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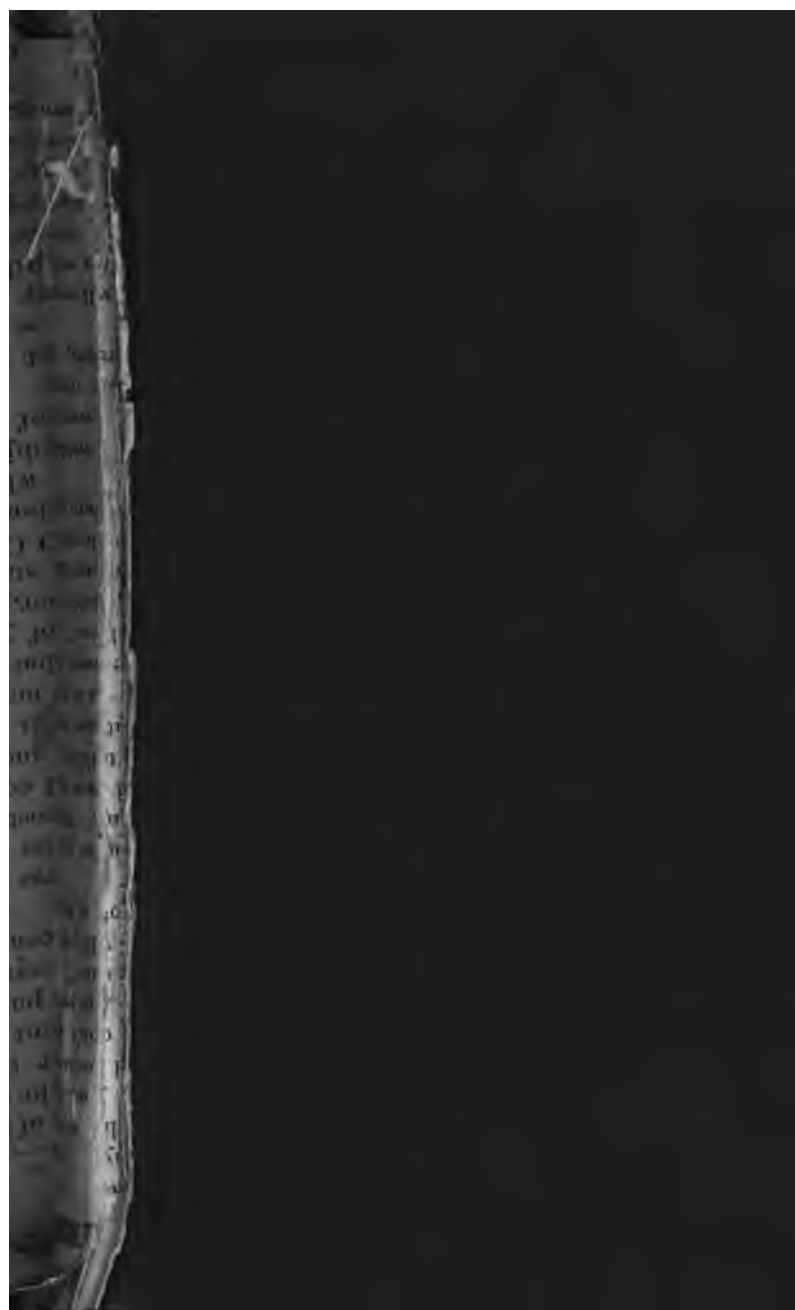
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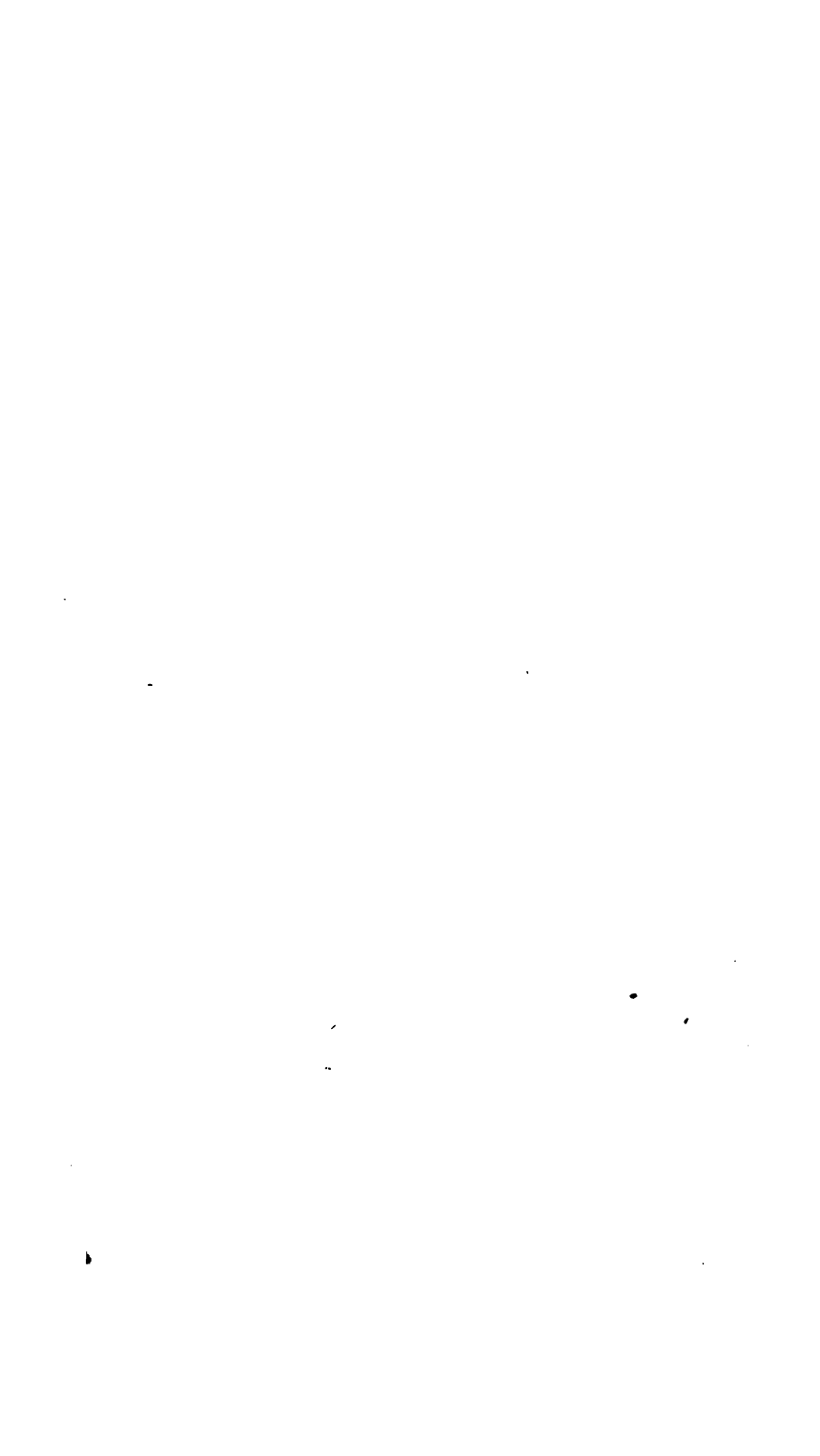
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KIP



THE  
DEAD MARQUISE

A ROMANCE

BY  
LEONARD KIP

*Author of Enone, etc.*



NEW YORK  
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
FOURTH AVE. & TWENTY-THIRD ST

1873.

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## P R E F A C E .

*To Mons. THEOPHILUS LECLERC, Editor and  
Dramatic Author, Paris.*

NEULLY, Aug. 22, 1852.

MONSIEUR:—It has been my felicity to have formed one of the household of the late Marquise de Sainte-Maure,—having acted as her principal maid-in-waiting for over twenty years, and up to the very moment of her release from life, three months ago. In this connection, it becomes my painful duty to allude with just condemnation to the heirs of Madame la Marquise. These were all of distant degree, and none of them had ever paid her any attentions except of the most interested character. Yet, I grieve to state, that after her lamented decease, they exhibited the most extraordinary and culpable rapacity, not to be justified by other than long continued previous affection and intercourse;—in their division of

S. M. W. 4665 - Ma 128, 1947

her effects, stripping the chateau of all articles of the slightest value, and even extorting from my charge those few pieces of jewelry which, upon such melancholy occasions, it so properly behooves a domestic of tried and faithful service to retain. Nothing, in fact, Monsieur, has been permitted to remain in my possession, excepting the pages here enclosed, composed by Madame la Marquise during the last few months of her failing life; and with which pages, perhaps from their being written in a trembling and partially illegible hand, no one of the heirs has cared to make himself acquainted.

I confess, Monsieur, that I myself have not read any of these pages. But it has been suggested to me, that, with some trifling alteration, they might be made available for farce or comedy at the Odeon, or Opera Comique; and that, for this purpose, I might part with them for a suitable consideration, and thereby partially reimburse myself for the iniquitous frustration of my reasonable expectations. If, therefore, it should be in your mind to use the manuscript, you are at liberty so to do; and I will esteem it a favor if you will send to me, as their probable value, the sum of forty francs.

With respectful consideration, I remain, Monsieur,  
CELESTE DUPONT.

*To Mademoiselle CELESTE DUPONT, of the household of the late Marquise de Sainte-Maure, Newilly.*

PARIS, September 13, 1852.

MADemoisELLE:—Permit me to express my obligations for the Mss. you have so kindly forwarded to me. In finding myself thus selected, as, in your judgment, the most suitable person to bestow upon them that proper and satisfactory attention which they seem so eminently to deserve, I feel that I cannot too warmly or gratefully acknowledge the compliment you have conferred upon me. Allow me, nevertheless, to tender my conviction, that your real estimate of the purpose and nature of the Mss. would have been greatly different from what it now is, if you had thought them worthy of an attempted perusal. I cannot forget that the late lamented Marquise has been spoken of as one who, bowing beneath the weight of past sorrows, had voluntarily retired from a world which, in its turn, had too soon consented to forget her; bearing thenceforth, her isolation with sweet, sad serenity, and simply striving to beautify her daily life with the practices of abundant and well-bestowed charities. It does not seem, therefore, that she could have been one whose pen would indulge in mirth-compelling thoughts to.

recollections. And when I recall to your mind what I have more lately learned, that she expired suddenly and without warning, while giving expression to what must have been almost the concluding sentence, and that her death was supposed to have been hastened by some tender emotion of the mind, stimulated to undue activity by the realization of having at last arrived at the end of a mournful task, you will perhaps agree with me, that the Mss. can scarcely contain elements suitable for re-arrangement in farce or comedy. But inasmuch as I may be able to make other use of them, with your permission I will now retain them; and I take pleasure herewith in placing at your disposal the sum of forty francs, mentioned by you as your estimate of their value.

With great respect I subscribe myself, Made-  
moiselle,

Obediently Yours,

THEOPHILUS LECLERO.





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## SAINTE-MAURE.

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### CHAPTER I.

**D**URING the past few years, Paris has very closely crept about me. A century or so ago, when Louis Fifteenth was king, the Chateau Sainte-Maure stood sequestered and unapproached amid its own wide-spread domain of lawn and woodland. The city, separated from it by hill and dale, then seemed far off—its neighborhood evidenced to sight by little other than the twin towers of Notre Dame peeping stealthily across a break in the chestnut grove at the right of the grand alley of the park. Even in later times, when Louis Sixteenth was king, and the city drawing nearer, so that at last long rows of dwellings began to look boldly through the opening vistas of the trees, and, at one side, a portion of the park had been torn asunder from the rest and given over to civic purposes, much still remained to stamp the site with pleasant suggestion of its ancient extent and state. Now, however, that the



Second Empire is in its sway of power, the blind tangle of narrow streets has crept still more remorselessly onward, eating its insatiable way into lake and forest land; and, of late, one great boulevard has swept along with giant leap, carrying before its resistless course all that was left of the old domain, excepting the chateau itself, with its narrow terrace and orangery. Even of these the increasing city seems fretfully jealous; and, like an angry sea, it beats against my garden walls, threatening, year by year, still further to invade me with its irresistible, roaring human tide.

As I gaze out from the open window at which I write, I look far down the new boulevard, and I see, at the further end, those venerable towers of Notre Dame, appearing now at only half their former distance, such foreshortening uniformity of unbending outline has been given by the levelling of intermediate hill and valley. At times it is very pleasant to have the old cathedral thus seemingly brought near. But again, in some other mood of mind, when I would retire from perception of even the little world I still retain about me, those towers appear yet further removed than ever, so varied and perplexing are the scenes that lie between myself and them—so many and tumultuous the throngs of population I must encounter before, as of old, I can say my prayers within those quiet

walls. In every direction, a blinding, commingling sea of roofs ; or, where I can gaze down some unbroken line of street, an equally confusing regularity of frontage. In every window, signs of seething life—student, grisette, or artisan—all given up to pursuits that I can no longer comprehend, or, comprehending, can no more, in my protracted isolation, regard with active sympathy. In the street itself, a ceaseless tide of pleasure or of traffic, whose mingled murmurs scale my walls, but tell me nothing further. Even at night no respite ; for then the myriads of lights that dot the view speak equally, as before, of teeming thousands—the solitary student here, the sick-bed watcher there, elsewhere the festive gathering—all unknowing me and to me unknown. And daily, at certain hours, I hear the clashing music of a military band passing beneath my walls on its way from neighboring barracks to palace-court ; and I cannot then resist sad memories of the distant past, when, in the flush of youth and beauty, I stood in the centre of another royal court, and listened to the martial music of its brief period.

But within the grey walls that now inclose all that is left of the old domain, another and a different scene unfolds itself. However wildly and tumultuously the storm of life and energy may beat outside, here there is peace and quietness—the quiet-

of generations long passed away. No disturbing hand has been suffered to brush aside or alter those olden tokens that speak to me with such association of the former days. The orange-trees still maintain their places around the terrace,—all of them now old and gnarled, some almost lifeless,—but redolent of memories of my Queen, who, so often in the days of her early happiness, had plucked their blossoms. Down the broad avenue,—the only one now left,—are the old yew trees, still trimmed each season into the artificial angularity of their earlier training. Even the solitary peacock that now flourishes his gorgeous beauties upon the terrace rail, is the descendant of others that were wont to expand their plumage for the maids-of-honor of Louis' Court.

In one corner of the garden and half hidden by the foliage, is a more permanent trophy of the past, the marble tomb of one of the most distinguished of our ancestors, known as the Count Roux de Sainte-Maure. He was a stout old warrior of the third crusade; who though marking his course with deeds of courage and enterprise, had yet the fortune to return unharmed from Palestine, giving up his life in later years at Frotteval. Whether there is truth in the tradition that, in conformity with his dying request, his heart was sent to the Abbaye St. Ambrosius, cannot now be known. But it is certain that his body was brought hither, and now lies beneath that raised oblong pile of

stone. Even here, amid all the memories it inspires of gallant chivalry, it does not fail to point its own moral of the vanity of human glory. For now the stones are worn, moss-grown and shattered. Of the inscription once upon the side, there remains only a Latin word or two, of which the connection with others that long have disappeared cannot be told. Upon the top there was a full length effigy in armor, but this has long been shattered and dispersed, only the head, chest and a mailed foot remaining. And though the antiquary still may read in olden chronicles, about the valor of the Count Roux de Sainte-Maure, yet, with all common association and gossip, his tomb is pointed out with greater interest as the place where, upon returning heated from the chase, the valorous but light hearted Henri Quatre sat at the side of the fair Henriette d'Entragues, and there felt for her the earliest glow of his baneful passion.

Nearer by is one other relic of the past, an antique fountain. It stands in the centre of the garden, breaking the grand avenue midway into a broad circle. The coping is of marble, in octagon shape. The centre-piece rises from a rugged, broken rock, and was noted as one of the earlier conceptions of Pradier ;— one of those triumphant successes, indeed, that first made the artist's fame and gave him, by favor of the Grand Monarch, a share in the decoration of the gardens of Versailles. After the fashion of that day, it is

of grotesque design, two cupids struggling for possession of a lizard, from the open mouth of which the stream of water falls into a fluted shell beneath, and thence trickles softly into the lower basin. But the conception is carried out with singular artistic beauty,—the poise of the cupids being replete with grace and nature, and their expressions marvellously indicative of earnest yet unmalicious strife,—even the poor lizard developing, in his struggles to escape, a certain unmistakable harmony with the purpose of the group. In its earlier days, when pure and white with its first freshness from the artist's chisel, this work of Pradier must surely have gained him much meed of admiration, for the display of which there could not have failed to be frequent opportunity. For it happened that my grand-sire Florent de Sainte-Maure then stood very high at Court, and was wont to signalize his favor with frequent fetes, to which came not only the courtiers, but the great Monarch himself. Many a time, therefore, must the marble coping have been thronged with fair maids of honor and their gallant attendants, and the alleys have echoed with the merry laughter of some, the grace of whose portraits we still admire, though it is our sterner fashion to condemn their actions and their lives. They and their laughter have all passed away. What now does the fountain, in its memories, reveal of them, with its solemn flow of water tinkling upon the listening ear?

Nothing that I can understand. But very plainly it speaks to me about myself. It whispers of its likeness to me, and thereby begets a certain sympathy between us ; for I cannot fail to think that in our ways we are curiously similar. Time has dealt very rudely with the fountain-group. The figures are moss-grown and discolored beyond redemption. One of the cupids has lost a wing and the other an outstretched arm. At the first sight, it would seem as though the whole group had become merely an useless relic of long-past glories. But, by some strange chance, the hidden works that feed it with its flow of water have remained untouched ; and the silver stream still pours forth as sparkling and beautiful as in the days, when, in the first freshness of the work, a brilliant court was wont to throng admiringly around the polished coping. In like manner, I, too, am worn and faded. It needs no glass to tell me that. I know it from my tottering steps ; I see it even in the thin, brown, wasted hand that holds my pen. But still, from that pen flows the full torrent of my thoughts and memories, as vividly as though only a few months had passed since the period of my former days of triumph and of trial. The fountain drops its silver jet no longer before admiring eyes, but only in the solitude of a waste ; unseen by any one except myself, and, now and then, by some forlorn handmaiden of the household, who dips her pail full from the overflowing basin, and, in her

rustic ignorance, never dreams of that beauty of statu-  
esque imagery that still, in spite of fracture and decay,  
lifts itself so gloriously above her. I, too, pour out the  
current of my memories in unsympathetic solitude ; for  
there is no one who shall ever see them during my few  
remaining years. If, at my death, the scrawled and-  
blurred pages should happen to be found, even then  
there may be no one who will care to decipher them.  
And if by some strange chance they may be read, it  
will surely be with careless inattention, for they will  
doubtless be regarded only as a commonplace record  
of trials which thousands of other persons in their lit-  
tle day alike have suffered. Beneath the whole, there  
will still remain concealed the unread mystery of those  
springs and incentives which, in times of doubt, have  
so often, as by a mere breath, inclined the fortune of  
my life in this or that direction.

Why, then, do I write at all ? Hardly, indeed, do  
I myself know, except that I feel somehow driven to it,  
as by an impulse that cannot be resisted. If I can  
analyze aright my motives, they are to this effect. I  
am now very old, and in my longing for some kindly  
sympathy, my memories of the past are all that to me  
seem left. These I would fain retain ; and yet I fear  
that, with the coming years, should I much longer lin-  
ger, something of those pleasant memories may steal  
away. The main outline of my life, it is true, will  
never be forgotten by me, nor the record of those

greater passions and tumults that, from time to time, have most strongly swayed me. But there is much besides that I would fain not lose. There are the words of others which, once recorded, give also the record of their deepest thoughts. There are the glances and stolen looks that have betrayed to me the hidden fulness of the soul. There are those slightest actions of loved ones which, seemingly so trivial and little likely to bear upon my destiny, yet, by some subtle magic, have controlled it. These apparently minute touches in the picture of my life, may, before long, with the failing memory of increasing age, begin to fade away; and now, while they remain to me, I would wish to make such full record of them that, in the days of weakness to come, I may read and re-read, and thereby bring back, in all its freshness, the full developed scene of all my life, be it the record of pleasure or of suffering.

And once again. There are times when the past seems so far removed, that it is as though I looked upon a life other than my own, and was dwelling upon the memory of some story taken from a far distant period. This may be natural; for when a life-time has been broken in upon by some great trial or convulsion, it would be singular if, in some way, the two fragments did not further separate, so as to seem to lose their real and intimate connection with each other. When the sons of Noah beheld the wrecks of past



empire emerging from the subsiding waters, might it not be that they could not fully realize the shortness of the period since the destruction had commenced, and that, therefore, in imagination, they must rather have surveyed those relics as one would gaze upon the upheavals of a long buried age? In manner similar, I sometimes find myself looking back upon my past. If mine had been a quiet, unbroken, uneventful life, free from all cares and agitations, unmarked by passions or misfortunes, and gliding softly on from youth to venerable age with insensible pace, there would be nothing to disconnect me from my former self. But the storm and turmoil of revolution that once so rudely broke in upon my peace, seem at times to have turned my past life back, as though it were some separate existence driven apart from itself, and holding no connection with that which was to come; and this it is that I would hinder. I would fain write out the details of that former past, and, by an accurate and vivid recalling of the springs and impulses that then moved me, would learn to know myself again as then I was—would, as it were, unite myself unto myself once more.

And doing so, I can, without reproach of vanity, speak freely about that former self of mine, for I know that in one sense it is all gone forever. The mind chastened by age and the memories bedewed with tears may remain, but the form and face that once gave delight are now as far removed from me as though, in-

deed, they had been attributes of another person. Therefore, even as the ruined capitalist can, without fear of being called purse-proud, speak of his vanished wealth, so may I, in these few recollections, unhesitatingly make mention of my former beauty. Upon the wall now hangs the only record of it—my full length portrait. It was myself at eighteen years. According to the fashion of that day, I am represented in the typical costume of shepherdess, with a ribboned lamb nestling beneath my arm, and a garland-decorated crook poised lightly in my hand. It is a style that now moves smiles and criticism, as though unwarrantably indulging in quaint conceits. And yet I remember that, at the time, it did not seem inappropriate or absurd. Sylvan and pastoral objects and scenes were then, not more than now, looked upon as real concomitants of character or occupation, but only as the mere well comprehended accessories of state or beauty ; and the maid-of-honor was painted as a nymph or shepherdess with as little idea of irrelevancy as now the fine madam of the growing city will be represented leaning upon broken column of ruined temple. But passing from this, as I now look up, I see in full length before me, a creature buoyant with health and youth, resplendent with a beauty which gained fair meed of commendation even amidst the well-acknowledged rival claims of so many others at the court. I see a tall and graceful figure, in which the artistic imagery of the rustic

dress discloses perhaps too freely the well-developed beauties of arm and neck. The hair, cut close and curled, and partially covered with a little cap, gives to the face a not inartistic appearance of innocent mischievousness. The lips are slightly parted in a smile, and the hazel eyes are large and filled with a certain tender languishing gaze, mingled with the spirit of some roguish, saucy impulse peeping through from within. In the whole expression of face there is a tone of courtly dignity, yet with its customary coldness tempered by glow of pleasant innocence, affability, and candor. In the entirety of attitude, face, and figure, there is beauty—calm, unconscious, opulent beauty—adorned, but scarcely heightened, with the rich, unfading tints and colors given by the gifted artist.

Can this glorious creature really have been myself? I know, indeed, that when the portrait was finished there were few who spoke of it as flattered, and it is in my recollection still, that the whole court gave honest testimony to the truthfulness of the likeness. And now, placing my mirror beside it, I endeavor to trace in my reflection some present resemblance. It is in vain. I see my bowed form, my straggling white locks, my withered cheeks and darkened complexion—and that is all. In feature, figure, or expression there is not one vestige of the great beauty that shone resplendent at the side of Queen Marie Antoinette. I turn sadly away. Were I not so old, and the foun-

tains of my grief so parched, I could even weep. As it is I can now only sigh. And again I tell myself that if, in these recollections, I ever speak at all approvingly of my former beauty, let it not be charged against me as of pure vain-gloriousness. It is so easy to forget that the radiant loveliness of that pictured canvas was ever attribute of mine ; or, if I may remember it, so hard is it, that I should not be allowed to pride myself a little upon what has now so far off and forever gone. The contracted world that at present sees me, knows me merely as the feeble old Marquise, sad and broken—filled with memories of better days, but refusing to utter them aloud—given over to peculiarities which move the smiles of others—cumbering, perhaps, the path of some who could make better use of her inherited wealth. How, indeed, can she be at all associated, except by some vague and strained imagining, with the resplendent creature who stood among the most beautiful beside her queen—whose smile was courted, and whose lightest utterances of kindness or friendship cherished—whose only labor was the mock toil of the sportive court in the creamery of Trianon—whose days were all one round of unthinking pastime and revelry, in which she saw not the impending storm, or if she heard it spoken of as she sat and dallied with her court admirers amidst the foliage of the Versailles orangery, gayly laughed as though it portended only a summer shower ?



## CHAPTER II.

**T**HERE can be little need to tell minutely or in exact detail, how, at the first outbreak of the Revolution, believing too confidently that the commotion would soon subside, and having moreover, no one of better judgment than myself at hand with power to compel my flight, I neglected too long to join myself in the outward current of the emigrating nobles. How, in the end, I discovered that the time during which I could readily have crossed the frontier had altogether passed by, and that I was left at home unguarded and exposed, and seemingly with no protection against mob insult and attack. How thereupon, as the only remaining means of safety, I abandoned my chateau and hid myself with kindred-minded friends in the loyal province of La Vendee. How there, though not as yet assuming any deliberate or fixed disguise, gradually I abandoned all my habits and traditions of stately rank or courtly culture, and let even my name contract itself in

unison with the plebeian prejudices of the day, and lived a life of unassuming lowliness in a secluded town, and so for a while believed that I was safe. How finally, the storm of revolutionary hate penetrating even into the most loyal strongholds, once more I was forced to fly, and this time in actual and studied disguise; wandering thus half purposelessly from village to village, until, as I realized that there might be better security in crowds than in solitude, again I entered Paris. All this, indeed, is mere matter of that ordinary adventure in which thousands besides myself at that time had their experience. The true individuality of my life commenced—though at the time I realized it not—only upon a certain evening when, worn and terrified, I sat half breathless in a little upper chamber beneath the sloping roof of the old *Maison des Capucins*.

A room built so directly beneath the roof, that its slope gave unsightly irregularity to the low ceiling, and crowded the solitary window into a deep recess. The window, itself so masked and sheltered with broad mullions and with heavy carvings projected outwardly, that though in the early morning the sunshine might pleasantly gleam within, brightening thus the roughly plastered sides, it was evident it could not penetrate far or long remain; so that there must be times when the rest of the room would be dark and gloomy with sullen shades, creeping around the walls long before the cheerful light of day had elsewhere faded away.

Connected with this room a still smaller one, furnished with two little beds, and also faintly illumined by a narrow, deeply-set window which opened around the corner of the building at right angles with the other, and thereby looked out into an inner court. Excepting these two beds, a few old chairs, a plain table and discolored muslin curtains, no other furniture in either room. No covering upon the floor; and the crumbling fireplace still filled with ashes and charred papers left there by the last occupants. The kind of rooms, in fact, that are usually tenanted by artisans, grisettes or students. In his time, the artist certainly had been there; for the walls were scratched profusely with rough designs, in pencil and burnt coal, and occasionally evincing some degree of culture and taste. There was even a display of merit in a large profile extending half across the ceiling and evidently created by the rapid transit of a smoking candle; though subsequent occupants, endowed with less artistic cultivation, had not failed to suggest grotesque additions with the same rude implement, and had thus partially obscured the vigor of the earlier conception.

Almost every feature of these little rooms I gathered into my mind at a single glance, upon my first entrance into them. It was evening, and therefore I could not then mark how far the sunlight falling upon the window-recess might further penetrate; but nothing else escaped me. The unpleasing shape of the

apartment, the roughness of the walls, the painful untidiness of the fireplace, the random sketches and inscriptions upon every available spot of plaster, even certain strange, weird shadows which the fitful flickering of a single candle threw into distant corners,—all seemed to impress themselves upon my mind as familiar objects. It was true that I was not in condition, apparently, for close observation. For it had been a hurried flight of mine across one of the river-bridges and through the crowded streets. It had been a wearisome climb up those many courses of steps in the chill, ill-lighted building. All my senses were strained upon the alert against chance of suspicion, stoppage or arrest. But, on the other hand, it was this very sense of apprehension, perhaps, that now imparted to me some fuller power of perception; so that even in my confusion of mind from the union of many diverse impulses and emotions, nothing of substance or shadow escaped my notice. And thus, though heated, panting and nervous, I seemed with one glance of the eye, to comprehend and realize all the discordant surroundings of the place.

Mourning vacantly over the ruined past, as who would not, yet thankful all the same for my present refuge,—wearied with the long-sustained flight, and still apprehensive of pursuit, yet with the mingled hope that safety would come out of it in the end, and thereby feeling myself partially relieved from that



heavy weight of fear which, speaking of little hope at all, had pressed upon me for so many weeks,—I sat in momentary silence. Beside me and holding my hand firmly, as though from her own store of courage, she would inspire me with calmness, stood one who had escaped with me,—Flonsette, my confidential maid, my foster-sister, and now more than ever my close and intimate companion. Upon the edge of the table and lightly swinging his foot, as he leaned his elbow on his knee and gazed into our faces, sat my cousin, the Baron de Montfaucon, who, during his own wanderings in La Vendee, had of late chanced luckily to fall in with us, and thenceforth materially assisted our flight. Indeed, without his aid we should have been utterly lost; for it was his ingenuity that somehow procured the protection papers that were needful to carry us through even the nearest barrier.

Now, seemingly, he was a rough-bearded and poorly-clad peasant,—with worn and somewhat ragged clothing,—his whole costume surmounted with a loose red cap of the kind most affected by the ardent patriots of the day, and giving to his whole appearance an air of rude, uncultivated ferocity. For awhile he remained in silence, perhaps purposely giving us time for mental recovery. Then he spoke; and had some stranger been present, not cognizant of the disguise, he could not have failed to be startled at the contrast between the uncouth appearance of that sup-

posed patriot and the manifest purity of his intonations. For, in respect to natural manner of speech, that of the Baron was unusually soft, flexible and winning,—as far removed as could be conceived from any approximation to the customary utterances of either peasant-boor or man of the cellars and barricades. I could not fail to feel the difference; and without attending to the substance of his remark, I made haste to caution him that he should assume another and more suitable tone.

“For surely you must know, cousin Gervais,” I said, losing a portion of my apprehension in fear for him, “that, if you thus rashly employ that habit of court-language, you cannot hope long to escape. Your very first word at the nearest barrier will betray you.”

“Nay, trouble not your heart about me, fair Gabrielle,” he answered. “If I now speak in my usual tone, it is not that I am careless, but merely that I know I can safely do so. We are all alone,—we three. The door is closed and bolted, and the room is not only at the very housetop, but at the end of a passage, so that no one can have occasion to go by it. It is fitting, then, that on this last occasion of seeing you for many weeks, perhaps, I should converse as best becomes my nature.”

“But when you are away from here—”

“Why then, indeed, I shall have to fall back upon

my disguises both of voice and manner; and will do it to such effect that even you, passing in the street, would fail to recognize me."

With that, assuming at once his full powers of deception,—from force of habit and association, rather than in illustration of his meaning, it being a disguise to which he had necessarily accustomed himself during our flight, and which hence was already familiar to myself,—he arose from the table and slowly paced to and fro across the room, talking as he went. So thoroughly, indeed, was he now altered in appearance, that had I not hitherto thus seen him, and knew, moreover, that the door was locked, I should have believed another person must have entered, and I would have been upon the point of calling out for help. For the man whom I now saw passing back and forth had his shoulders rounded and his neck bent forward with the uncouth stoop of a sans-culotte emerging from his cellar. A stoop that seemed to flow downward and pervade the whole body with its character, until it reached his feet and there struck friendship with a shuffling gait of peasant freshly severed, in the first pride of new citizenship, from wooden shoes, and as yet unaccustomed to walk without them. Fortified with these characteristics, the red cap and the rough beard, though untouched, seemed to acquire newer ferocity. And, as he spoke, I heard no more the smooth dialect of the Court, but rather some harsh.

rude, grating jargon of the provinces,—Brittany or Gascon or what not,—or, as it might well be, a compound of all together. And, it seemed as though, familiar as I already was with his disguise, here, in this little close room, for the first time its real perfection impressed me.

“Nay—no longer any of that, cousin Gervais,” I expostulated, half laughing and yet half ready to cry, at so fully realizing that with him it had come to this extremity. “It is enough—more than enough.”

“And so you see, dear cousin,” he said, resuming his natural voice and manner, “that there must be sharper eyes than any I have yet encountered, to detect in me the Baron de Montfaucon. It is not for nothing, after all, that in olden times I have acted my poor parts in the theatre at Versailles. Little did our dramatic instructors know, when they drilled me into the costume and conduct of a sans-culotte, that they were assisting me in my escape towards the frontier. Do you remember, Gabrielle, when we took our parts in Molière? How hard it was for me to become Lubin, and have my ears cuffed by D’Alsayte, as the noble Clitandre? And how, boy as I was, it was necessary to reason me into it, telling me that it was only in the play and therefore counted for nothing? Poor D’Alsayte! If he had taken the part of peasant instead of courtier, it might be that he would have worn his late disguises better, and not have been led

from Lille so summarily to the scaffold. Well, well; each one to his own fate, and, some time, a fate to all."

In that gay spirit of insouciance with which the gentleman of the day—let posterity condemn him otherwise as it will—prepared to meet any destiny courageously, Gervais now stood before me, banishing all regretful feelings with a snatch or two of light chanson. And I, looking upon him, no longer saw the rough man of the people who had so heavily just shuffled across the room. His gay, pleasant voice had restored him at once to himself, even stripping away the few disguises of costume that yet remained, and making him appear once more as in the free and joyous days of old. The ill-shapen, purposely-tangled beard—it was gone again, and I saw only the light, daintily trimmed moustache upon the otherwise smooth, youthful and unwrinkled face. The red cap—that, too, was gone; and in its place a braided velvet chapeau, with its pretty ostrich plume. The slim rapier buckled at his side, the graceful movement and sway of figure—all these in my imagination were, for the moment, fully restored! Had the olden days really returned? Was the hideous interval only a dream? It needed the pressure of Flonsette's hand and my own startled glance about the room, upon dingy walls and shattered fireplace, to recall me to myself.

"Yes, cousin Gabrielle," the Baron continued, after

he had finished his passing bar or two of merry song, "I will slip through their barriers and outposts as though I were the most favored revolutionist of all. I will adapt my manner to any emergency. Whatever it is necessary to be—whether bravo or boor—leader or dupe—native of any district I may have to pass through—that will I become. In less than a fortnight I shall be with our friends at Coblenz, this uncouth beard forever cast aside, and my own true sword once more in my hand. And, in a few days or weeks from that, there will be the onward movement which will sweep this canaille from before us, restore the royalty, and give us our own again. No, you must have no fear for me. It is over yourself that you must now be watchful."

"We, of course, will quietly remain here, cousin Gervais."

"And with discretion added to your quietness, Gabrielle. Take upon you, as much as may be, the manners and occupation of poor working-women. It may not be pleasant now, but it will be a thing to laugh over in the future, when all things have come right again. Hyppolite, the concierge below, knows me, and can be confided in. Whatever he can do for you he will, protecting you as well as any one man can. This is why I am not ill-pleased that you have been led hither—driven here, in fact, rather than allowed to remain in the open country. I fear that I

should never have been able to project for you a disguise sufficiently perfect to carry you across the kingdom—and in the villages of the provinces there is much scrutiny of strangers. But, after all, there is no isolation from curiosity like the heart of a great city; and therefore, here, with care, you may be most nearly safe. And you must always remember, Gabrielle, that even here you must keep constant guard. Walls, even, have ears; and there are many persons who, more or less constantly, will be watching you. None the less will that be because you are two pretty young women, living alone. Trust no one who seems to come with proffers of friendship. Dress simply, as working-women should,—putting on thereby the appearance of labor, though your concealed means will enable you to avoid the necessity of its practice. Put back those clusters of curls, Gabrielle, lest you may, perchance, be recognized. And for the same reason go out from here as little as possible. Let Flonsette do whatever is necessary to be done away from here. Even if you are not recognized, there is something about you that would awaken attention—something that, to the eyes of the people, would point you out as an aristocrat. But as for Flonsette—”

“I, of course, will not be taken for an aristocrat, is not that what you mean, Monsieur le Baron?” interrupted Flonsette, with a merry little laugh. “Well, you are right in that. I accept it; and I will pass as

the daughter of the people, and thereby be safe. Truly I am content."

She was content, indeed. The child of my forester, she seemed born to be a forest nymph herself, but there was nothing of refined or aristocratic impress on her bearing or appearance. She knew that her beauty was of a different order, and she made no vain striving after the unattainable. She was Hebe—why should she care to pass for Juno or Diana? To her let there be the enticing beauty of a daughter of the people—the rotund figure, not tall, but yet pliant and graceful—the richly clustering curls falling densely about the plump rosy face—the white teeth sparkling through perpetually merry smiles—the bright eyes full of fun and humor, and the little round nose giving saucy expression to the whole countenance;—this was Flonsette, and with this she was abundantly satisfied. Content, now, more than ever, perhaps; for as such she might go about in a safety that could never belong to me, with my unconscious, educated habit of dignified bearing. She could trip whither she would to and fro about the city, and everywhere, as the proper meed of her enticing beauty meet the admiring gaze of all conditions of men; but there was no one, who, looking upon her, would ever take her for an aristocrat in disguise.

"Yes, Flonsette," said Gervais, in answer to her remark, "that is what I mean. You have beauty



enough to lead to your being snatched from our sight at any moment by some of these modern usurpers of ancient manners—anxious, also, to emulate ancient deeds. Beware, therefore, lest at any time you dress too nearly like a Sabine woman, and thus give shape and cogency to some lurking, half-formed desire for classical imitation.”

“And what is a Sabine, Monsieur le Baron?” she asked. “Does she come from Normandy, may it be?”

“Nay, never mind whence she comes or who she is,” he responded with a laugh. “It is enough for you to know that where there are men calling themselves Romans, Sabines will naturally be looked for; or, if there chance to be Sabines anywhere, Romans will start up to carry them away. It is the way of the world, and is your real danger. Apart from which, you may rely upon it, that you will never be guillotined for a duchess. And now, Gabrielle,” he continued, turning to me, and with evident hesitation in his manner, lowering his voice into something of a different strain, with a tone of tenderness mingled in it. “And now, Gabrielle—”

For the moment I shrank abashed and half frightened within myself, feeling instinctively that he was now about to speak about other things than mere plots or escapes. Even Flonsette, with quick wit, seemed to imagine the same, for I saw that at the first tone of

his voice she had arisen, and upon some feebly uttered excuse, glided away into the inner chamber and left us alone. But her caution, as well as my own confusion, were needless; for, in an instant, my cousin raised his head, another impulse and disposition of thought evidently swaying him.

“Nay—why, indeed, should I speak, or yet, of what?” he muttered, half to himself, as though discussing a secret doubt. “And, besides, it were almost unfair here to say what had better be told in other place and in days that will be happier for you. And we well know, Gabrielle, without explanation, how to each other we stand. So, for the present, let that pass. For now already the time has come when we must part. The night has begun to fall, and before morning I must be many leagues from here; for soon the army advance may be made, and I know that you, of all, would not have me to be absent when our forces come to restore the king.”

“You forget, cousin Gervais, that the king is dead,” I said.

“King Louis the Sixteenth is dead,” he responded, setting his lips tightly together, and moving, instinctively, his hand to where his sword hilt should have been. “Is it likely that I, an officer in his service should forget that fact? But King Louis the Seventeenth still lives, a prisoner;—and should they murder him as well, there will be Louis Eighteenth upon the

frontier, burning to avenge them both. Surely, indeed, in the end, will this rebellion be put down with fire and sword, and the royalty be restored. It may be speedily done—or it may be that we overrate our strength, and that it will be much longer than we think before we succeed. It is not good that we should look forward too easily to evil and defeat; and yet he is no true soldier who, in reflecting upon all the strange chances of the world, allows himself to speak with too great confidence. Therefore, though I feel that I may look for final success to our arms, it may be so far in advance that even months may elapse before we can meet again.”

“All that, cousin, as well as your success, is in the hand of God and of the Virgin,” I said.

“Yes—I suppose we should call it so;—and in the strength of our hearts and arms as well,” he added. “Both should surely work together. But to myself most properly must be the exercise of arms, rather than churchmanlike or priestly supplications to the sky; for you know that to us soldiers there is often little care for the help of heaven, and that even in the hour of a death-wound there are some of us who cannot utter a prayer for want of the knowledge to shape the words of it aright. Therefore, while we wield the sword, to you the prayers, Gabrielle. Doubtless they will be of service. I will fight the more bravely, perhaps, knowing that you have promised these in my be-

half. And I feel, as well, that they will bring success to the cause, if anything short of hard blows can do so. And with this, farewell."

So speaking, he turned away and sought the door—then coming back, as though under the impulse of a forgotten duty, placed his hand lightly upon my shoulder, and softly kissed me upon the forehead—then releasing me, once more and without further word turned away—and so departed.





### CHAPTER III.

**F**OLLOWING him softly to the door, I could hear him, with slow pace descending the steps towards a lower story. It was a rambling old building, erected for other purposes, in a past century, and partaking of something of the wilfulness of an erratic and impractical age. Therefore, economies of space or material had not been consulted in its construction, and the utmost irregularity prevailed. The stairs of no one story seemed to meet or connect with those of that next adjoining, but the downward way would ramble off far and heedlessly through dark winding passages before finding new descent. Therefore when my cousin Gervais' foot had reached a lower story, he did not at once continue downward, but I could hear him wandering away through a long vacant hall; and noting the firmness of his tread, as he advanced in some seemingly careless spirit of reflectiveness, I trembled lest he might forget his assumed character and thereby be detected. Even as I felt

this terror, I heard a lower door opened and the voice of some one addressing him. But I also heard the firm slow step change, as by a flash, to the dull, pounding, uncertain pace of peasant-boor, and there came response in those same rough dialectic tones which I had already heard him employ as illustrative of his method of disguise. Then I knew that he would remain ever alert and incapable of being taken by surprise; and I closed my door in the full assurance that he would safely elude all hostile vigilance and reach the border.

Then, for the moment, I stood and silently reflected. He was gone—but the pressure of his farewell kiss still seemed to rest upon my forehead. It was what he had never done before; and partly with sense of shame and partly with feeling of forgiveness, I wondered whether I had been heedless or not, in suffering it. Was it really a wrong to myself that I had permitted the caress? It was, indeed, hardly in conformity with the severe manners of the day, which, while giving utmost scope to ordinary gallantry, prescribed the most rigorous reticence between those of equal degree. Yet for all that it is not needful too narrowly to criticise the outward action, without regard to the spirit of purity within; and moreover, I could not but become conscious that the old days had altered within the past year, and newer circumstances had necessarily abolished much of the former court ceremonial. And

I knew that the kiss which Gervais had so lightly placed upon my forehead was not given from wanton and careless impulse, but as the seal and token of friendship and protection ; and surely of both of these I had abundant need.

Then furthermore, there was between the Baron and myself that intimate condition, which, though not held to justify the slightest levity other than between strangers, surely in time of trouble might tolerate some mutual drawing near, by way of sympathy. For with us there was a betrothal, or rather a shadow of betrothal, which, though not acknowledged by public ceremonial, none the less was considered real, and destined at the proper time, to lead to the stronger tie of marriage. For the estates of Montfaucon and Sainte-Maure lay close together ; and when at an early age, the young Baron and myself, almost within the same year were left in orphanage, it was considered by all no more than proper that our lives should be so directed, that in the future, the two estates should become one property. To this effect, therefore, had a council of noble lords, our guardians, attended by notarial advice of best degree, decided. So also had the king approved, holding us as royal wards and consequently needing his consent. And therefore, in this especial purpose, our lives had thenceforth been led to run together, as nearly as might well be ;—Gervais at court as page, at first, while I, still in my chateau, and being brought

up under tutors and governors, made frequent visits to Versailles. Then he, growing out of pageship, took commission in the royal guards; and I, laying aside my books, became maid-of-honor to Marie Antoinette. So, that silent tie unsealed by any outward form or by attested agreement, but none the less well known, grew up between us. Binding on him; inasmuch as however he might pursue his gallant conquest of hearts elsewhere, he might never expect to look for other alliance than mine. Binding upon myself; inasmuch as every courtier of the realm might try to delight me with his compliments and praise, and yet it were insult, not only to the Baron but also to the king, for one among them to aspire to my hand. And all the while, between the Baron and myself, there was never word of love or sentence of confirmation of our destined lot. Perhaps it was because there was no need to speak of what we so well knew,—perhaps because in the artificial air of the Court, those words or advances which might serve a Strephon in his wooing of Chloë, would, if overheard, excite only ridicule and laughter. The Baron, too, was of a timid and reserved demeanor, and dreaded greatly to provoke the salient wit of those about him; and if at times, I may have longed to listen to warmer words than those he gave me, I soon learned to look for them no longer, but to remain content with believing myself held dear in the quietness of his thoughts. And it must be



confessed that it is hard to commence recital of words of love, unless fair occasion for doing so should previously be found. If two persons are thrown together only in maturity of life, and then, for the first time, are suddenly awakened to a realization of their sympathy of heart, the words of its betrayal must necessarily be sought for, and being then poured forth, the stream may flow uninterruptedly for many years thereafter and perhaps forever. But when a mutual destiny requiring no words of acknowledgment or assent is imposed from unconscious childhood, there seems no especial period in which the habit of silent concurrence may be broken up and a life of passionate avowal be commenced. Therefore, from this long habit of tacit assent, the Baron spoke no word that might not be overheard by the most caustic wit about the Court, and in turn I learned to receive from him merely those gentle compliments that others also might give, and to smile pleasantly into his face in response to the graceful air with which, at times, after the manner of others about him, he would lower his lips gently to the tips of my gloved fingers, in conclusion of some open interview. And truly all this came the more easily to me, inasmuch as I felt no absorbing love for him. Love is a hardy plant and will grow in all soils; and yet there are plants which will thrive in the crevices of a mountain slope but will not flourish in ground already prepared for them. To me, the

heart of the Baron was this carefully nurtured soil; and to it, only the slender root of my friendship would consent to cling. But with this I was content. There was no instinct in my soul telling me that I could ever learn to love. To me, passion of the heart was a folly of the early romancists, or, if it could be made to thrive in modern days, was looked upon as a weakness that by careful guarding might have been avoided. The Baron pleased my taste. He was brave and handsome and courteous. I was envied for my lot and others envied him, in turn. It was all a proper matter well arranged and to be further spoken of when the time of mutual majority arrived and called for newer and more deliberate action. And in that spirit I had been content to remain. Therefore, when now for a moment, the Baron had seemed inclined to depart from his long reticence and play the lover, even with such slight action as that kiss upon the forehead, it was as though I had in some sort offended my innocence in allowing it, and I felt a guilty trembling stealing over me.

But, in a moment, I shook off this feeling. Something of reason and good sense prevailed. I could not have acted wrongly; or, if I had, it was done unwittingly. The past was past;—I must look to the future and its cares. It was no light distress to be secluded in those rude rooms, for many weeks perhaps, and all the while in danger of surveillance and suspi-

cion. A moment before, while the Baron had been with me, it seemed not so terrible a thing, for there was some assurance of present safety ; but now that he was gone, how could I ever drive away the dark shades that enveloped my soul? And I gazed again around the apartment more thoroughly than ever, taking note of broken wall and littered fireplace,—even of the heavy cobwebs thick with dust, and which cast against the ceiling a broad shadow like a festooned curtain. And there was the deeply recessed window, from which I had not yet looked. But doubtless there was nothing of consolation to be thence obtained. What prospect, indeed, could be gained from this lofty garret, to be in consonance with it, other than some hideous jumble of decayed, discolored, and ill-shapen roofs, a refuge for cats and a drying-place for ragged clothing, and without one glimpse of cheeriness or sunshine?

But to my surprise and delight, upon approaching the window, I found that I gazed out upon a scene of rich loveliness and beauty. It was as though, sitting in some dingy box at a theatre, the curtain had rolled up before me and disclosed unexpected magnificence of art and decoration, all appearing the more attractive as it contrasted so greatly with the poverty and ugliness more directly about me. There was no confused and dispiriting prospect of roofs and gables, but instead, the well-defined correctness and regularity of

a broad street, across which an inclosed wood or park stretched before the view. It was almost like the prospect from my own chateau, having something of the similarity which one piece of cultivated parterre will bear to another, when the fashion of adornment happens to be of the same age; and, for the moment, I was disposed to imagine that, in our flight into the city, unconsciously we had approached my own domain and were now gazing down upon it from another side to which I was unaccustomed. A foolish fancy, indeed, engendered by sudden ecstasy of bewildered feeling, and which almost immediately vanished before the more collected criticism of Flonsette.

“Nay, we must be far away, still, from both park or chateau,” she said, “for we have made our entrance upon another side, and it is easy to see that we are now in the heart of the city itself. It is true that yonder is a group of chestnuts like those beneath which we have so often played in past days,—and yet, they are not so much like, either. And see further there are many people walking around as though it were their own place; and it is not so very large, besides, since yonder, through the break of the trees, we can see the roofs of other buildings. It is one of the little parks of the people, dear mademoiselle, in the middle of the city, but exactly where, I cannot tell.”

Long before Flonsette had finished her explana-

tion, indeed, that strange fancy of mine, of seeing my own home had passed away, and I, too, had noticed the people walking about and the straight line of roofs beyond. Yes, it was only one of the small parks of the people, closely hemmed in with houses ; but it was with joy, indeed, that I looked down upon it, knowing how greatly the daily contemplation of it would lighten our captivity. And even now, impatient to drink in the quiet beauty of the scene, I bade Flonsette draw nearer, that we might both gaze our fill.

For it was not yet too dark to detect details of the place or to take accurate note of many of its peculiarities. The evening was well advanced, to be sure, the sun having already been down an hour or two ; but the inner gloom of our rooms, calling for the dim aid of that flickering candle, had little counterpart outside. There was still abroad a pleasant glow of lingering twilight ; and where, by reason of the density of the foliage, this waning brightness came with less effect, the scene was otherwise enlivened by the oil lamps swung across the street and the more stationary lamps placed inside the garden rail. By these, I could faintly see the soft glimmer of a fountain's play, and it seemed as though the sight of it brought nearer to my ears the gentle lull of the falling water. Around the rim of the fountain strolled little family groups, parents and children in pleasant companionship,—not gazing at the silver spray, it might be, and seemingly

oblivious and unregardful of its beauty; but none the less, I did not doubt, feeling its influence in their hearts and finding their thoughts gently attuned in harmony to the whisperings of its tinkling fall. In the recesses of the deeper shades, lovers wound their way, following the more secluded paths and only now and then coming into view, as they crossed some broader avenue of the park. There was peaceful repose in every direction. The very sentry at the gate leaned against the nearest post with folded arms as though seeking rest; and the venders of fruit and wine, crying their wares as was their duty to themselves, did so with diminished and drawling note, as though wearied of their task and dreading to be overheard. The whole scene was one of soft and gentle and picturesque character; so that even the prevalence amidst it of the then fancied style of costume, in which there was affectation of Greek and Roman imitation, while loud-mouthed patriots had devised their own peculiar dress more especially to mark them, detracted nothing from the romance and interest of the prospect, but rather imparted an additional charm, as though it were all a pleasant piece of masquerading.

All this, Flonsette and myself looked down upon from our little window under the roof. At first, with something of tremor, indeed, fearing to be detected. For the spirit of dread from our hasty flight still

weighed upon us, since we could not yet tell whether we had not been tracked, and might not at any moment be arrested. But with all this, came the reasoning of good sense as well; and we soon convinced ourselves, that whatever might be our real danger, it could in no way be increased in our present position. No person looking up from the street to our own height would be likely to notice the protrusion of our small heads, or, noticing them, would regard them as other than carved corbels or other ornaments to the roof. Certainly our features could not be identified by any passer by. Therefore, little by little we projected our straining gaze across the street, and drank in the pleasing scene with keen enjoyment, at last forgetting, for a time, even our real danger from search by tracking spies.

And as I gazed, there came across me a strange wonder that in unhappy Paris there should be anywhere a scene of so much apparent quietude and peace. At Versailles, and sometimes in the seclusion of my own chateau, I had been wont to bewail the fallen fortunes and character of the loved city of my birth—sorrowing over it as given up to hopeless anarchy and crime. Oh Lutetia! fair crown of France—often in the past foremost in deeds of blood, yet never, seemingly so much as now—time after time, indeed, emerging from the frenzy of your terror, and once more gladdening the world with your festive smile, but never likely thus to emerge again—withering beneath the wrath of

heaven for having cut off the Lord's anointed—at any moment, perhaps, destined to feel the avenging thunderbolts of God, and so be swept away from the earth, becoming almost a nameless heap of ruin—could it be that anything except misery and lamentation might anywhere be found within you? Not yet had I learned what even history has since so often failed to teach, that a few hundred men, earnest to do good, or driven by some spirit of sanguinary frenzy, it hardly matters which, can turn a whole nation into a new and untried course, and seem to all the world to create one universal flame of discord; and that all the while, beside the platform of rage and fury on which those fiery spirits may work, the millions of other people may be passing calmly along in their course of gentleness, sobriety, and peace,—cultivating, as before, the social virtues and all kindly influences, and awaiting the subsidence of the tempest that they may show how little its whirling career has affected them. Therefore, it was now a surprise and perplexity to me to look down upon this scene of rest and peace in the soft shadows of the garden, and to think that it could ever exist at all. Ought I not rather to see fire and fury and drawn swords—men seeking each other's lives, and even women fleeing from the wanton spirit of destruction that could know no difference of sex? Or had the lately told tales of blood all been mere unreal portions of some ghostly phantasmagoria already passing away



into forgetfulness and void? Where, indeed, around me, were there any evidences of the nation's so-called turmoil and unrest?

Nowhere for the moment, indeed. The peaceful scene for a while longer kept itself unrolled before me for my wrapped contemplation. Gradually, as the darkness deepened, the little family groups drew yet closer together, and, with a lingering look or so, departed to their own homes. So, too, the lovers, in their forgetfulness remaining somewhat longer, also strolling at last a little further on, did not return. Still that same quietude, however, and still did the fountain drop its silvery stream into the shallow basin beneath, with pleasant tinkle, now in the greater stillness rising more freely to my hearing, and promising thus to sooth my night-long dreams with its undisturbing lull.

Until, of a sudden, the sound of the soft flow was deadened with the crash of drum and the hoarse shout of rough men; and, from around the corner, appeared a concourse of many hundreds of fierce, yelling patriots of the day. A few of them seemed well dressed, and probably were the demagogues of higher degree that led the rest. Of those others, a goodly proportion wore almost grotesque travesty of the patriot costume. Many were ragged to utmost extreme of poverty. Yet almost all wore the red cap of revolution inclined jauntily upon the side of the head, or else

drawn tightly over the brows and close to the eyes, as though it were a principle which should not be removed without loss of the head itself. Many of these men carried pikes, and banners also with strange devices ; and those who were not thus equipped seemed disposed to take recompense for it with loud yells and brandishing of the arms. All this I could see with the aid of the torches and flaming flambeaux which were distributed at equal distances along the close, disordered procession ; and by the lurid light of which the begrimed, unshaven faces below, with their adornment of tangled, unkempt locks, bore something of the impress of fiends newly risen from some tartarian pit. The whole concourse were vehemently yelling rather than singing the words of some violent Jacobin song, to which three or four drums at the head were beaten in rude untrained symphony. At the head of all, a patriot was being borne aloft in the arms of two stout men, who did not seem to feel the weight upon them, but rather to glory in it, as a soldier will joyfully bear through sand and heat the banner entrusted to him ; for, with the same enthusiasm as the rest, they joined in the harsh acclaim of song, and even at times waved one arm in the air, supporting their burden, for the instant, with only the other.

It was a Jacobin club bearing their favorite orator back from their place of meeting. I had supposed that they would soon pass on ; but, to my dismay, the

whole concourse arrested itself directly below my window, and the orator being released from the shoulders of the two men, was lifted instead upon a projection at the side of the doorway. It was evident that here he lived—in this very house in which we had taken our refuge—though perhaps in some distant quarter of it—and that the club were awaiting one more address, for he faced towards them, and sundry of the torch-bearers gathered near, so as to throw a strong light upon him, and the song and the drums at once ceased their discord. Dangerous as it might seem to me, and easily as I might be recognized by the light of the flambeaux which, in its collected power, was thrown in broad glow far up to the eaves of the building, I could not restrain my excited curiosity, and now leaned far over to watch the scene, and more particularly to scrutinize the orator. He was young to have gained such influence over these men—in years was apparently not much over twenty. His face was thin and sallow, and in his wild enthusiastic excitement his black eyes blazed like coals. Unlike the rest, his dress was perfect in fit and adaptation to the peculiar fashion of the day and scrupulously neat, as I have heard is often the case with those who have most influence with the classes of the vile and outcast. What he said I could not well hear, except a fragment of a sentence here and there; for at his first word the crowd would seem to anticipate his meaning, and drown the rest in cheers. Nor

did he speak long, having doubtless given his sentiments all necessary flow at the more formal gathering of the club, and now designing merely a parting word or two. But however short his speech, it was delivered with impassioned tone and gesture which went directly to the hearts of all his listeners ; so that, when finally he turned into the house and disappeared, it was many minutes before the loud cheers were stilled.

At length, however, there came again comparative silence. Then a loud voice gave command to fall in—the crowd made some pretence of re-arrangement in ranks and broke once more into revolutionary song—the flambeaux were distributed as before along the motley line—the drums at the head again beat their discordant symphony—the whole concourse moved off at a quick pace—fainter and fainter grew the tumult as they turned the next corner and still continued onward—and at last there was once more quiet. It had all passed in a few moments, like some shifting terror of an otherwise peaceful dream. Could it really have been a dream ? For now I could not hear even the echo of the Jacobin club ; but, in the garden below, the little fountain was singing its pleasant song with never-ceasing musical ripple, as though it had never been disturbed.



#### CHAPTER IV.

**H**OWEVER threateningly ruin and bloodshed might hover over unhappy Paris, there must still have been bright angels left to keep their pitying guard upon the faithful and true. For, during the live-long night, some kindly spirits floated above me, and with the gentle motion of their wings, wafted pleasant pictures into my soul. I had retired to my little cot with a terrible burden of uneasy thoughts, and not knowing whether, in my condition of apprehension and dismay, I could sleep at all; and lo! my eyelids almost at once softly closed with the gentle repose of an infant, and until the morning, sweet and refreshing dreams floated down to me, with soothing balm to my troubled heart. Dreams that I could not remember when I awoke, since they bore no recognizable form, but manifested themselves merely in some vapory indistinct guise of swiftly passing waves of brightness; but which, all the same, cheered my slumber, and gave to my whole train of mind a continuing peace.

For not only did they thus favor me during sleep, but they left their soothing impress upon my waking thoughts. And when at last I opened my eyes to the new day, and, after a moment of doubt, gained recognition of those objects around me that only the night before had filled me with such distaste, it was no longer with any of my former dread or dislike. The unshapely walls, the crumbling plaster, the festooning cobwebs,—all these had become merely the picturesque concomitants of a drama that I was about to play, the necessary surroundings to my chosen part; so favorably now, did the glow of the bright sunlight tinging the scene, give perpetuity to the cheery influences of my dreams.

“For, after all, Flonsette,” I cried, pursuing thus aloud the inner current of my thoughts, “this cannot last for very long. It is a part we are playing in some great dramatic scene. Let it be considered that we are of the actors, and, for our own pleasure, have taken our characters and will wear our disguises. It is no hard part, indeed, thus to sit and watch the action of the other players; and when we have our own again, it will be with a triumph over those faint-hearted ones who so early have left the theatre and thereby have missed the whole grand drama.”

Flonsette had already arisen, and was sitting motionless beside my bed. Now she smoothed down my pillow, and, for a moment, still kept silence. I could

see that she was in troubled thought, as though the lightness of my own assuring tone somewhat distressed her. For about Flonsette, there was this, that beneath all her natural gayety of heart, there ran a certain element of keen, far-seeing judgment which held her mind in equilibrium and gave purpose and efficiency to all her actions. Now I could see that she doubted whether we might not be obliged to play our parts for very many years to come; so that at last, I would become not only wearied with the action, but all the more depressed and broken-hearted from contrast with my present feverish elation.

“Yet let that be as it may,” at last she said, like myself continuing aloud her inner train of reasoning, “there is now much to do. Will you suffer me, mademoiselle, to go out for a little while, in order the better to prepare ourselves for this our life of disguise?”

I nodded assent; and Flonsette, taking two or three of our gold-pieces,—a supply of which with my jewels had formed part of our accessories of flight and now would serve for long support,—left the room. In much less time than I could have expected, she returned, bringing with her some food for the day. Then again she departed; and before night-fall, the results of her forethought and industry were spread around us. Newer and more pleasant furniture for the rooms; though, with necessary precaution, of sim-

ple character and not out of keeping with the supposed fortunes of two lowly working-girls, provision for a few days to come, together with a little stove and a few bundles of fuel. Clothing, too, of somewhat tasteful description, yet of cheap fabric suitable to our assumed condition of life. And lastly, Flonsette appeared with a roll of uncolored maps and a small paint-box and roll of brushes.

“For if we are working-girls,” she said, “it will be proper that we should be able to show some evidence of daily toil. These maps and paints can lay spread out upon the table ; and should any one ever chance to knock at our door, we can seem to be earning our livelihood by putting in the colors.—And, mademoiselle,” she added, “I—I have been straying towards the chateau.”

“To the chateau ?” I cried,—and for the moment there rose up in me a strong longing myself to wander forth and see once more my own home from which, for so long, I had now been parted. “Ah, Flonsette, it was a dangerous thing for you to do,” I added remonstratingly, yet none the less at heart rejoiced to think that I might obtain tidings of the place. “And what there did you see? They have not burnt it, as they have burnt others like it?”

“Nothing as yet is injured, mademoiselle. Heaven so far has been very good to you. There was at one time a mob before it, after we had fled—so those tell



me of whom I have sought information, and it is not easy now to make inquiry and avoid suspicion,—but the soldiers of this new government coming up, rescued the place from harm. Hardly even a glass is broken; but—”

“But what, Flonsette?”

“They tell me, mademoiselle, that the chateau is no longer yours. That it is now claimed and protected as the property of the nation. When I walked stealthily around, there stood a soldier guarding the door. And he, seeing my face, dared to wink at me, mademoiselle! He, a common soldier, to wink at me, who have been treated with respectful love by a sergeant of the royal body-guard!”

“All that care of the chateau is for my benefit, of course,” I said. “If this unauthorized government has until now guarded my property from mischief, it has at least done one good thing for which I shall feel thankful to it. All will come back to me before very many months,—as soon as King Louis the Seventeenth comes to his own and punishes his enemies.”

Again the passing expression of troubled thought upon Flonsette’s face, as though, with some far-seeing gift of prophecy, she beheld before her mind a longer vista of trouble than I had anticipated. But she said nothing now. And turning to other matters, we prepared to perfect the arrangements of our new life. About which, indeed, little need here be said, the most

of it being mere record of domestic detail. How we arranged our table with half colored maps spread out upon it and color-brushes lying loosely around, so that at any disturbance we could seat ourselves, and, in a moment, appear deeply engaged in earning our livelihood,—how, by long practice, we attained a happy medium in dress, so that taste should not too greatly conflict with supposed poverty,—how we blundered over our amateur cookery, half starving at first, by reason of our failures, and how we laughed at and enjoyed our repeated mistakes,—all these things need not here be narrated, since they can so readily be imagined and realized. It is only the actual events of the day and the passing phases of our minds bearing upon them, that need now, in any way, be here detailed.

It is sufficient, then, to say, that the days and weeks flew on smoothly, and, for awhile, without noteworthy incident. For a time, indeed, in spite of growing cheerfulness, there was a vague sense of apprehension upon my mind, from the ever-constant dread that our flight might have been traced. Had this occurred and our refuge-place become known, even upon the very evening of our gaining it,—I reasoned—it was by no means a certain thing that our arrest should have immediately happened. There might be complaints to be laid in certain quarters not at once to be reached, and diverse formalities of justice to be observed and numbers of obstacles to be overcome

before arrest, but not the less certain to be surmounted in the end. I had, indeed, some comprehension of the summary manner in which the behests of the ruling powers were now administered; but still, it seemed to be not impossible that certain cases might be attended with delays. Yet, as time passed on, and nothing happened, gradually I became reassured. No stranger came to our door. No step ever passed it, even; for, as has been said, it was not only at the highest flight of all, but also at the passage-end, and with no room beyond. It was not even necessary, by reason of any disturbance, ever to fly to our table and assume our pretended labor for livelihood. And at last I dismissed nearly every apprehension, concluding that any search for us had been misled and that we were supposed to have safely reached the frontier.

Therefore, there gradually fell upon me a tranquil confidence and peace. I learned, in some new spirit of habit and acquaintanceship, to love even the little rooms that were our only home, finding in them familiar lights and shadows which it seemed as though I would have elsewhere missed, and investing their different mural drawings and inscriptions, with their separate legends, all tending to give romance to the place, and, by some inner sympathy, to my own life as well. For nothing was more true than that there should have been wild legends connected with the *Maison des Capucins*, and that, if these did not exist, it was in

proper consonance with my mind to invent them. For it was a very old building and must certainly have had its history. Erected many centuries ago—there was no one to tell how many—I could see that originally it had been a fortified palace of some feudal lord; who here, surrounded by retainers and as well protected in the centre of old Paris as though in high castle upon the Rhone, must have made alternate league and war with other feudal lords, and held at times high festival and oppressed the poor, as all then seemed to do, and so had lived the godless life of the age until called at last to his account. Then must the Church have stepped in and claimed the place, perhaps in forced retribution for misdeeds and cruelties; and, for a few centuries thence, the clang of armor and the oath of the musquetier must have been banished, and the halls have remained in ghostly silence, except for the low droning of squalid monks at their monotonous prayers. And then again had come the change that spoke of church confiscation and spoliation, until both church and state were swept aside, and the building sank into the unromantic tenantry of a civic lodging. All this I could decipher, not merely in the heavy cumbrous architecture of the place, speaking open mouthed about the past, but also in the slight and almost unnoticeable relics that had been left behind, of different occupation. There was the little closet which inwardly marked the outline of corner

tower upon the roof, and in which there yet remained old iron spikes upon which armor must once have hung. There was the half-obliterated inscription, of pious purport and in mediæval Latin, carved upon the rotting fireplace; left there by fervid monk, and now turned into wanton sense by the irreverent pencil of some subsequent student. It seemed at times as though, closing my eyes, I could hear, still echoing through the place, the shout of brawling baron and the hymn of acolyte. And there was one day when the thought came upon me that there might have been days when my ancestor, the Count de Sainte-Maure, had here enjoyed high festival with the tyrannous lords of his own time. Strange as it may appear, the thought inspired me with comfort, for it seemed to suggest that it was not the first time my race had there been present; and thenceforth, more than ever, there came to me a feeling of home and half acquaintance with the scene.

This familiar feeling, as time passed on, seemed rather to deepen, and with it ensued new phases of the mind. Little by little I began to find enjoyment in my freedom from the constraints of the life-long etiquette to which I had been subjected, and to realize a pleasure even in the sparing simplicity of my dress. Then gradually, as one phase led to another, it seemed to me that I began, not exactly to forget who and what I was—since I could never, of course, help some-

times looking back to my past or forward to the possibilities of my future—but to lose a portion of any prevailing consciousness of my hereditary position ; so that, at times, I would sit in dreamy mood and become almost oblivious to the fact that there could ever be any other kind of life for me than of the present. And it must be confessed that, for a time, there was much in the peace and serenity about me to encourage this state of mind ; for, upon the whole, in my increasing freedom from apprehension and from the tyranny of artificial restraints, I was not unhappy. It was pleasant to sit and dream over the books which Flonsette from time to time brought in for me, and to gaze down upon the area of the little public garden beneath. And this latter pursuit, after a little while, became one of my ruling and most engrossing occupations of the day. There was keen enjoyment in sitting aloft in my eyrie and looking upon the quiet eddy of the population below. I began to learn by heart the position of every tree—to love the flow of the fountain, so often did it pour forth its tinkle when no one was near, seeming thus to sing its little song for my ears alone—to know the faces of the people who came there each day for their quiet stroll, and so often, by force of habit, occupied the same seats, or leaned reflectively against the same railing. I learned to love the white-haired old man who always, at a fixed hour, came to sit at the end of a particular bench, and never

failed to bring a piece of cake for the parrot upon a certain nurse-maid's wrist. I hated the vulgar-looking shopkeeper who one day usurped the old man's seat, so that he coming, turned away sorrowfully, declining to sit elsewhere, and left the garden ; and I watched with eager anxiety to see whether the old gentleman would return the next day, feeling vastly comforted in my soul when he did so, and found his seat again unoccupied. I loved to watch, in their stroll, one especial pair of lovers, who always at the same hour turned into one of the alleys, and after a long while emerged from another ; and I formed a pretty romance about their future, until one day I saw that the young girl was accompanied by a new lover, and that the old one stood afar off, jealously looking on, and I knew that there had been a breach. To like effect, I followed most of the steady frequenters of the place, and learned their hours and their habits, and made romances about many of them, even of the stooping vendor of lime-water, who always stood at the gate and seemed to sell nothing, but amused himself by counting and recounting a few sous, which, perhaps, were ever the same. The soldier at the other side of the gate, too, I much observed, being pleased to see what a fine-looking, erect, and manly fellow he was, and how kindly he gazed at the nursemaids and children, and with what a magnificent air he saluted detachments of his comrades who now and then passed along the

street in front, on their way to their barracks, or to some neighboring drill-ground. All things seemed redolent of peace and quiet—even those few soldiers appearing to go through their duties as a mechanical exercise that never need lead to any result; so that it could scarcely be wondered, indeed, if at times my own soul should lose active consciousness of whatever had tried it, and thereby, little by little, should begin to sink into a false security. And though at other times, there would cross my mind some well-defined suspicion that this show of serenity and peace was only one side of a medal, the reverse of which must all the time be telling its story of atrocities and bloodshed, I strove to shut out the thought of what, after all, might be mere empty imaginings. Much that was cruel had already been done—that I too surely knew. But was I for this to believe that the harsh story of iniquities would forever be continued? Therefore, as rigorously as possible I looked only upon the pleasant picture now spread out before me, striving to teach my soul the forgetful philosophy of a child who, gazing upon the pastoral delights depicted within the theatre's proscenium, never thinks to wonder whether the next shifting scene may not bring death struggles or a tempest's rage. While Flonsette, who, in her daily errands below, must surely have heard from time to time much to which it would have grieved me to listen, forbore to make recital of it, and thus, in instinctive



answer to my unexpressed desire, did what she could to leave my soul in peace; causing me at intervals even to believe that the popular troubles, if not entirely stilled, at least were slowly subsiding, and might soon pass away forever.

Thus, therefore, for a while, my life glided along in quiet, uneventful course, nor during a month did it suffer any interruption from the outer world, unless by such a term might be designated the arrival one morning of a letter from my cousin the Baron. It had been written over the frontier, and told me, of course, of his escape from all peril by seizure or attack. By what subtle contrivance he had managed to forward the missive to Paris I could not tell, nor would it have been good to know. It was sufficient that it reached me under cover to Hyppolite, the concierge of the house, to whose kind trust the Baron had commended us, and who now delivered to me the letter. And it was written in guarded, half-hidden style, mentioning no names, not even my own, in its outer address, being simply marked upon the back with a numeral, which, by some previous understanding, told Hyppolite all that it was necessary for him to know. For the safety of the writer, I was very thankful. That the army of deliverance had not yet advanced, I received with resignation, having become accustomed to possess my soul in patience, and finding such patience always strengthened with the assurance that, in the

end, all would turn out for good. But there was much in the tone of the letter that displeased me, so coldly and ceremoniously was it written—so little did it hint at any emotion of the writer other than polished regard. I knew, indeed, that all this was not meant for coldness. It was merely that olden spirit of ceremonious etiquette which, even between those who might be fully betrothed, prescribed an affectation of only courtly respect, in written as in spoken language, before their actual union. And to the propriety of all this, two months ago, I would have blindly assented. But of late, unconsciously to myself, a change had been wrought within me. Withdrawal from form and etiquette had given more spontaneous action to the natural impulses of my soul, and I had begun to realize that life need not entirely be a scene of fetters and restraint—that the heart, dangerous as it might become if left to its own desires, might now and then be allowed to glow with a transient gleam of liberty—that even my heart, indeed, under proper impulse, might lawfully assert itself and claim its own share in the affections of the world, deadened and inert as I had supposed that heart naturally to be. In fine, I had too often looked down from my window upon the loves of others, as they strolled slowly along through the alleys of the little garden, not to feel that there must be both pleasure and reason in that intimate drawing together of two souls, oblivious of all the world besides, wrapped

up in mutual dreams of a happy future, feeling it no harm to pour out their thoughts freely to each other, and courageously ready to face the world and all its ills with a care for no other protection than that double shield of love. Why was it necessary that mere outward form should take away from us who were born in a higher state, the pleasure of such intimate relations of heart, thereby cruelly enveloping in restraining bonds of seals and settlements, and courtly habits, those true natures which we held no different, indeed, from others? Must only the lower orders be allowed to look for real interchange of soul? Strephon and Chloë might excite our smiles with their crude absurdities of passion; but for all that, was there nothing in which we could emulate them? We could, indeed, wrest from them all their unreal traditions of beauty and romance of life. We could not be content unless painted with their rustic pipes and shepherd crooks. We could gently, at times, play at pastoral life among ourselves. Why should we thus seize upon their outward traditional show, and laugh at or despise the unsophisticated love to which that condition leads?

Thus I could not help reflecting as I sat motionless with my cousin's letter spread out upon my lap. I remembered, too, the farewell kiss he had placed upon my forehead. At the moment I had felt affright and even shame;—now, on the contrary, I was rather inclined to look back upon the act as one of those natu-

ral impulses of the heart which call for commendation. I knew that I should not foolishly expect any sudden, overwhelming gush of passion, filling the soul to the exclusion of sense, leading to wild raptures, and to making the groves echo with lover-like complaints, as in poetry poor Strephon calls for Chloë to ease the torments of his heart. But why, after one impulse of affection, should there be renewed retirement into courtly distance, as though that single impulse had been a crime? Surely, if now below my window two lovers of middle life could walk and whisper their soft words to each other, and think it all no harm, my own betrothed, from the far-off frontier, need not so greatly fear to write those few words of affection which others could so freely speak.

Realizing at last, in my new longing after loving words, that my own heart was not entirely cold and lifeless, I now began to feel how surely such tender tones might awaken it into power. Why, then, did the Baron never speak them? In my mind there was, at present, no disloyalty to our silent compact. I was prepared, as ever, to submit to it, for I knew that he was brave and kind, and that our lives would surely flow on smoothly together. But for all that, I could not help reflecting that while for his bravery and kindness I could always respect, admire, and trust him, there were needed gentle words of true affection to make me really love him.



## CHAPTER V.

**B**UT since those words of true affection failed to come, it seemed to me that this love was not to be; and I felt saddened at the thought, that, by reason of our now diverse careers, my cousin Gervais and myself, in every idea and purpose of our lives, were gradually drifting further and further apart. He, at the mock Court of Coblenz, was ever guarding still more carefully his scorn and detestation of the people; I, in my quiet contemplation of their pleasures and pursuits, was drawing constantly nearer to an active participation with them. Thus gradually turning myself from my olden habit of coldness and formality, and failing in my secretly hoped-for expression of Gervais' love, my heart was fain to search abroad for other sympathy, in friendship or affection, —whichever first might choose to enter and give to it the new life it sought. And when a heart thus stands openly awaiting guests, not seldom does it gain them.

It was friendship that earliest approached me;—but a friendship for one whom soon I dearly loved.

She was old and lived a solitary life, in a little room not far from mine and upon the same passage way ; a room in the earrof the Maison des Capucins, and hence had prospect only of the tangled roofs and gables that I had once thought to see from mine. And yet, near as she was to me, I might never have seen her or even known of her existence, had it not been for the indirect guiding of one prompting of my soul.

This was the need I now constantly felt of my confessional ;—a need the more openly asserting itself, since almost all my apprehension respecting personal safety had become allayed. During many years, I had faithfully confessed, having all that time engaged the ministrations of the good Abbè Fontelle. He was connected with the Church of Saint Roche, and noted not only for the ability and persuasiveness of his oratory, but also for the gentleness and sweetness of his manner, whereby he was even more sought for in the confessional than in the pulpit. How he found time to discharge the weight of sins that were laid before him was to me a mystery ; since at the church there was always a throng of suppliants awaiting him, and outside his humble lodgings, upon certain days, were scores of carriages belonging to penitents of high degree, seeking him in that more accessible privacy. To me he was wont to present himself with weekly regularity at Versailles or at my chateau, my rank in

the Court forbidding that I should be obliged to seek for him; and the questions that he put to me were ever so gently framed and his appreciation of my difficulties of utterance so acute, that it always seemed as though his own power of instinct sufficed for reading my whole thoughts, without the labor or mortification of explicit confession. Even in La Vendée I had occasionally met him during exile, and there obtained from him my absolution. But now, at last I had altogether lost him; and whether he had been arrested and thrown into prison,—or had fallen victim to the rage of the mob,—or had considered it his duty to follow the fortunes of some noble of high rank and thus had early escaped to the frontier, I could not tell. Nor, to my knowledge, had he left anyone in his place with authority to care for such of his penitents as might chance to be left behind. Indeed, there were now few if any of God's priests remaining in Paris; and any who might be left, were hidden in such safe privacy, that I could not go to them nor could I hope that they would dare to come to me, even had they known ever so certainly my sad neglect of soul. And though as I was now situated I might accumulate few failings,—being in a measure, incapacitated from encouraging pride or arrogance or any of those kindred faults for which in times past I had most often done penance,—yet I felt most keenly the deprivation from my confessional, missing sadly the

pleasant glow of satisfaction with which I had once been wont to arise from my knees with all my sins forgiven. Neither could I now do the next most available thing and kneel in prayer at any of the church-altars ; since, as is well known, the churches were then closed, and it was even matter of grave suspicion to be seen near any of them in lingering attitude.

But in this difficulty it happened that Flonsette one day told me how that, from a window at the other end of the floor upon which we lived, the towers of Notre Dame plainly could be seen ; and I eagerly embraced the opportunity, whereby I might in part at least, encourage some cultivation of devotional feeling. For even the most distant view of a church, it seemed to me, would be of advantage to my soul ; since, in my fancy, I could pierce through the rugged walls and gaze upon the altar that I knew to be there sheltered. And so it turned out ; for when I left my room and crept along the vacant hall, which few footsteps other than our own now ever disturbed, and looking out from the rear, beheld the twin towers with half the walls, rising beautiful and majestic from amidst the surrounding lower and confusing cluster of roofs, my heart gave a bound of joy, and I felt that already I was brought near again to Heaven. What though the tabernacle itself was closed by armed force and illegal statute, so that the priest no longer stood at the



resignation, that more surely than by mere indifference, not only had the chisel of time been blunted in her behalf, but, from the inner workings of her soul, there had been imparted that uncomprehended sweetness of expression which advancing years, however fraught at last with pain and infirmities, could never take away. Moreover and beyond all this, to me her very attitude as she there stood and bent her eyes reflectively upon the floor, had in it something of abounding grace and dignity ; a tone, as it were, that could not even be learned or acquired in any poor school of culture, and that therefore, to my mind, gave proof for her, of something better in the associations of the past than what she now retained.

All this I gained in that one glimpse as I passed her door ; and for many hours I held my mind fixed upon her, desiring to know her better, yet not seeing how I might best intrude. But in a few days after, by some new oversight, her door was again ajar, and now I noticed that she was standing at the window. Nay, more, I saw that her rosary was in her hand, and, by the movement of her lips, that she, also, was in the act of offering her prayers in the direction of the shrine of Notre Dame. How now could I hope to resist ? Therefore, waiting a single moment until her prayer was finished, I gently pushed the door before me and entered. Naturally she started, and fixing her eyes upon me, silently awaited my pleasure. In

response, I framed some trivial excuse of the moment, —a needle that I would like to borrow, having lost my own and not having time or inclination to descend to the street for purchase of another. With courteous, yet still impassive mien, she supplied me with all I professed to need; and then, still standing, seemed to invite my departure.

I did not feel in the least aggrieved at this. I was not so foolish as to forget that the times demanded caution, and that she would be an indiscreet person who could admit another to her confidence or even to her acquaintance, without due previous consideration and foreknowledge. Had this person now before me conducted herself otherwise than as she did, it is probable that I would have blamed her in my heart for being naturally reckless, and thereby, of course, unworthy of my own confidence. And yet, I was disappointed at this baffling of my ardent sympathy for her, and was turning somewhat sadly away, when I noticed that she had dropped her handkerchief upon the floor beside me. A corner of it happened to be projected upward, and upon it I saw the fine working of a coat of arms.

“Do I not know that crest?” I remarked, lifting the handkerchief and offering it to her. “The Valery crest, is it not? I have seen it emblazoned upon their gateway, as well as often upon their seals.”

“Ah, it may be,” my companion seemed rather to

gasp forth than to say, hurriedly and with nervous action repossessing herself of the handkerchief, as though she might thereby tear the revelation of it from my mind. "It may be—it is very little that I know about these things. The gift of an old friend—this token. It is a crest, didst thou say, citoyenne?" she continued, breaking forth, for better disguise, into the affected utterances of the period. "It may be, then, that she who gave it to me had known the person who once bore it. It can surely to me be nothing."

Still was I not hurt at her evident avoidance of me, and her transparent attempt to divert the current of my conclusions. And yet I was displeased with myself that thus uninvited I had come into her presence, and by my uncalled for suggestion had so cruelly filled her with suspicion and dread. It was right that she should dissemble and strive to conceal those things which, being seen, might much endanger her; it was not right, it seemed, for me thus to disturb her with dismay and doubt. As I gazed stealthily at her pale and frightened face, struggling to throw off its tell-tale confusion and regain its natural composure, I felt that I ought to neglect nothing that might restore her to confidence and peace.

"Why do you thus distrust me?" I therefore said. "Do you think that I, a poor lonely thing myself, would wish to do anything which might injure you? And how, indeed, could I reveal anything to your

harm, without also injuring myself? For you are not alone in wishing concealment, dear madame. I have, at least, an equal interest in seclusion. I—I am Gabrielle, Marquise de Sainte-Maure.”

Even as I spoke I felt that I was imprudent in thus revealing myself, and yielding merely to an impulse of generous passion, without any actual knowledge of the person whom I addressed, and that I might yet wish to recall my unsolicited confession. And yet, no sooner had I completed the mention of my name, than I became at once reassured by the first instant glance into her face; for the momentary trouble and distrust seemed to break away from it like to the dissipation of a passing mist—a bright, happy expression of delighted surprise at once appeared—and almost with a sob of joy she sprang forward and took my hand in both her own.

“Yes, I know you now,” she said. “I have seen your picture once—and again I have noticed you walking in the garden of the Luxemburg beside our queen. You did not see me or know me, then. How, indeed, could you? For I am very poor, and always have been so; nor could I ever venture to Court, except to look on at a distance, and, from among the common people, watch the movements of my class. For it is my own class, is it not? Yes, that is my own crest—that of the De Valery family. Myself the great-granddaughter of the Duke Ademar de Valery—but through one

of the younger and poorer branches, so that since girlhood I have been separated from the others of my kin, knowing few of those to whom I am related, and have been in humble poverty all my life. You, dear mademoiselle, restrained from liberty in this terrible Paris, need take up only the semblance of labor ; but I, as you see, must really work for my livelihood, as I have most always done. But you will not think the worse of me for that, I trust? It is fine embroidery that I do ; and you must know that, at heart and in idea, I have always been faithful to my class."

She had re-seated herself while speaking, and seemed to gaze up imploringly at me, as though doubting what my treatment of her might be. In her words there was a winning grace, mingled with an evident longing for outer sympathy—the longing of a long-wearied and much disappointed soul. For answer, I stole behind her chair, and bending over, kissed her softly upon the forehead.

"You will not, then, send me away," I said. "You will let me be your friend, and, in return, you will be mine ; shall it not be so?"

"Do I hear aright, mademoiselle? For now it is so many years that I have not had a friend. I have lived so very secluded, you must know ; not caring to mingle among those who were not of myself, nor wishing to intrude among my own kin, with whom my poverty might make me an unwelcome guest. Ah !

how little do we ever know what good or ill fortune time will bring us! Could I think, indeed, that this revolution could ever greet me with a blessing? And yet I now see that it has brought me yourself, dear mademoiselle. For that, at least, I will give it thanks."

"Might I not otherwise have been your friend?" I said. "Was all that crime and bloodshed needed for so little?"

"It was needed, surely, that we might meet," she said. "That, at least, I know. For our paths in life are very different—you so young and rich and beautiful—I so poor and unknown. But for this we should not have met, or, if we had, you would not have known me. I blame you not for that, indeed. How could you have known me or regarded me, except for this terrible revolt which, in each class, destroys long recognized distinctions, and draws together in equal, mutual accord, those who may happen to have been born upon the same side of a single dividing line of blood and outrage? Three years ago, mademoiselle, we could not even have met. Now, having come together, we can forget the differences of our ages and estate, and remember only that we have a common interest in the preservation of our order from the excesses of the canaille. And it is by this, more than from anything else, that we can here be friends."

"Always the best of friends, I hope," was my re-

ply; and again I kissed her upon the forehead, for I was more than ever touched with the mournfulness of her words and the insight into her history which they revealed. Yes, I saw it all—the early dependence upon the unwilling charity of distant and not loving relatives of high degree—the youthful glimpses of rank and power as embodied and displayed in the state and grandeur of a family chateau—the stern, unyielding resolution of a proud heart not to remain a poor pensioner upon unwilling bounty, but to separate herself from all such ties and work out her own livelihood in ignoble seclusion—the memory and ever consciousness of those ties of state and power thenceforth controlling her life and preventing her from allowing herself to subside away from that sphere in which she would not be missed, into another and lower grade of life which by cultivation, she might make very happy to herself—the consequent loneliness and isolation of her life—all this I could read with as much distinctness of perception as though it were spread out before me on a printed page. Nay more, I could decipher the secret thought, nourished from much pondering upon it, that in thus maintaining as far as possible her adherence to the ideas and principles of her order, she was fulfilling almost a new religion in her life, doing thereby a thing for which her kin, so little regardful of her, must surely at heart feel grateful. This morbid continuance in one idea might, in other circumstances, have made

me smile, but not at that moment, when invested with such almost tragic quality. For I saw that, however mistaken she might be, there was the true spirit of martyrdom in thus clinging to her order at great peril of her life, and when, by simple denial of her name, she might escape all danger, so far removed was she from the knowledge of her peers among the hated aristocrats—that there was true nobility and loyalty in thus coming forward to share the perils of her class, though she might not be able to aid it, and though all the while her devotion would not be known to any member of it, and would pass as little regarded as the return of a common soldier to a regiment which has lost all its officers and is on the point of being cut to pieces.

Therefore, from that moment, we became dear friends. And as true friends are apt to do, we abandoned the use of those formal names to which we were born, and adopted others which more fully seemed to express the depth of our feeling for each other. I called her 'Madre,' remembering in an old Spanish gallery a picture of the Mother of God standing at the foot of the cross, her countenance depicted, with unusual propriety, as of a suffering woman in advanced age rather than of a youthful virgin ; and the picture having somehow until then lived in my recollection, I associated the sweetness and resignation of the features portrayed in it with the same expressions upon



the face of my new friend. And she, after stumbling awhile with the coldness of Mademoiselle and the inflexibility of Gabrielle, settled down at last into the more endearing appellation of "my child;" and to her I remained "my child" until the end.

And thenceforth daily I was with her in her room. As may be conjectured, our conversation was mainly about the past. To her, with her intense idea of loyalty and her few opportunities to have ever gratified it with any direct knowledge of the Court, I seemed to have come as a spirit of brightness, bringing a new atmosphere of intelligence. I could tell her about the palace and the courtiers, and the ways and sayings of the foreign ambassadors and the festivities given by them, as well as if they had happened only yesterday. And more than that, I could describe the daily lives of the king and queen, and repeat their utterances, many of which may have been very pointless; but all of which to my simple-hearted listener, seemed almost like the inspirations of an oracle, coming as they did, to her heart so loyal and so long starving for the want of royal tokens. To her, I was almost as the king and queen themselves, so near had I been to them for many years, so lately had I been driven from their side.

In return, she was not slow to enlighten me with her own recollections; as who would not, having any recollections to impart? These, of necessity, were more distant in their date, reaching back into the

days of the reign of Louis the Fifteenth, nor did they speak much about the Court itself. They rather told about the forbidding dark old castle of the Duke de Valery, in the seclusion of a distant province, accessible only through badly built roads, and surrounded with an utterly uncultivated and boorish peasantry. They mainly gave description of fading tapestries and mouldering furniture, inasmuch as, at the time, the Duke himself was feeling in his seclusion, the gnawings of relative poverty,—of the stinted table and the curtailed lists of retainers in shabby liveries,—of the yearly setting out for the capital in the lumbering old carriage, with four thin horses, a departure in which she never participated otherwise than by looking on,—of the one glory of the place when the Dauphin himself made a passing visit of two days, and reduced the castle's larder to yet more stringent poverty for the next six months. These were very poor recollections, indeed, it might seem to me ; and yet she would detail them with such heartfelt tremor of utterance, so feelingly, as lingering visions of a far distant grandeur which could never be duly estimated, that I always forbore disparaging criticism. And after all, poor as it was, it was the real greatness of her life ; for afterwards had come her voluntary separation and retirement from this dependence, and henceforth there had been to her a career of privation, labor and seclusion, brightened only by the natural goodness of her heart.

“At twenty, you left them?” I asked, when once she had been repeating portions of the story.

“At twenty, my child. I went away where I could learn more perfectly my business of embroidery; and my whole life since then has been a very common one.”

“No rest,—no pleasure or amusement in it at all, dear Madre?” I responded. “I can scarcely think of that, indeed. It seems so sad.”

“But when at last I became accustomed to it,—then it was not so very hard, my child.”

“Never an event,—a ripple to break its terrible monotony? Not even an emotion, perhaps, or pleasant memory?” I persisted.

For a moment Madre sat impassive, thoughtful, and silent. But at last she spoke.

“Emotions?—memories?” she said. “Yes there were those, indeed, though not for long. Who may not have them, if they will? See, my child, I will show you something, for I have kept it to myself these many years, and at times,—in the beginning of it more than now, I sometimes thought that my heart would break for the holding of the knowledge of it all by myself.”

Unlocking her little desk, she produced a square of worn and discolored paper; and unfolding it, displayed a single wavy lock of auburn hair.

“And was it very long ago?” I asked.

“Very long ago indeed, it seems to me, my child. When I was only eighteen.”

“And—and is he dead?”

“I do not know,” she softly said, and as she spoke no more, I forbore to question her any further.





## CHAPTER VI.

**A**ND now, for a while, the days flitted calmly by, my intercourse with Madre becoming every hour more and more endeared and precious. Excepting herself, I held converse with no person outside the limits of my own apartment, unless it might be Hyppolite, the concierge. He was a well favored youth of Norman extraction,—not over twenty-five years in age,—short and stout, yet rather muscular than heavy in appearance,—with fair complexion and large blue eyes, which, in their round openness, expressed good nature and fidelity rather than extreme intelligence. As corporal in the king's guard and serving under my cousin Gervais, until the dispersal of the Court, Hyppolite had acquired some habit of soldierly bearing, which seemed now rather discordant with the trivial business of watching the comings and goings in a large and well tenanted mansion ; yet for all that, he appeared to enjoy his position, and doubtless found in it much alleviation and rest from the ex-

actions of military life. In principle, he was revolutionary, of course, and wore the red cap with proud and defiant air ; swearing boldly by the republic and avowing his perfect readiness to sacrifice for it his life and all that he held most dear. And, yet in his disposition, there must have been some remaining corruption of reverence for royalty, nursed in his earlier days of guard at Court, else, as it seemed to me, he would not have maintained his attachment for my cousin's name, or so sedulously, for his sake, protected myself and Flonsette from harm. To myself, indeed, he did not fail, by action rather than by words, sometimes to hint his secret longings for the old days of Court glitter and preferment ; though to all persons else, of course, he manifested every symptom of unshaken devotion to the tenets and principles of the Revolution.

Hyppolite now began to appear often upon our floor, almost daily knocking at my door. It was not that any longer he came bringing correspondence from my cousin. This could not often happen, for it was very difficult and dangerous to get letters into France, and beyond that first intimation of Gervais' safe escape beyond the border, I received and expected nothing. But it was with the ever repeated expression of desire to be of service to us in other ways, that Hyppolite now came forward. For a while, I revelled in the idea that the attention was prompted simply by kind-

ness for myself, but before long there came occasion whereby I was undeceived. For, chancing one morning too suddenly, to turn, I noticed that Flonsette's gaze was fixed upon the poor youth with coquettish show of enforced attraction, her eyes sparkling with a bright counterfeit of admiration; and seeing how his cheek became flushed and his mien embarrassed, I read the whole story at a glance. And therefore, as soon as Hyppolite departed, I hastened to give to Flonsette severe reproof.

"For surely," I expostulated, "you do not expect to marry the poor boy. He can give you no dowry, and doubtless, when the good time arrives, you can do better than with him. Why then, so needlessly disturb his mind?"

"Dear mademoiselle," responded Flonsette, breaking into a merry laugh, "Why call it needless, when upon it may hang your safety? For why should you trust so fully in the loyalty of Hyppolite, seeing that your only claim upon him now arises from his attachment to Monsieur le Baron? Surely all that might fade away in time, and we well know that not seldom are the nobles betrayed by those who have seemed the most faithful of their retainers. But when once I have taught him to admire me—as I believe I have now done"—she added, with piquant affectation of lingering uncertainty—"his fidelity is put to all its proof. He could not dare to betray you, knowing

that we would probably fall together, and that in any case, I would never speak to or look at him again. Already even, he has been of much service to us in that he has fictitiously designated us to the domiciliary police ; whereby we are written up on the outer door posts of the building among its residents,—you as the Citoyenne Adele Carnot and I as your sister Jeannette. For you must be aware that to the police, who seem to know all things and who have their spies, we must as necessarily furnish names as have some faithful friend and admirer like Hyppolite to guarantee them.”

Yes, it was true that we must have names. I had never thought of it before ; and now I remained silent for a moment, that I might study to recollect those names which Hyppolite, doubtless with Flonsette’s assistance, had imposed upon us.

“ Therefore it is fit and proper that I should teach him to love me,” continued Flonsette, “ though, as a certainty and as you say, I could not think seriously about him. For I shall never leave you, dear mademoiselle, as long as you are in trouble ; and if at last these disorders blow away, why then, of course, the royalty will be restored and I shall marry a groom of the chambers, or the keeper of the hounds, or some one else about the Court whom I can love for his gallant air and his gay livery of green and gold. To Hyppolite, then, the daughter of a fruiterer or some other of



those free and equal people whom he professes to love so well. And it will not hurt his heart or his appetite that meanwhile he has fallen in love with me. For when indeed, did any man ever die of a broken heart?"

Carelessly and laughingly as Flonsette spoke, I knew that she was not heartless, but that it was merely her manner, making jesting play of almost any subject. And therefore, there being so much real reason in her words, I remained content to let the matter go on without further reproof, consenting to those little love passages and glances upon which it was true our safety might indirectly depend. I felt assured, moreover, that she would not roughly drive Hyppolite to despair, but, on the contrary, would constantly solace his torments with pleasant, hope-inspiring glances; and, at the time, I was not altogether certain—though afterwards I knew my error,—that she did not, at heart, secretly approve of him, and, if the old times returned, might not consent to make him happy,—provided, always, that he could first obtain some place about the court, and gladden her taste with the sight of a gay livery.

"And then again," she continued, and here I laughed pleasantly to myself as I saw how the real artless coquettish nature of the girl made exhibition of itself, "would it not be hard were there not some one in all the world to make love to me? A while ago, and there were valets and huntsmen around me in num-

bers, from whom to choose ; and now, excepting this poor Hyppolite, who indeed seems ready to worship my shadow,—there is no one at all to speak to me. When I go out into the street, I see crowds of men, and they all gaze admiringly at me, but of course I cannot think to look back at them. A poor girl like me, mademoiselle, surely needs somebody upon whom now and then to bestow a quiet glance. Must I content myself with only the old chocolate-maker in the opposite window ? That were poor sport, indeed.”

In speaking thus, she referred to an occupant of the adjoining wing. As I have already stated, an inner court made issue into the little garden before our building, and at right angles with it ; passing along the side, so that the single window of our bedroom looked out upon it. This court was so narrow, indeed, that the windows of the other wing, upon the same level with us, were distant not more than twelve or fifteen feet, and we could easily glance into one of the apartments to which they belonged. Our own privacy was protected by light curtains in our window ; but behind these we could sit in perfect obscurity, and, without detection, gaze into the other room. And this we sometimes did unhesitatingly and without indelicacy ; for while we gained much amusement from observation of our opposite neighbor, it was evident, from the freedom and the absence of care with which he threw open his premises, that it gave

him no concern whether he was looked in upon or not.

He was a little old man, short and stunted almost to the deformity of being hunchbacked. He had a bald head and great broad-rimmed spectacles like goggles. He usually sat at the window, for the benefit of the better light, and there operated with some complicated arrangement of wheels and pans, in the manufacture of chocolate. He was evidently a violent revolutionist by profession, though not altogether so in practice, since, at times, he would forget himself, and, in his conduct and language, betray relics of olden associations or education; and it was this self-betrayal which continually amused us, seeing that it occurred almost daily and seemed to follow one uniform pattern. He would appear late in the morning, tottering to his seat before the machine, with the air of one who had been in the enjoyment of a long debauch. This dissipation, however, was probably little more than that of a night spent at some revolutionary club-room, listening to his favorite orators; for he always came in with defiant free mien, a red cap of liberty upon his head, snatches of revolutionary song on his lips, and a general air of sleepiness rather than of late intoxication. So, for a few moments; and then, warming with his labor, he would forget his line of political preference, would snatch his red cap off his head and irreverently employ it in dusting his tin

pans, and insensibly to himself, would pass from his *ca ira* to a certain royalist song of plaintive air, which he had doubtless learned in his early youth, and which by association had become so dear to him, that its melodies still hung about his soul in its more sobered tone like something sacred. This was the old man to whom Flonsette now alluded, and I said :

“But he is gone away, Flonsette. Or perhaps he is ill. For it is three whole days since we have seen him.”

“Yes, mademoiselle, his window has been closed, - but now I see that it has been once more opened. Shall we go and look at him again ?”

Assenting, I retired with her into our little bedroom, and peeped out from behind the curtain. True enough, the window of the opposite room was again thrown open to the air and light ; but instead of the intricate machine for making chocolate, I saw a simple, three-cornered frame which I recognized at once as a painter's easel. In a moment more, a young man appeared and placed upon the easel a half-finished picture, turning it partially so that the light could strike diagonally across it, a position which enabled us to look upon it without difficulty. An ordinary landscape indeed ; trees and a pond in the foreground—a cow or two midway, and a background of mountain-range. A very pleasant picture, as far as we could determine, at that distance. But, for the moment, I

gave it little thought, preferring rather to look at the young painter himself, standing in front. For it was evident that the little old chocolate-maker had removed to other quarters, and that this person was now occupant of the premises in his stead; and it became a matter of some interest for us to determine whether the new neighbor would be likely to prove as agreeable a study to us as the former one.

A young man, as I have said—not over twenty-four or five years of age, — of medium height, slender and graceful in movement. This was all that, at the time, I noticed; for I was never an adept at close examination of features or general minute details of appearance, and there seemed no reason why, in this case, I should go further than submit to the one general impression which the stranger produced upon me as a whole. But this was favorable; for, in addition to that certain grace of movement—a grace which I did not fail to notice as he stood before his picture and, with occasional approach and retrocession, examined it in every aspect,—I could not avoid perceiving further, that his face was a good and pleasant one, betokening not merely a genial disposition, but also culture and intelligence. Flonsette too, was pleased at the survey, and manifested her satisfaction by recapitulation of all those details to which I had chosen to give no separate attention.

“A fine pair of eyes, mademoiselle,—that cannot

be denied," she exclaimed. "A straight nose and yet not too long. And see also when he smiles, how evenly his teeth show between his lips. A very pleasant substitute for the old chocolate-maker, is he not?"

"For you rather than for us," I laughingly said. "It is true that I claimed my share in the chocolate man, but when it comes to this young fellow, I will give him all to you. But you will not be jealous enough, not to let me look at him now and then, will you, Flousette?"

"Let us look at him now," she said. "There is nothing else for us to do, indeed; and it is as well that we should learn to make pictures as well as bonbons."

With that, she took her seat behind the thin light curtain; and I, though at the time I did not follow her example, preferring conversation with Madré, once in a while thereafter consented to join her, and so gradually, little by little, as the days went on, fell into the habit of sitting longer and longer at her side and uniting in her contemplation. For when one is idle during many weeks at a time, it is very easy to glide into a habit, especially when it has become one of the occupations of an only companion. And therefore I readily fell into the way of resting myself behind the curtain and looking across; more particularly as I was naturally something of a lover of art, and it began to interest me to watch the gradual growth

of the picture, to see how the trees from mere outline took on their massy foliage and the distant mountains their blue tints, and how the whole landscape, from time to time, with occasional alteration, gained constant improvement. For though I was myself no artist, being only blessed with some love of the art as I saw it in others, I could not help perceiving that there were germs of merit in this painting. And, in my idle moments, I studied it as though it were my own work, and with something of almost equal interest; hoping that when completed, it would be so worthily bestowed, as to be seen and appreciated, and wondering what would be its career, and whether it would finally rest in the seclusion of vulgar wealth, or in the openness of royal gallery.

Up to this time, I had given little attention to the artist himself, further than that first inspecting glance; seeing him, indeed, as he daily stood in front of the canvas, yet hardly regarding him more than as some attendant shadow. There was nothing about him of which I could take hold for my amusement, as in the case of the little chocolate-maker; and, for the want of that, I chose to give him no regard at all. But there arrived at last a day when I felt that I would have liked to speak with and advise him;—and in this manner it came about. There was one morning when my taste, awakening gradually to more acute criticism, detected an incongruity in the position of a main ele-

ment of the painting,—a tree-top that should not have lapped across a cloud in the way it did; and from dwelling at first lightly upon the defect, at last it began to fill me with nervous distress. I thought about it almost all day long,—I dreamed about it at night,—I wished that I could be a man, a brother artist, to be able to go in and point out the error,—that I might be his sister, to lean over his shoulder and give him counsel. Then when there came a day in which some happy inspiration seemed to have seized him, and I saw that with one momentary impulse he had brushed away the unlikely cloud and sketched out its outline in another place and just where I myself would have wished it, I could have danced for joy. Was it mere chance?—I said to myself. Or was there an instinct in his mind, which had re-acted for good under the subtle influence of my hidden thought? And then, even as I would have liked before to advise him, so now I felt that it would be pleasant, if it were possible, to thank him for the readiness with which he had allowed his critical impulse to answer to the vague promptings of my own.

As yet, he had never seen my face, for I had always made my observations from behind the quiet seclusion of my curtain. But there was occasional necessity for throwing open the window in order to water a single plant in a flower-pot that stood outside. This was a task that usually I delegated to myself, for



this plant was my only substitute for green-house and orangery—a poor little representative, indeed ;—and I felt that in personally cherishing it, I was maintaining some sort of a tie with my own home. Consequently, each morning, at an early hour, I gave myself up to this sole duty, being able to do so without attracting observation ; inasmuch as then the young artist—the only person who could look in upon me—never seemed to be at home. But there chanced one day when at that early hour he was there, standing in mute criticism before his picture ; and, as he heard the sound of my opening window, he looked across. I thought at the time that his face became kindled with expression of sudden admiration, mingled with a gleam of surprised satisfaction at finding himself face to face with one whom he could look upon as a pleasant appearing neighbor. Yet I forbore to linger a moment longer in any such study of what new emotions his countenance might reveal, and fell back abashed ; startled, somewhat, at the earnestness of his gaze, a little pleased in heart at the evident admiration I had provoked, and a great deal mortified at my disgraceful lack of composure. Surely,—I thought,—I should have sustained that chance encounter with more dignity of mien ; and I reflected how different would have been the action of Flonsette. She, indeed, would not only have continued at the window, in assumed unconsciousness, until the young artist could have had time to

take full inventory of all her charms, but doubtless would have ended by fastening her own burning gaze upon him and fixing him to the spot with the fascinating play of her sparkling black eyes.

When, upon the next morning again I watered the flower, the young artist was once more at his window. It was so unusual for him to be there at such an hour at all, that now I knew he must have been waiting for me. This time there was upon his face an expression of partial recognition, to which, however, I gave no appearance of response. But I retired less confusedly than before, nerving myself to complete my task with some affectation of composure. For I reflected that it would be a silly thing for me again to withdraw so evidently abashed and frightened, like any foolish uncultivated school-girl, who never before had seen any one except of her own sex. Were I a mere girl of the people, indeed, it might not be out of the way to show confusion; but knowing who I was and that I had so often received with composure the admiring compliments of kings, nobles and ambassadors, was it fit that I should be startled at the mere gaze of this unknown artist? Therefore, as I have said, I finished my little task with quiet leisurely decorum; and then, closing my window again, felt all the satisfactory triumph of having well sustained my part.

Upon the third morning, the young painter was once more stationed at his post. It became very

evident, now, that he had watched for me ; and there was something of exasperation in knowing this, though at the same time, I could not help looking upon it as a compliment as well. This time, the expression of recognition upon his face was fully developed and he even ventured a slight bow by way of greeting. It was not done with disrespect ; and with faint bending of my body I made return acknowledgment. And after all, there was no harm in this—I soberly reflected. He might appear obtrusive, judged from my own more courtly point of view ; but, on the other hand, he could not be expected to know who I really was, and consequently I should not feel displeased at receiving from him such moderate attentions as were most suitable in his own rank of life. And then again, the further thought came to me, that in my present disguise as a daughter of the people, it were not ill-fitting that in some measure, I should adopt their fashions. In fact, already through my long imprisonment and deprivation from all the pursuits and society to which I had been accustomed, my mind was becoming attuned to its new surroundings and even prepared for temporary outbreak from its past associations. Why, indeed, should I not amuse myself with the chance opportunities thrown before me ? If I were thus obliged to sustain the disguise of a working girl, why should I not more fully carry out the character by partaking of those innocent relaxations that properly

belonged to it? It was not much, after all, in that enforced seclusion, once in a while to interchange friendly greeting across a street, with one who, though a stranger to me, regarded me with evident admiration and respect. Therefore, as each day thenceforth I saw him in his window at that early hour, and it became a matter of perfect assurance that he had there watched for me, I began in decorous yet less haughty spirit to return his morning bow. And I reflected, with some feeling of inner merriment, how woefully astounded my cousin, the Baron de Montfaucon would be, if, from his far off refuge upon the frontier, he could look in upon me and witness these novel, and, in his judgment, uncondonable vagaries of my existence. Yet, not upon myself alone did I propose to waste this fugitive pleasure, but called for Flonsette as one who would participate in it with keener animation, and, in fact, seemed most suitable to sustain its progress.

“He is young and not ill-looking, and doubtless, consequently, he has scope for admiration for any number of others than myself,” I said to her. “Stand therefore at the window, yourself, and give him a greeting from those pretty eyes of yours. It is likely that thereby he will soon learn not to care to look upon me again at all. But I will not mind that, Flonsette, if thereby you can find amusement to blend with your long devotion to me. As you have said, you need employment for your fascinations; and what

better opportunity than this? I give him all up to you, Flonsette. As for myself, I am content with my friend, my Madre, in the next apartment."

Well satisfied to avail herself of my permission,—eager, even to commence the weaving of her toils about another victim, since already she was finding the admiration of Hyppolite to be growing tame and unexciting, Flonsette now often took my place at the bedroom window, and, in pretended care of the little plant, cast her wicked glances across, in full battery of assault. With pleasant smile and nod—far more pleasantly than I had ever done, she returned the morning salutations, which soon he began to bestow upon her, as well. At times, too, when she had finished with the flower, exhausting all possible pretences to linger about it, she would affect forgetfulness to lower the curtain, and take her work at the window in full sight of the young artist; seeming at first to have him no longer in her mind, but soon again raising her eyes with stealthy glance, and shooting out towards him her most kindling fascinations. But to my astonishment and certainly to hers as well, it seemed all in vain. He would interchange his greetings with her, even ascending from gestures to words, and would look upon her from hour to hour as he labored at his picture; but always with a calm composure, the very reverse of any thought of making love,—glancing, at times, into the room, yet with penetrating anx-

ious expression, as though he would pass by her pretty figure in search of something else. All her little poutings and sunny smiles and soft glances seemed lost upon him; and the arts and entanglements that had always proved so capable for destruction and havoc among royal valets and huntsmen now fell powerless. So that Flonsette, at the beginning so confident in the strength of her resources, finally became baffled and disconsolate, her defeat even keeping her awake at night with the bitter sense of failure.

“The man is a stone,—he is no man at all, nor is he at all as handsome as at first I thought,” she said in one of her pettish moments of defeat. “You gave him to me, dear mademoiselle, for my own; but now I surrender him back to you,—I will return once more to Hyppolite, who is worth one hundred such. Hyppolite loves the very pink bow upon my shoes, and I do not doubt that he would die for me. Why, then, should I waste my glances upon that insensate over yonder?—Yes, mademoiselle, I give him back to you, and I think that you should again take note of him. For, as you can see, he is not at all a stone when he looks upon you. Perhaps you can make him love you. And after all, why not? You have said that I needed some amusement; do not you need it, as well? You are young and beautiful, and it becomes you not to be satisfied always with talking to the Madre De Valery in the next apartment. This sketcher of

pictures surely might give you occupation. He knows you not for what you are, but only for what you seem to be. And however you may smile upon him now, he can elsewhere never meet you, to mention it against you, when you have regained your own. You need not always be thinking about Monsieur le Baron who is so far away. Do you not suppose that Monsieur le Baron even now chats with the vivandieres of the camps? Therefore, amuse yourself in your turn, dear mademoiselle ; and as for this painter, who has dared to admire you,—why, smile upon him and punish him by breaking his foolish rocky heart.”





## CHAPTER VII.

**G**IVEN if, for the mere amusement of the moment, I had been inclined to depart from the guidings of my truer nature and assume a carelessness that did not properly belong to me, the time was not propitious; for almost immediately after Flonsette had thus advised me, I fell ill. Not ill, indeed, in the sense of those bodily pains and weaknesses that confine one to her bed and call for the skill and attention of the physician, with his hideous array of drugs and apparatus; but rather, in the deeper sense of a mind diseased and spirits enervated, and a dreary, dreary perception of misfortune and disaster speedily to come. In fact, the long confinement, accompanied by the constant apprehension of ill fortune, which at even the best of times I felt, were beginning to work their cruel will upon me. My color faded away, my cheeks grew thin—my appetite little by little left me, a deadly languor oppressed my spirits,—hour after hour I found myself sitting motionless and in unsettled



thought, without desire for the relief of any occupation,—I seemed to feel the subtle approach of death stealing over me,—I cared not to struggle against its coming,—rather, at times, I believed that I could even court its final stroke.

Was it from some strange sympathy with my condition that, at this time, the city, which, for a while, had seemed wrapped in repose, at least to us, roused itself into new life and sudden fury of excitement? Or was it my own soul that began to follow the manifestations of that outward disease of national life, lashed by it into similar agonies of ill? For, with my own ailings of mind, there came, almost equal-paced, new and more fierce uprisings in the city; swelling its streets with surging crowds, and giving vent to wild uproar that spread from the main avenues even into our quiet little garden-square. I saw it in the disturbed and affrighted looks of some who had hitherto peacefully enjoyed the pleasant shade and fountain below me,—wandering, here and there, at nightfall with composed and tranquil air, as though, in that oasis, they could never be disquieted; but who now met in groups and consulted together after the manner of men who are bewildered with some great emergency. I could guess the fact, even in the mien of two lovers who one evening came to the trysting place in agony and tears, he, now, in the uniform of a newly made conscript: and then I knew the sad fact that this was their last stroll

among the whispering trees and that I should never see them together again. Not he alone, either, but other conscripts daily ranged riotously up and down in bands, making all the use they could of the little period of freedom yet allotted to them, and, with riotous shouts affecting an enjoyment that they did not feel; and then I knew that there had been fresh calls for the repletion of the army. What army, or upon what mission sent? This, indeed, I did not know, nor Flonsette, either; she, in her outward journeys, gleaning little about the politics and events of the day, and merely noting the abundant signs of a new confusion of the nation. Now, once more, the Jacobin club meetings, which may not have taken place as vigorously of late, seeing that it had been many weeks since any of those fiery and tumultuous processions had passed our street, seemed to assume new frequency and ardor, for, of a sudden, again there came, not upon one but upon many successive nights, that olden disorderly course with its ragged banners, its flaming torches, its corps of discordant drums, its sea of wild, unkempt faces turned up to the flaring light. Again as before the riotous mass closed around the doorway below, and the young orator of the people, standing upon the steps with the flambeaux held up close to his cheek, so that every one could mark the earnest intensity of his blazing black eyes, addressed the throng upon the rights of man and the dawning glories of the nation.

Once, far off against the sky, I saw at night the wide-spreading glare that told of unchecked excesses of the mob. And day by day, with little intermission, the cannon of the Invalides pealed forth at noon their record of new victories. In what army, again,—and where? In war with whom? For now each day, the gauntlet seemed thrown down to some new nation with which as yet we had not fought. We could not tell;—and each day, therefore, I felt all the sad despondency of one unknowing whether or not she could rightfully rejoice over her country's victories. Over English, Hollander or Russ;—in any of these I might well triumph, as for a new glory to the nation, even though its hosts might not be led by any legitimate power or authority. And yet, each time, now, how on the contrary did my heart sink as I reflected that the new victory might be celebrated over the fall of the royal banner; postponing thereby for many a long month, the expected triumph of the slain king's avengers and the glories of a restored, regenerated Court!

“Let us, therefore, neither now triumph or grieve,” said Madre, to whom I mentioned all my doubts. “Let us rather postpone our attention until the end, as far as may be; until then, possessing our souls in patience. The time will come, perhaps, when we can rejoice for all; or if we must weep until the last, it is better that we should not allow ourselves to weep too soon. All this tribulation of your heart, my child, re-

garding matters that you cannot now help or alter, will only in the end, make you ill ; and I can see that even now you are very far from well."

"But not yet ill, indeed, Madre."

"No—not ill, it may be,—and still, as I have said, not far from ill. I fear me that you will be really ill and very soon, if you do not keep better guard upon yourself. You are pale and thin, and each day becoming so yet more. It is only that you stand in need of air and exercise, my child."

"Yet that, of course, dear Madre, is a want that cannot now be supplied."

"Indeed it can," she said, gazing pensively upon me. "I do not think there would be great risk were you, now and then, in the early evening, to steal outside. Even were there more danger than there really is, it were better to encounter it, than to endure the living death of this confinement, so surely preying upon you. I indeed, must not go hence. It may surprise you to hear me say so, but to me there would be tenfold more danger than to yourself. For I have been compelled to live among the people, and there may be many in Paris who know me. And to some of these I have made myself obnoxious ; trying, during my hard struggle for existence, to maintain, as far as might be, the dignity of my name. In this I have sought to be inoffensive ; and yet I know that I have often given umbrage, and perhaps to some who, now recognizing me,

would not scruple to give information of my descent, and so consign me to the guillotine. But you, my child—”

“I, dear Madre?”

“You, strange as it may seem, might pass unnoticed where I could not go without detection. For you have been wont to live apart from this seething city world. Versailles and the seclusion of your own chateau have known you, but Paris has not. I doubt whether you have ever walked its streets—or whether you have ever passed through them, except with sheltered head. And now, those who have been your friends and intimates in your other life have either fallen, or have escaped beyond the frontier. Even the lackeys and valets of the court have mostly followed their masters. Of those that remain, who now would recognize you? For you have changed since then, so that I do not believe you could easily be known, and, without much difficulty, you could disguise yourself still more. Paler and thinner you are, as I have said, but this is only a trifle of the alteration. In this poor dress of workingwoman, and with your curls forced into decorous unnoticable firmness of regularity beneath your bonnet, who is there now that could recognize in you the beautiful original of the arcadian shepherdess, with her clustering locks and garlanded crook? Ah, child, it is one more of the privileges of youth to be able to assume new disguises. In age,

the body acquires its tones and habits not to be thrown off. Dress and practice combined could not conceal my figure or its accustomed motions; and there are few who have ever known the poor granddaughter of the house of Valery who now would fail to recognize her."

"But, *Madre*, I greatly fear—"

"You need not, again I say. I counsel not that you should advance into the broad streets in full light of day. But what should hinder you from safely taking your quiet stroll in our little square, when the evening has begun to fall and your features would grow indistinct with the waning light? It would bring back fresh color to your cheeks, and health to the coursing of your blood."

It was good advice, I knew; and for many days, I pondered upon it, desiring to take the bold step, yet dreading it,—arguing the matter every moment in my own mind, and balancing carefully all that could be said for it or against. At length I took courage and yielded. I do not know that I should ever have done so, but that I felt my strength daily failing, and began to suspect that the choice lay not between danger and safety, but between slight risk and the certainty of a serious and not remote illness. Therefore, one evening, *Flonsette* and myself carefully prepared ourselves for the expedition. I bade her attire herself in more subdued tone than usual, inasmuch as

I would not that the attraction which her sparkling beauty commanded should have too full a scope, thereby perhaps causing a close examination of myself as well. As for myself, indeed, I put on the plainest of all my few poor dresses, and smoothed my hair so carefully and prudishly beneath my bonnet, that, of a certainty, I believe few even of those who had been about the court would now have known me. And then, tremblingly, I descended the stairs and sallied forth.

Out into the open air,—across the narrow street, and into the little park, where I sank down upon the nearest seat, and resting looked around. How pleasantly, indeed, the cool evening air blew upon my cheek, refreshing every fibre and causing my heart to bound with new pulsations! Yes, Madre was right;—not only when she told me that it would bring me new health, but that, when I had taken the first plunge, I would be sure to throw aside a fear which was not natural to my race but was the offspring of long imprisonment. With the new bounding of my blood, there came upon me a strange almost unreal, reckless courage. I drew aside from my face the wimple that for additional protection I had drawn across it. For I would command freer play to the evening breeze, and why should I fear that any body should look upon my face? Was not my disguise sufficient? And then,—for after all, perhaps the world was a better one than I had been taught to believe,—who, even

knowing me, would have the heart to betray? Near by the bench upon which we sat, stood the guard, half leaning against the gate post, and with musket lightly resting on the ground before him. He was not the same guard who had been wont to smile upon the nursemaids, but, for all that, he seemed not unfriendly. What if I were to steal up behind him and whisper into his ear that I—I the poor map-colorer,—was Gabrielle the Marquise de Sainte-Maure? Would he bring his piece to his shoulder and arrest me upon the spot, and thereby perhaps, earn promotion? Or would he turn away his head and affect not to hear me, and ever after remain my secret friend? A little way off, upon another bench, was a group of conscripts. What if I were to go to them, and there also, say that I was the Marquise de Sainte-Maure? Would they surround me and with loud calls summon the guard? Or would they salute me respectfully as Mademoiselle or Citoyenne, as their momentary humor might advise, and tell me to depart in peace, for that they fought not against women but only against the foreign armed foes of France?

Such impulses of possible rash conduct every moment flew through my mind, tempting me to evil. More probably they were simply mere ideas,—intangible phantoms—which I would never have dared to put into practice. Often, indeed, persons will seem to themselves to be upon the very verge of daring deeds,



flattering themselves that there is only a thread withholding them from some heroic resolve; and yet, all the while, intent at heart upon maintaining safety, and held back by deliberate caution as by hempen cable. Yet, for the time, these ideas amused me,—cheering me with a gratifying self-laudatory picture of voluntary danger, befitting the habits of my race and the maintenance of my too long secluded dignity; so that, when at last, in the darkness of full nightfall, I re-entered the house, it was with some faint impression that I had actually been upon the point of committing myself to dangerous revelations, and had only escaped by the exercise of giant-strengthened control, in itself as creditable to my race as would have been the daring of the tempted disclosure.

Upon my next visit to the little garden, this mood of mind had changed, and I found that I could look around me more composedly and after the manner of any other visitor. I could move from my seat and stroll about the fountain; watching, close at hand, the lulling fall of its silver stream, and dipping my fingers into the cool basin, seeming thereby to attract to myself certain elements of its sparkling life and activity. I could wander along the walks, enjoying the pleasant odor of the foliage meeting overhead and stretching forth its arms on either side; and leaving the broader avenues, I could diverge into the narrower and more winding passages, emerging here and there

again into the main arteries at unexpected moments, as I had so often witnessed in the wanderings of the different pairs of lovers. And—with the development of that tendency more and more to assimilate my mind itself with the customs of the people among whom I was now living,—I began, sometimes, to wonder what I should do if I also had a lover, and whether I too, in such manner, could dare to stroll unattended, amidst those darkened alleys. What if my cousin the Baron were present in his disguise of a man of the barricades? Would he still demand decorous observance of all the formal traditions of the Court? Or would he rather yield to the situation, as a matter which the times could safely and without reproach allow, and so, linking my arm in his, wander with me up and down the shaded areas, whispering soft words of love into my ear? Might it not then happen, that, upon the foundation of my true regard, my heart would begin to climb towards his, until actually I would begin to love him?

Little by little, with these repeated visits to the garden, there came to me that true courage of the soul which does not tempt to rush needlessly upon dangers, yet weighs well the perils really existing and tells one whether and how much they are to be regarded. I began to feel that I could move about with more serenity, so little did my safety actually seem to be imperilled; and now there came to me the desire to see

other portions of the city. It was not long before I became so fully acquainted with every nook of the garden that it became monotonous to me, and I pined for other places to explore. At each angle of the square I could look down a long vista of connecting streets filled with shops, well lighted with their lanterns dangling from the centre, often crowded with people. I could see young girls like myself walking safely in couples, and I began to wonder why I also could not do the same. I had never in all my life, been on foot in any of those side streets. I had mostly lived apart from the city, being taught to look upon it as a mart of tradesmen and artificers with whom, of course, I could have no common interest. At times I had entered Paris with the rest of the Court, but this was in state, allowing no descent upon the pavement or sight of any thing except a few of the main avenues. When, sometimes, I made my visits to those friends who had their residences within the walls, it was in the seclusion of my own coach, surrounded by my liveried attendants. Therefore, this glance down the narrow streets at the corners of the square was as a glimpse of a foreign land, and daily there came more and more upon me, the yearning to explore them.

So that at length, there being nothing to prevent, except my own fast dissolving fears, I yielded. It was necessary, of course, to make my departure a little earlier in the day, so as not to be found loitering

in those narrow streets too late towards the evening ; but where could be the danger in broader light, feeling myself now so well accustomed to disguise, and with my wimple ready to be drawn across the face at the slightest danger of recognition ? Therefore, always accompanied by Flonsette, I began to make my departure from the house much earlier in the afternoon, and then again, still earlier, as the range of my explorations widened ; so that, at last, as I found that we could advance unmolested in the broad light, often we chose the most convenient hour of the day, and sallied forth in the full blaze of morning. There was in all this, a pleasant excitement, that ever tempted me onward, alluring me the more, perhaps, with the zest of the slight perception of accompanying danger. To pass from one narrow passage to another, knowing not even their names, until at times we seemed to have become inextricably involved in an endless labyrinth,—to feel, with a not unpleasant thrill of apprehension, that at last we were forever lost,—to still wander on, apparently plunging deeper and deeper into the toils, until, finally, at some turn of the street, the way would open a little broader, and a familiar tree or church or fountain would come into sight, giving cheering assurance that we were near at home,—to meet occasional bands of soldiery or gens d'armes, and to mark how they eyed us as we passed, taking note of our figures, and, if possible, of our faces, comment-

ing among themselves about our looks, and never dreaming that, in the most quiet of the two, might be recognized an aristocrat, whose head would bring solid reward,—all this had its moments of joyous excitement, and lent a charm to my existence that it had never had before. Paris, at that time so much more compact in its construction than at present, offered abundant scope for exploration in narrow streets and lanes, nor were there many wider avenues to break the tangle. The few broader streets, as much as possible we avoided, for there were to be found the greater crowds of men. But in the narrow places, there was not only greater safety from molestation, but also much that was picturesque and novel to both of us.

There were little shops, in the windows of some of which glittered jewelry and silverware, a never failing fount of contemplation for me. With decorations, too, for military and civic honor, different from what I had been accustomed to see at Court, and now recognizable by their form and style, as instituted for the newly founded republic. There were book stalls, too, and print shops, in which I could see displayed the ardent speeches of patriot leaders and the efforts of revolutionary artists ;—painful for me to look upon, inasmuch as, with their political rancor, there was often mingled much that was unbecoming, and yet, at times, attractive to an artistic eye, for simple quaint-

ness and originality. There were magazines of clothing ; and these, too, were of interest by reason of the daily progressive exploration which they seemed to develop, into the modes and fashions of the ancients. All these things we would gaze at in our wanderings, affrighted away at times by some too inhuman artistic satire upon royal misfortune, but, at other times, amused and entertained by the daily changing spectacle of new ideas and fashions.

Once, in our quiet strolling, we dared to cross the river, and stood at last before Notre Dame. So long, hitherto, had I murmured my prayers towards it from a distance, that now, as we stood looking at it face to face, it almost seemed as though there should be some recognition of us by it. Grand, gloomy, and sad it stood. The doors were closed ; and in front of each one, with shouldered musket, stood a sentry, his duty to prevent all entrance for worship into that which had now been appropriated for national secular uses. Upon one of the towers floated the black flag of the revolution, emblem of usurped authority. As there we stood, and for a moment gazed, we would have wished to fall upon our knees in front and repeat our prayers, even as we had done from the back window of our home. But the eye of one of the sentries was upon us, and we knew that it would be death to yield to this desire. Therefore, pulling our veils closer over our faces, we hurriedly passed on, glancing

stealthily upward and secretly muttering our orisons; and it was a comfort to us when, turning the corner of the building, we saw one old man, wrinkled, crippled, and bent, but with his face also lifted up at the towers and his lips softly moving, and so realized that we were not alone in our devotion.

So for many days. Then there came an interval of nearly a fortnight during which I fell once more ill, and did not move from my room. It was not now the illness of constraint and imprisonment, but rather of a nervous nature that had overacted itself with too enjoyable excitement. For many days I lay, not dangerously sick, but rather prostrated with loss of strength. During this time, Madre and Flonsette together nursed me, Flonsette not leaving the apartment, so that we remained wrapped in our own seclusion, and the world and its events went on unnoticed by us. Now and then, the riotous procession at night,—sometimes the boom of cannon from the Invalides,—and this was all. What was doing and what it all portended, except as some new ebullition of the seething cauldron of commotion,—wherefore now should we care?

At last I slowly recovered, and once more resumed my explorations. It was necessary, indeed, that I should do so, for again the loss of exercise was threatening to overcome me. But not far must I now go,—I was still too weak for that. Only a little stroll, even as I had at first commenced,—down one of the side

streets a short distance and then to return again. Only as far as the little print-shop upon the second corner. But when we reached this spot, we found, to our surprise, that it was closed. Then, for the first time, we noticed that all the other shops also along our route had been closed. What was the meaning of this? Was the nation celebrating some fete-day,—some great holiday, by acclamation? Down this street a few people were now hurrying, and when they reached the nearest corner they turned and all still pursued one direction. Other persons, coming from the opposite point, there also turned down and joined the route of the first goers. We, too, wondering and curious, slowly crept along, and at last found ourselves advancing in the common route.

Soon we noticed that the concourse of people moving in one direction had greatly increased by the influx from other streets, so that we were beginning rather to be swept along in our passage, than allowed to advance of our own will. At this I became alarmed and would have turned away; but the thickening throng rendered it impossible to do so, without such labor as might have drawn attention to us. Then I determined to submit to the current until the next cross street, through which we might gently slip aside and steal away. But now, as it happened, there was no other street crossing this, until we had reached the destination of the human current; for, at the next



corner, we were plunged into a larger and stationary crowd, filling the sidewalks and lining half the carriage way, and, after a moment or two of jostling to and fro, found ourselves securely fixed in the denseness of the mass, as in a vise.

A street wider than that which we had passed through,—compactly filled with people, excepting where near the centre, two lines of armed soldiery stood firmly opposite each other and kept a vacant space between. At a little distance, the street expanding broadly into a large open area; too remote from me, however, that I should distinctly see anything about it, except that this whole opening was also thickly crowded with people. There, as well as here, also, all the windows to the uppermost story were filled with expectant groups. It seemed as though all Paris had disgorged itself into this street and into that open area a little beyond. What could it mean? What portended that army of troops thus drawn up in silent waiting? A strange hope flashed across my mind. Could it be that while I had been ill, the revolution had run its final course, and that now a repentant people with a repentant army as well, were awaiting the final reception and greeting of Louis the Seventeenth and the restoration of olden times? I whispered my hope to Flonsette, but she said nothing in response, looking grave, however, and biting the end of her veil in nervous agitation.

Soon I saw by the turning of all heads, first in the upper windows and then in the streets, that some object was approaching. The troops stood more upon the alert,—the crowd began to cease from its careless jostling and to take upon itself a more subdued air,—and anon broke upon the stillness the muffled sound of drums. Troops of escort, too, appeared, marching slowly between the lines of those that were stationary. Then I thought I knew it all, my bright anticipations of royal restoration fled,—and I saw only the unhappy chance that had brought me to witness the passage of the tumbril to the guillotine. Oh, those unhappy condemned ! Often had I heard of them, but never had expected to face the sight of that sad sorrow. It was as though I were myself going forward in their ranks, being thus obliged to look upon the terrible sight. I would have turned and fled, if I could, so as not to be compelled to see, perhaps, the agony of some friend of old, now taken in the toils and condemned. But I could not flee, for the pressure of the crowd was too strong. I could only hold down my head and strive no longer to look on. Yet, in a moment, I heard the sound of the tumbril itself passing and its guard of troops. A horrible fascination seized me. Struggle as I might, I could not avoid gazing forward,—nay, not though it were to face the imploring eyes of many suffering victims. And therefore I looked, and felt my blood freezing and my senses apparently leaving

me as I saw,—not a mixed assemblage of condemned nobility hurried to its doom, but close beside her confessor, the upright figure of my Queen Marie Antoinette, bareheaded, sitting with hands tied behind, and looking forward with pale face yet courageous unfaltering gaze towards the guillotine now so short a space before her!





## CHAPTER VIII.

**H**ARDLY do I comprehend what I did or said when first the terrible reality of this scene flashed upon my startled senses. I may have screamed aloud,—I think that I must have followed the impulse which bade me stretch forth my hands towards my Queen and call out her name—it is certain that, in the first moment of bewildered, overpowered perception, I committed some open act to gather around me the ever watchful scrutiny of suspicion and hate. For when, after an instant, the mists passed from my eyes,—it was only an instant, for as yet I saw that the death-car with its unhappy burden had not rolled onward many feet from where I stood,—there was a little crowd collected closely around Flonsette and myself, and flashing eyes seemed to interrogate us with more directness of purpose than could be gathered from the confused, discordant mutterings of twenty open mouths, and here and there in the outer

circle, a fist was raised aloft with ominous threatening.

“They are aristocrats! Down—down with them! To the lantern!” were a few of the distinguishable utterances among the many savage sounds of discontent and hate. The situation for us was grave and perilous. A moment more, and we should have been sacrificed to the fury of the mob. Already they seemed only to await a leader to commence the work of outrage. He came, at the instant, in the person of a burly butcher, with rolled-up sleeves and blood-shot eyes kindled with every demoniac passion. He had even raised his gigantic arm to strike me down;—when suddenly he was driven back into the crowd by a single blow planted in his face. Had he rushed forward and grappled with his assailant, his mere brute strength must have prevailed, and nothing could then have saved us. But the man was a craven at heart, and shrank further back, satisfied with his single experience. Seeing this, the concourse raised a laugh at him, and thereby attention became partially diverted from us. And he who had struck that timely blow at once took advantage of the situation by words as discreetly delivered.

“These are my sisters, citoyens,” he said. “They have come out to see the spectacle; and because one of them is taken faint with the pressure of the crowd, they must be attacked by such ruffians as that! Are

Frenchmen to suffer such a thing? Am I not known to be a good citizen of the Republic, that I may not protect my own?"

The crowd looked on and gaped and wondered. Whether there might have come any revulsion leading to renewed violence, I cannot tell. But in a moment, one of them pointed onward towards the still receding car of death. It was now even entering the square of execution. For any one to delay for even a few moments, would be to lose the spectacle of the murder of a Queen. At once, with haste, they all began to break away and follow the tumultuous streaming of the struggling concourse. And in an instant longer, we were left almost alone with him who had come so urgently to our aid.

It was our neighbor,—the artist of the opposite window. He stood for a moment longer, alert and firmly braced, as though awaiting renewed attack from the ruffian who might so easily have crushed him. Then, as the attack came not, he unbent somewhat from his defiant attitude and turned to us. We, with mingled fear and gratitude, were clinging to him, one on each arm,—looking, for the minute, to no other safety than through him.

"Let us leave this place," he said. "It is no scene for you,—or for myself, as well. Nay, do not explain;—I know that it must have been by accident that you were here. Let me now lead you to your home. Not

all at once, though,—there may be spies abroad, who will watch your going and bring you into future trouble by reason of this expression of unguarded woman's sympathy for women. Do you yet feel that you can walk? Then lean upon my arm and we will depart."

Timorously I took his arm, and we slowly moved away. Not all at once to our homes, however. Through devious windings, rather, turning first to one side and then to the other—sometimes advancing in a direction leading away from our destination,—then adroitly diving into and through dark alleys,—all this for an hour, at least, until there was no longer any danger of pursuit. Then through a new maze of winding streets and lanes which as yet I had not learned,—and so at last he brought us safely and unwatched to the *Maison des Capucins*.

"You see that it is not discreet for you to wander away alone, *citoyennes*," he said, using even the latter word hesitatingly, as though not yet well accustomed to it. "There may be many times when a young girl might need protection, and not always find it close at hand. In future walks, might it not be that I—"

His eager glance, resting by turns upon each of us, but more particularly upon myself, concluded his speech for him, amply of itself betraying the wishes of his heart. But that, of course, could not be,—I reasoned with myself. And somewhat coldly—all too

coldly, indeed, towards one who had so greatly befriended me,—I shook my head.

“We will go out no more,—my sister and myself,” I answered. “It is better that young girls should not venture into the streets at all.”

Then, turning into the house, we sought our own apartment. Little need, perhaps, to tell how I flung myself upon my bed and gave vent to my imprisoned woe, in impassioned tears! How, seeking out Madre, I sobbed forth to her the story of the great tragedy just enacted,—a horror, of the long preparation for which, she, in her seclusion, had been equally ignorant with myself! How, with our faces turned towards Notre Dame, we prayed for the soul of the martyred Queen! How we sat in speechless horror as we listened to the low beat of drum attending the returning troops, and thence knew that the dreadful sacrifice had been performed,—realizing then, more clearly, how up to that moment, we had still lived in hope that, even at the last, some stay or intervention might come through the pity of the populace! How, for weeks, we went around sad and desponding, feeling that now at last the sole remaining prop against social anarchy had been cut away! How, from that day we wore mourning for our Queen;—not bearing it outwardly indeed, where it would only have led to our own destruction, but each carrying within our breasts and against our beating hearts, our little ro-



sette of crape, to press against us and remind us of our loss !

All this, indeed, can readily be realized, without description. Nor,—since Heaven is merciful and has decreed that its children should not always mourn, but that, even to the heaviest grief there will come a time when the blackness of night will break away and the dawn of composure appear, even though the sunlight of pure happiness may not burst forth quite as brightly as of old,—need I perhaps tell how, little by little, our sorrow gained abatement and both Madre and myself began to gain new interest in the common business of life. Not that ever again we forgot our Queen, or thought carelessly upon her unhappy lot. Not that we ever threw aside our secret mourning badges or recalled her sufferings with aught except tender mournfulness of spirit. Not that, long after the violence of our distress had spent its force, there did not remain a dew of gentle sadness that might ever afterwards sparkle upon our souls, never to be entirely dissipated by the warmth of any earthly pleasures. But it is not the less true that little by little we began to regain our olden equipoise of spirit. Madre first, for she having never known the Queen, her grief was largely made up of abstract sympathy for woman's suffering and a regret for royalty's seeming downfall, as of a system without which the world were a worthless waste. Moreover, to her long life there had been

many misfortunes, so that her heart had become attuned to grief, and each new sorrow was merely one in addition to those which had gone before, and thereby, perhaps, the easier to be borne. To myself came last that mitigation of woe; for, to me, the memory of the Queen was redolent of personal friendship and of many happy hours of festival and song. But gradually I, too, began to recover from the depth of my first despondency; not feeling the change at first, yet having my attention called to it, at last, more than once by trivial incidents. In particular, I felt that the world outside was resuming its usual sway, as, one pleasant morning, there came to me a recollection of the pretty little landscape in the opposite window. I felt, then, a desire to see how far the work had progressed; and with the wish was mingled self-reproach that for so long a time, I had dismissed any interest in the creation of one who had so richly deserved my sympathy and approval.

“But the picture cannot now be seen, dear mademoiselle,” said Flonsette. “Daily have I looked across, and always the blank back of the canvas is towards us.”

“It may once again be turned,” I responded; and I passed into the little room and stealthily lifted a corner of my curtain. As I had hoped, there was now no bare canvas facing us, but, as of old, the full glowing beauty of a painting. Yet it was not the former

grouping of cows and hills and distant mountains, but instead, a single half length figure. The figure of a woman, sad yet resolute; with eyes tearfully turned up towards Heaven, yet with stern, unyielding expression of dignity. There was something that at the first struck me as familiar ;—then, after a single instant, the whole conception broke upon me.

“ It is the Queen, Flonsette,—the Queen herself ! ”

No other indeed, than poor Marie Antoinette. Whether it was what might be called a great painting, I do not know. I only recollect that, by some happy inspiration of the painter, there was not merely likeness, but also the glow and combination of all expression befitting the terrible occasion of her death. Her hands were bound behind her, the cords seeming to cut the flesh ; and yet not from any straining of the captive herself, inasmuch as the arms lay lightly against her sides with passive perception of the uselessness of resistance. As I have said, her eyes were tearfully turned towards Heaven, yet, in the whole expression of the face, there was no surrender of queenly dignity. A call upon God, indeed, for pity to the passing soul ; yet in nerved lip and chin and even in the firm set of the head upon the shoulders, a look of unbending contempt and scorn of the raging populace so cruelly gloating over her misery. Not, perhaps, a great picture, indeed ; and yet to me it seemed a won-

derful embodiment of every sentiment befitting the occasion and the scene.

“I would that I could see it even nearer,” I murmured.

“There is nothing easier than that, dear mademoiselle,” suggested Flonsette. I did not answer, or indeed, especially regard her words, not comprehending, in fact, how much they portended; until, that afternoon, there came a gentle rap upon the door, which being opened by Flonsette, disclosed the young artist standing outside with the covered picture beneath his arm. I looked my mute amazement towards Flonsette, who, flushing at my implied reproof, hastily whispered:

“But, indeed, mademoiselle, you so earnestly wished to see the picture nearer, that I thought it no harm to invite him over. Shall I send him away again?”

“He is here, now,—let him, therefore, for this once, enter,” I said. The explanation and consent had all passed in an instant,—so rapidly, indeed, that our visitor could scarcely have noticed the conference. Then at a sign from Flonsette, he stepped inside the room.

“Be seated, Monsieur,—that is to say, citizen,” I said. “We meet so few persons,—my—my sister and myself, at—at our work,—that we have not yet learned all the manners of the time, you see. Excuse therefore, the old fashioned regardlessness of my ad-

dress—and it is kind indeed, for you thus to have come in answer to the invitation of—of my sister.”

“It was surely my own wish, Mademoi—citoyenne, I would say,—to be permitted to approach and show you my poor work. It may not live for long, since I do not plume myself upon great genius for my art. True, I have studied with Jacques Louis David, and have gathered from him some principles in painting that elsewhere I might not have learned ; but still, it is not to be expected that any of his pupils could even distantly approach his fame.”

I remember how, as he spoke, I found myself looking up into his face with real surprise and pleasure. I had intended to take this opportunity to thank him more fully and collectedly for the great service that he had so lately rendered me ; now,—so easily are we influenced by trifles,—the feeling of gratitude was almost swallowed up in the simple satisfaction of noting that, in addressing me, he forbore to use the affected phraseology which the Republic had prescribed as the true test of patriotism. Even the now customary word denoting citizenship came to his lips with laggard utterance, as though he had not yet succeeded in accustoming himself to it. I recalled how it had been the same, at the moment of our rescue, though then I had been too much agitated to take especial note of his manner of speech. The thought seemed to give me more confidence in him, than hours of ordi-

nary conversation or association might otherwise have done. It was as though he was not merely trusting himself to my discretion, but was actuated by an instinctive perception of my natural distaste for the conventional follies of the day. So that, in the pleasure I felt, for the moment I forbore responding to his words, and only the dead silence that followed and his hesitating air of expectancy recalled me to myself.

“True, citizen,” I then remarked,—recurring, as was proper, to his latest words. “It must be a pleasure to have studied with Jacques David, and I presume it is not to be expected that all his pupils should equal him. Still, may you not be too modest in thus depreciating yourself? For to me, this painting shows not merely promise of the future, but genius already dwelling in your soul. It is beautiful and artistic,—that I can see. And I know that it is life-like as well.”

“Ah, citizenne, this is high praise, indeed. I hardly hoped for half as much at your hands, for I know that the picture does not even distantly meet the aspirations of my fancy. Were I to succeed in placing upon the canvas all the conceptions of the subject that float before my vision, I should be happy, indeed; for then, perhaps, my work might live, and some day, when this nation has passed through its trials and come again to its repose, the picture might

even have place within some royal—what am I saying?—some national gallery. That would be fame for me, indeed. And yet, *citoyenne*, it was not with that purpose, altogether, that I began it. Rather I thought that if—if you—”

“I know it all,—I feel it, indeed,” I cried, made bold with sudden inspiration of his meaning. “Seeing how we have watched your other work, you have thought that it would please me that you should begin something which would appeal more surely to my tastes and feelings. You saw,—how could you help seeing it, when you were there and when to you I owe my life,—that I pitied the poor Queen passing onward to her death,—you knew that not then, merely, but for long afterwards, as a compassionate woman, I could not resist lingering with the same pity over the scene,—you knew that we were two poor girls, absorbed in our labors and secluded from the world,—you felt that when you chose a new subject for your genius, it would cheer us if you were to select something consonant with our feelings, so that we could watch with interest the progress of your work, as though it were almost our own. Is not that so?”

“*Citoyenne*, you have put into words, almost all that was in my heart, but which I could not so well express. Yes, it was to please you that I have done this. I knew that it would not be unappreciated by you, seeing that you had shown a woman’s sympathy

for a suffering woman, and therefore could look with continued pity upon the pictured copy of that suffering."

"And you, citizen,—what do you say for yourself as well?" I made response. "Did not your own compassion for undeserved torture, as well as your memory of my pity, prompt you a little to your task? Is it only for a woman's nature to feel pity? Is mercy so repugnant to sterner qualities, that a man cannot be anything but stolid, leaving all tears to women alone?"

"What shall I say, citoyenne? Yes, I am a man, and therefore supposed, perhaps, to be stern and tearless. And yet I can be as a woman in my outpouring of compassion,—was so, indeed, at witnessing the fate of the unhappy Austrian, else would I not have undertaken the task I did. Or, undertaking it, surely, as working with unsympathetic mind, I could not have had even the present poor success. It was, indeed, a scene to be wept over. These are cruel and uncertain days, and it is well for no one to be too eager in expression of opinion; and yet, to you I know I can safely say, that the careless words or acts of a frivolous woman who, doubtless of a kind heart, was made thus frivolous merely by education and example, are not a crime against the state, such as should be punished with death."

"And the king, citizen. Should not he, as well,



meet your pity? May not he, also, claim that his words and acts were foolish or unworthy, not through intention, but as governed by education and example?"

"There may be a difference, citoyenne. The king was a man; and a man ought to be of sterner stuff, and with responsibilities that he should bravely meet. He should nerve his soul to throw off the weaknesses engendered by association or culture, to take an accurate and living view of the circumstances and demands around him, to become, in all matters of national administration, the true father of his people. If he fails in this, he is guilty of a crime which lack of manliness or force cannot excuse,—he is no longer worthy of the place in which God has placed him. And might not, then, his subjects hold him responsible for his crime?"

"Perhaps. But think you, to the extent of death, citoyen?"

"About that, what can I certainly say?" he answered. "For, after all, I am a simple citizen,—an artist,—belonging to none of the clubs or secret meetings of the day,—listening to few of the speeches,—engaging in none of the plots and plans for reorganization,—content to remain in obscurity,—wishing only that the present tempest may blow over, so that all men may rest in security, and, as regards myself, that art and culture may again prevail. What the verdict

of history upon these scenes will be, remains yet to be seen. History may say that much of it was rightfully done,—it may say that all was wrong. Yet even I have reflected much, and I can feel—”

“Can feel, you say?”

“That the people have suffered much; and that having in vain sought for redress, they were justified in some extent in rebellion. That having rebelled, there is a subtle instinct in the masses, telling them that they cannot expect forever to retain their organization,—that, after a while, those rebelled against, being better educated and fitted for union, might succeed in putting down the uprising, and would surely do so with terrible severity and waste of blood,—that, therefore, while the masses hold the power, their only safety is in stamping out the embers of oppression, at whatever cost or sacrifice. This thing, their instinct is now leading them to do. That it is often done cruelly and fiendishly, who can deny? And yet it is bad government that has turned into brutes and beasts the lower orders; and when the beast overpowers his prey by rending and mangling it, do we not say that it is its nature and that it could not be expected to do otherwise?”

“But yet, Monsieur,—citoyen, that is,—the king. Need they have murdered him? Why not have suffered him to escape unharmed, as he desired?”

“I have read, citoyenne, of one Charles of England

who was led to execution. He had acted unconstitutionally, but yet had done nothing which the laws said should be punished with death. Here, however, the instincts of the people prevailed against him. Had he escaped he would have sought aid from abroad,—there would have been invasion and new civil war, thousands would have fallen upon either side. All this seemed likely to be avoided by the death of one man; and therefore it was decreed, that for the good of all, the one man should perish.”

“And so you think it should have been with king Louis?” I asked.

“Is it not the same, citoyenne? May not his execution have saved countless lives? And why, indeed, should not a sovereign as well as his people, die for the good of all? One man upon his throne has a boundary dispute with his neighbor. To settle it, he sends ten thousand innocent and unwilling men to die upon the field of battle. If the war were to last sufficiently long, he would claim the right to send out millions. Why should not those millions, once in many generations, have the right to tell the one man, that it was expedient he should die for them?”

He stopped,—but I had no answer to make. It was the first time I had heard the argument of the people’s side in any way advanced, and it was a novelty to me. That I believed in it, I could not say. Whatever force there might be in it, hardly could it be ex-

pected that I should throw aside all the impressions of my position and early education. That, on the other hand, I despised the argument, neither could I say. My sense of justice told me that, viewed from the people's side, there might be something in it. But how much there might be, for or against, I could not say. Even now, at my present mature age, with the different verdicts of history all before me, I cannot so far separate myself from education or prejudice as to feel satisfied how far those transactions of the people may have been justified. Therefore, for the moment, perplexed and confused, I remained in silence,—then gently strove to change the subject.

“I fear, citizen,” I said with a laugh, “that after all, you are what the people would call an aristocrat. It is true that you seem to justify the execution of the king; but on the other hand, you have avowed your pity for the Queen. Is not this enough to show the leaning of your mind? Would it not, of itself, bring you into condemnation with the people?—Confess, citizen,” I sportively added, venturing into dangerous suggestion of my own condition,—“that you are no mere artist by profession, but that you are a royal prince in hiding.”

“And confess, citoyenne,” he responded, gayly taking up the same spirit of banter, and certainly not dreaming how nearly he had drawn towards the truth, “confess that you are no poor girl of the people, but,

on the contrary, a disguised princess of the court. Why should I not believe this, when I have seen you almost die for the Queen, and when, moreover, I recognize in you—pardon me that I allude to it—an air of nobility that a Marquise might well envy.—Nay, citoyennes Carnot,—for you see I have learned your names,—we cannot claim to be of the blood royal, and perhaps in these times we are more happy than if we were. Elsewise we might be on the border, dancing attendance upon some army of invasion, and casting fruitless glances towards some forfeited castle or demesne never more to be enjoyed by us. Surely you now should be more than happy in being what you are ; and I—I do not feel ashamed at being merely one Fluvian Chamant, son of a reputable notary of Mortagne,—at peace with all the world, and only at times disturbed lest my sire, in his anxiety that I should make a suitable appearance among my comrades, may too generously cripple his own means.”

“ And still, citoyen Chamant, as it is not altogether a plebeian name you bear, I must, all the same, insist that you are an aristocrat. Tell me now,—do you not secretly pride yourself upon royal or princely blood in your veins, be it ever so little, from some distant source ? ”

“ Ah, citoyenne, you are pleased to be very hard upon me. As though a poor unknown artist could, in any way, have royal blood ; or if he had, might pride

himself upon it! And yet, who knows but what, if it were so, I might not really make it my boast? For we are all so foolishly constructed, that much as we claim superiority over fashion or habit, often we do not fail to revel in our hearts over the slightest chance of self-exaltation. Nay, there is no royal or princely blood with us,—very little of any noble blood at all, even from the most distant descent, except in one matter which surely is too far off to excite due cause of pride. All that we can boast ourselves upon is a descent, through some female branch, from an olden chieftain of one of the Crusades, one Roux, Count de Sainte-Maure, of—”

“Of the Count Roux de Sainte-Maure?” I whispered feebly to myself. For, at the moment, I could not speak aloud, being so astonished at this sudden utterance of my ancestor’s name. And I gazed stealthily up at the artist, to see how far he really knew me through my disguise, and how far, all the while, he had been making his sport of me, before at last revealing me to myself. But his face was calm and impassive. There were sincerity and truthfulness in his deep dark eyes. I knew that he was innocent of my identity, and that the mention of that name was only a matter of curious coincidence. And I felt a thrill of delight at knowing that, after all, there might be something in common between us—that, inasmuch as his manner pleased me, so I might justify myself for that faint

leaning towards a stranger, with the excuse that we were not altogether alien to each other.

“They say the old Count has his tomb somewhere near Paris,” continued the artist, “and sometimes I have thought that I would visit it. This is mainly when I have mused upon what might have been my present condition, if only I had drawn my descent through the male instead of through the female line. But after all, I have never visited the tomb; for returning sense always ends my speculations, and I see that to me it can be nothing. For, indeed, it was hundreds of years ago that he lived; and with the expanding record of descent through so many generations, there must now be even thousands of lineal descendants of the Count,—some looking back to him with nearness of thought as though close of kin, others as near as I and yet beggars in the street, and never having heard of him at all. Yes, citoyenne Carnot, there is indeed little to pride oneself upon, in being only one of thousands drawing descent from one old Count so many centuries away.”

It was so, indeed; and somehow I felt my heart sink within me, as I realized, that, judging from mere reasoning fact, there was in truth no tie between us worth the thinking about. And yet, so unreasoning are we, when a desire or aspiration has taken hold of us, that I felt I could not release the slender chain of sentiment of which I had taken hold. There was

something in the idea which I could not now give up. However distant, there was still the fact of kindred blood flowing in our veins, though ever so minutely. I could make pretence of this, perhaps, to call him friend, if never he should disgrace the title.

“Doubtless, citoyen Chamant, you are worthy to trace descent from many a better man than the old Count,” I said ; and somehow the words came strangely from my lips, for I had been taught to look back reverently upon the author of my race, and this seemed the first heretical utterance of my life. Was I then actually imbibing, from mere contiguity, any of the sans-culotte doctrines of the day ? “Doubtless,” I continued, in sheer despite of tradition, “almost any man can trace for himself a better life than that of the Count ; for, though a brave knight, he may have been a hard and cruel man at heart, as so many of his kind necessarily must have been.”

“It may be so—it may be so, citoyenne. And now, permit me that I take my leave. But first—” and, for the moment, he stood irresolute, and from the expression of his earnest face, I read the words almost before he uttered them,—the same request, indeed, that heretofore he had proffered. “First, citoyennes, let me ask whether, sometimes when you walk abroad, I might not venture to join you. Not always, indeed, but sometimes. It would, perhaps, be protection to



you,—and I—you know the pleasure I should take in it.”

I looked at Flonsette and she at me. Her face was almost radiant with pleading anticipation. Poor girl,—I said to myself,—why should I condemn her always to my dull society and after so many months of constant sacrifice for me? Then, feeling the fallacy of creating excuses on her behalf, I turned my thoughts inwardly upon myself. Would this be right that was now proposed? Surely it was against the traditions of my race;—and what would Cousin Gervais say if ever he heard of it? But, on the other hand, rebelliously I argued, what should it matter to Cousin Gervais, who had never breathed to me a single word of love? And why, since I had been thus left to lead the life of a lower class, should I not as well take its privileges, instead of venturing out unprotected, or, as the only other recourse, pining in unhealthy seclusion? Then, was not this citizen Chamant of my own descent and blood?

Confused and undecided, I looked towards him. He stood expectant, with his hand upon the handle of the door, and gazed earnestly into my face. I read in his expression so much of admiration, and yet of courtly deference to my will,—such pleading and entreaty for that little boon,—how could I have the heart longer to resist?

“Can it be so, citoyennes?” he whispered.

“Perhaps,” I only said, and even hesitatingly at that; and before I could make up my mind whether it were best to recall the word, he had closed the door between us.





## CHAPTER IX.

**I**T happened that almost a week elapsed before again I left the house. Whether in the mean time I pondered much upon the late interview, I can hardly tell. Of course I remembered it and sometimes gave it chance consideration; but if I formed any opinion regarding it, at all, it must have been rather in the way of vague impression, that what had been said could be of little serious moment,—the idle words of a passing hour, never to expect any especial fulfilment. Yet when at last Flonsette and myself sallied forth to resume our olden explorations,—and it was with something of a thrill of apprehension, seeing that the memories of our late escape from massacre yet lurked around me in the shape of brooding terrors,—hardly had we advanced many paces, when the young artist came forward and took his place at my right hand. He had evidently been watching for us.

“Good day, citoyennes.”

“ Good day, citoyen Chamant.”

“ I have kept my promise, you see,” he said, “ and now hold you to yours as well. For it is a matter of risk for you to journey about alone, and it is no slight pleasure for me to offer protection.”

What could I say? I had made no promise, it is true; and yet I had weakly said “ perhaps,” which, little as it might amount to in itself, could easily be twisted into much, by an impulsive mind. And now that the artist was walking along beside me, with all the maintained serenity of assured permission, how could I venture to send him away again? That, surely, would be too cruel. And then, once more, was he not of my own descent and blood? Therefore, at the moment I spoke no word, but strolled along, merely listening to his remarks. And yet, it were foolish always to maintain this spirit of retirement, nor could all the reticence in the world alter the main fact that I was walking with him in the public street. So, after a while I broke my silence, only at first in the way of monosyllabic response,—then with longer utterance as one topic led to another;—and soon we passed into the merry glow of equally sustained conversation, as though we had been for years acquainted.

Not all at once, however, did I feel completely at my ease. It was a novel thing, indeed, for me, a member of the old nobility of France, thus to assume and copy the manners of any other class. Frightened

and shy, at first, I walked along, feeling as though every moment I must endure detection. That guard who stood with poised musket at the park gates,—might he not, at some other day, have stood at the palace gate as well, and now be able to recognize me? And though, with kindness of heart he might not give the hue and cry for my arrest, would he not, at night, tell his comrades how he had seen the proud Marquise de Sainte-Maure, in working-girl's attire, strolling along with artist-student, and that now, all might laugh to find the rigid propriety of the aristocrats voluntarily brought so low? That common peasant with the clanking boots, shambling along with boorish air, as though as yet unused to any pace excepting in the ploughed furrow,—might not he be my Cousin Gervais, again in his disguise and lingering near to watch over my safety and gain new tidings of me? And seeing me thus escorted, would he not turn away without a word, deeming that no excuse could set aside the fault, and so cast me off from even relationship with him, and feel free to make my name the scorn of all the Court, in whatever countries found lingering? Such fancies came to me each moment, and, for the time, I seemed to shrink away at every unaccustomed sound; feeling less free from danger than when, of old, I had loitered through the narrow streets with only Flonsette at my side.

But it is strange how speedily custom will adapt

one to almost any new position, or how easily drooping courage will revive with some novel mood of mind. When next we sallied forth, hardly had we well started upon our way, when, as before, the watchful artist joined us. And now, whether it was that all my store of apprehension had already been exhausted, or whether I happened for the day to be in some more than usually elated and courageous spirit, I beheld his coming without a tremor, even, perhaps, with secret pleasure. For a better flow of reason had hastened to my aid, and I knew once more, that my disguise of plain dress and half drawn veil was too perfect to fear detection. I began, also, to feel that there was nothing unsuitable in my manner of escort, since here and there we would meet other parties similarly made up and attracting no especial remark. Again, too, there came upon me the pleasant realization of protection. No longer did I have that first impression of Flonsette being my best refuge, but I knew, assuredly, that there was virtue in a manly presence. It was a cheery thing, too, no longer to be obliged to wander timorously through the narrow alleys, but rather to plunge boldly into the broadest streets and squares,—to take our places upon the shadowed benches of the public gardens and watch the passage of the shifting populace,—sometimes to wander off to hill-top or terrace and note the gayety of some civic fête. Gradually, too, our communication became more and more unre-

strained. Between us there grew up the feeling of friendship; and, as will so often happen when there is some sympathy of taste, a pleasant perception of having known each other for years. In such spirit of confidence, he would tell me about his native home in the outskirts of Mortagne,—about his parents, of whom he was the chief ambition,—about his only sister, whom he wished that I could see, and who, in turn, was his ruling pride. Sometimes it seemed to me that I ought to repay these confidences with similar rejoinder of my own,—inventing something to the purpose, inasmuch as I could not reveal my actual self;—but what history, after all, should there be to a poor working-girl of the people? Therefore I kept silence; and though, at times, he seemed to wish that he could hear me speak more about myself, I easily evaded direct inquiry, and on the whole, he remained not dissatisfied, perhaps from that very belief that I could have no especial history at all.

Soon came the time when, instead of once or twice a week, we walked out every day,—when I looked for his coming with all innocent feeling of friendship, not dreaming that ever there could be aught else,—when the hour seemed to have passed unsatisfactorily, during which he had not been with us,—when it was truly a wasted day, when anything hindered walking at all. There might be rain, perhaps; but even this had its consolations. For to that pass had our friendship come

at last, that I did not think it wrong to sit at my little window upon the narrow side court and look across to him with greeting—I with my flowers and he with his painting; and so we would pass the compliments of the morning, and even at times indulge in random scraps of conversation. There was one week when he was away upon a visit to his home in Mortagne, and then I found that the days went very slowly. Flonsette and I betook ourselves, it is true, to our former style of loitering in the narrow streets,—but somehow, the charm of it was gone. The picture-shops and book stalls that had entertained us seemed to have lost something of the interest they had formerly possessed,—it was not so pleasant, after all, to walk only with Flonsette, who, in addition, had somewhat changed from what she had been of old, becoming silent and reserved in manner. Therefore, during that week, our walks grew less and less in duration, so that now I spent half the day with my friend Madre, who remained ever the same—calm, gentle and resigned, and never weary of her recollections of those gloomy days of grandeur at the De Valery chateau. And in all this, I let her wander on unrestrained, musing much to myself about many other things, and feeling at times a secret compunction that I could no longer open all my own confidences to her. For how, with her old fashioned strict ideas, which would assuredly prevent her sympathizing in the lonely feeling that had led me



to adopt another friend and from such different rank of life, and which would not allow of her comprehending the zest with which I attached myself to that one fine fibre of mutual ancestry with him,—how could I ever venture to confess to her those morning strolls with the young citizen-artist Fluvian Chamant?

They were so pleasant, indeed,—and the more so, perhaps, after his return. For then I seemed to throw myself into them with greater ardor, as though to make up for the past deprivation; and little by little, our taste began to lead us away from any purposeless wandering and into certain paths and retreats which we found out that we loved more than any places elsewhere. There was one short narrow street leading down into an open square, and which was so filled with little shops of pictures and silverware that it always took us an hour to loiter through. There was one quiet walk along Montmartre, shaded with trees, and whence we could look down upon the city,—a gleaming hive of pleasant life, with all its atrocities hidden or absorbed in the full spread-out picture of apparent general enjoyment. And there was one spot upon the border of the Seine, at Courbevoie—oh! how I learned to love that nook—ever after to love the sweet memory of it!

It was a place where the bank rose two or three feet from the surface of the water, rounding up from the edge and presenting on top a few yards of level

grass. Only a few yards, indeed, for the thick shrubbery grew close around on either side, so cosily shutting in that little area of green sod, that it seemed to us as though we had a special proprietorship in it,—the ownership of original discovery. Others, of course, must have wandered into it before, and doubtless like ourselves, have enjoyed its pleasant seclusion; but for all that, it seemed now given up to us alone. It could be reached most easily by boat, and whenever we came to it, there it lay unoccupied and apparently awaiting us, so that it is no wonder if, at last, we began to look upon it as exclusively our own. A gnarled root of oak projecting from the earth, made convenient foothold for us to leap ashore, as well as a place for mooring our little boat. Almost in the centre of the turf rose two tall pines, spreading out from a single root, shadowing the grass from the ardor of the sun, and with their trunks gently inclining so as to form convenient position for the back. Seated upon my spread-out shawl, here would I remain with my body leaning against the largest tree-trunk, while Fluvian Chamant, with book and pencil in hand, made feeble pretence of sketch work. But all the while there was little sketching done, indeed, our poor energies being too enervated for any labor. To watch the clouds drifting among the pines, sometimes seeming so deceptively near as liable to be entangled in the tree-tops,—to see the many boats with other pleasure par-

ties darting to and fro over the glassy river, none of them, by sympathetic instinct, coming near us, and many of them doubtless, seeking for other similar nooks along the banks,—to recline and talk vague nothings, until the gathering indistinctness of the further shore warned us that evening was coming on apace and we must be gone,—what other than all this in the shape of labor could our idle souls endure?

Pleasant days, indeed,—known to be so at the time, in the conscious serene enjoyment of them,—more pleasant yet, when afterwards looked back upon, with the gathered aureola of their distant memories. Why is it that the heart so seldom can be fully conscious of the full volume of its immediate joy? Yet I knew it then, somewhat,—feeling that I was content, yet not able perfectly to analyze the actual sources of my happiness. It was the open air and sunshine,—to myself I said, whenever I ventured inwardly to inquire the reason why. It was the abundant exercise that braced my nerves and made my whole body glow with newer life. More than all, it was the ability I had discovered in myself to partake of the genial unfettered pastimes of the people—I, who so long had been fettered with the unreasonable trammels of court etiquette and form. This was how I reasoned with myself; and indeed, there was much in the last supposition that would stand the test as true.

For after all, with my natural impulsiveness and

elasticity of heart, the rigid observances of court life had never been wholly to my taste, though, at the time, I had not known my heart's proclivity towards rebellion. I had endured them because I was there and in among them, knowing no other life; even as a child brought up in convent seclusion will even cheerfully bear its restraints, by reason of its want of consciousness of anything else more pleasant. I had seen the people only as I had passed through their haunts, at times, in my own glass coach. I had thought of them, if I thought at all, simply as laborers for my benefit, and content to labor, and as in a state where some ruling providence had placed them from the first, and there-bade them remain. All beneath my own degree to whom I could ever speak, were soldiers, court-actors and menials of diverse station; and these all-treated me with such deferential homage as left me no choice but to believe that my lot, as one of the favored ones of earth, was the only one which had its true and natural enjoyments. When, therefore, within so few months past, a more intimate knowledge of the people taught me that they, too, had their hopes and joys, their pleasures and their ambitions, it was as if a new light shone into my soul,—as though, indeed, I had journeyed into some unknown land and there discovered a new race of men. And when, at last, I forsook my distant post of observation in the silent seclusion of my garret-room, and after a few feeble, timid

venturings, thus took courage and boldly plunged into the unaccustomed turmoil and excitement around me, it became to me as though I were at last endowed with a newer and more enjoyable life.

For then I seemed, myself, to have become one of the people and to have taken their condition upon me. And wherever I looked, I found them apparently all happy and with a kind of joyous, unrestrained content, such as before I had never known. I saw them at their sports, and these seemed enjoyed with an open social zest which I had never comprehended. Even when I watched them at their labor, I discovered that at times they sang. Had they always been as happy as this? Why then, had they rebelled? Or had they never been thus happy before? Why then, had they not earlier rebelled? Such were often the musings of my soul. For it must be remembered that, in all this, I was allowing myself to be partially deceived. I saw the people only at their best,—in their holiday attire. I saw them where their labors were of the joyous or tranquil kind. I saw them at their fêtes and holidays. Even the midnight march of clubs, with its pageantry of flaming torches and discordant drums, now and then passing beneath my window, spoke to me not so much of discord as of a certain picturesque riotous elation of uproarious pleasure. All the while, I saw not the squalid misery that raged and festered in certain quarters of the city, for into such unsightly places

my guardian Chamant, anxious only for my pleasure, had never led me. All the while, too, the dreadful tumbril was daily dragging its despairing freight of men and women to the guillotine, but this, too, I never saw or even imagined. To me was the insect-like enjoyment of pleasant sunlight and surrounding happy scenes,—this was all that then I comprehended.

Gradually too, there grew upon me a half defined desire that all this joy could last forever,—mingled with the dread that soon—at any time, indeed, too soon—it must come to an end. If a few months ago I had been told that before long I would be enjoying the life of ordinary citizens and with such keen sense of personal freedom and independence, that I would at last believe there could be no life equal to it, what might I not have answered in reply to such apparent absurdity of prediction? Yet now that time had arrived and its only bar to perfect enjoyment seemed to be in the constant foreboding that some day the end would come. How or when, I did not know,—these things never happen as we might expect, and I hardly ventured any except the most vague prophecies. It might be that I would die; but that, it seemed, would be no such great matter, as then, at least, the pleasant season would have lasted out my time. It might be that the rule of kings would be restored; and then of course I must perforce resume my olden condition and bid farewell to freedom from tedious form and eti-

quette. What was the current of the public news I did not know ; and, in my contentment with the present, I forbore to ask. King Louis the Seventeenth yet lingered in the Temple Prison ; but at foreign courts, the faithful nobility were still intriguing to muster armies with which to place him upon his rightful seat. This I knew, but nothing beyond ;—whether these armies were really mustered, whether they were awaiting events upon the border—whether they were close at hand. It might be that any day those armies would come crashing into fire-enveloped Paris,—it might be that the people were already preparing their minds to welcome the imprisoned king with garlands. About all this, I could not tell. I only felt the saddening anxious thought, that to my present pleasant life, some day the end would surely come.

Yet the weeks flew round and nothing seemed to happen. Until, one afternoon, we sat,—Flonsette and Fluvian Chamant and myself,—upon our favorite bench near the edge of the Montmartre hill, and looked down upon the city, glistening bright and lovely in the full blaze of a joyous sunlight. Around us at different distances were other groups of citizens with their families, all pleasantly taking in the scene. At a little distance was a small estaminet with two tables brought out in front ; and at these tables sat a group of officers of the national army. They were not in the gorgeous array of gold lace and embroidery that would once

have characterized the officers of the royal guard, their uniforms being plain and somewhat well worn, a few of the wearers having evidently lately seen active service upon the border. A service productive of victory, most likely, for no discontent sat upon their bronzed features. On the contrary, their conversation was loud and merry, mingled with broken scraps of army song, all betokening a state of contentment with the world and themselves.

For a while, I took little heed of them. But at length it seemed as though their careless song had commenced to die away, and soon I noticed that they were engaged in whispered conversation with each other. I observed it the more, indeed, for the reason that we seemed to be the object of their talk; for each moment, they turned and gazed intently towards Flonsette and myself. Something about our figures or our half disclosed faces had seemingly attracted them, for they gazed and gazed again, and continued among themselves a series of whispered criticisms. At length one of them, flushed somewhat with wine, arose and passed before us, with obvious desire to gain a closer view. Then back again, this time staring more intently than before. There was an insolence in this continued close gaze under which I could see that Fluvian Chamant's blood began to boil. Then, when the action was a second time repeated, he made some caustic speech intended to reach the ears of the offend-



er. To this came an answering remark, flippant and contemptuous and too closely bordering upon insult. Another retort from Chamant; and before I was well aware how the matter had progressed, the quarrel was at its height and the whole party of officers had tumultuously risen and had thronged towards us. All of them, equally flushed with wine, indulged in loud talk and seemed inclined to take their companion's part to the bitter end, and right or wrong;—all except one.

“Ta! ta!” said this one. “Let us not be hasty. Let us first hear what it is all about.”

He was a small, thin, sallow-faced officer, in very dingy artillery uniform. His forehead was broad and high; and even amid the confusion, I could not avoid noticing the immense fixedness of purpose in his firm, thin lips and his pointed chin. His eyes were bright and piercing;—and, as he stood with hands clasped behind him and head bent slightly forward, and so for a moment gazed upon me, I felt that somehow, he was looking me through and through.

“Let us first hear what it is all about,” he said again; and with that, he gathered the rest around him at a little distance and they held a whispered colloquy. At first with violence of action, but soon with increasing appearance of calmness; and I could see that the young sallow-faced officer was urging his policy of peace upon the others.

“Buonaparte is right!” at length one of them exclaimed, “and it is thy part, Julian, to make amends.”

And inasmuch as the others now chimed in with similar judgment, the offender came slowly forward,—not pleasantly, but as one who is driven to a disagreeable duty.

“Citoyen,” he said to Chamant, stepping before him with unrestrained ungraciousness of mien. “I have been wrong. Accept my regrets.”

“Lieutenant, it is all forgotten and past,” was the response; and so again they parted. The officers returned to their wine, and, after a little while, we took up our homeward route. I felt that Chamant had achieved a triumph, and was proud of him. I was glad too, for my own sake as well as his, that the quarrel had been thus happily brought to a conclusion, without further fear of bloodshed. And I was surprised to find that Chamant remained moody and apparently dissatisfied.

“Is it ever to be so?” he said at length. “Is there never to be a time in which the plain citizen will not be tyrannized over by some other class? We have put down king and court, and raised our own armies—and have imagined that at last we were free, yet now—”

“And are you not free?” I interrupted.

“Now,” he continued, “there is another power rising up to look down upon and crush us—the army

itself. Did you not see it all, in those last few minutes,—the whole tendency of the thing? Under the Court, that man who had insulted you must next day have fought me. The king was then above all, but the army was not so far above the people that it could despise a fair demand for redress. But now—I have keen ears, and I heard part of what that young officer whom they called Buonaparte counselled, and I learned the drift of all his argument. It was that the army was already being looked upon with jealousy by the state and must be quiet and abide its time until it had overcome some present weakness and established itself in power. - That the offender must now apologize to me, inasmuch as the slaying of a citizen in a duel might savor of presumption and breach of law, and array more strongly against the army some present prejudice of the people, and that this, for the time, must be avoided.”

“But yet he did apologize,” I interrupted. “And so your own honor has been saved.”

“Yes, he made that poor amend, and I perforce, must so accept it. Yet was not that very amend a newer and continued insult? It was because he was told to do it; and looking down upon us as he did, it hurt not his pride as it should have done. Among his own fellows, the sword alone could have atoned for his offence; no words of regret could have passed, until the rapiers had clinked together and some wound been opened. But we—we are of a lower class, and

can be put off from our merited satisfaction with a mere word. It is as when one wounds the feelings of a servant,—it is easy to make amends and there is no sense of disgrace in doing so. So now we are being looked upon as the servants of the army, to be offended at will and then coolly baulked of our revenge with the muttered thread of a regret.”

“Fluvian,” I said, for the first time calling him by his name, inasmuch as I was sorry for him and anxious to soothe, and feeling that perhaps there might, in the eyes of a man, be many gleams of truth in this sombre aspect of the matter, “How should all that concern you? Let the army and the people stand towards each other as they may,—does it alter your power to be my sure protection? Trodden down and weak as you may deem yourself, have you not been already able to save me once from certain death and now from continued insult?”

“Adele,” he responded, with sudden impulse pressing closer to my side and whispering into my ear, so that Flonsette, who hung upon his other arm, might not hear, “in that, surely, I have been fortunate, indeed. May I—may I hope that I can have the right ever henceforth to be your safety from all harm?”

At hearing this, the blood went from my face to my heart. My happiness seemed to fly away in one single instant; for I felt now, indeed, as I had so long apprehended, that at last the end had surely come.



## CHAPTER X.

**W**HAT could I do or say? I only now remember that, overcome by my startled perceptions, for a few moments I remained speechless, staring blankly in front, down the long narrow street, the tall houses seeming to approach each other and again recede as though in some wild dance, and, at times, a mist gathering before my eyes, and, for the instant, altogether blotting out the view. And all the while I could feel rather than see, that my companion was turned toward me, looking down at my straight-set face with earnest, expectant gaze,—imploing me, as it were for that answer which, in the heedless blindness of my late course, I had unwittingly so well taught him to expect.

Yes,—it was all over now—the end had come at last. And yet, how could I tell him this, with Flonsette upon his other arm and certain to hear everything above the merest whisper? It could not be told in an instant,—with any single look or motion of the

hand. An assent might thus be intimated, but never the reverse. There must be some labored explanation,—perhaps a long and stormy one. Must I still, through it all, continue my disguise of station and fabricate some plea which he could accept unquestioned? Or should I tell him all, trusting myself to his generous confidence; and so, with one revelation, convince him that what he had desired could never be?

Many minutes of this troubled thought,—and all the while that eager, imploring gazing down into my face, wondering why the answer did not come. At last I saw that we had turned a corner, and that I stood before our own door. The mist seemed to disperse from before my eyes, for now there could be delay, and delay was present relief. I drew my arm from his,—and, for the first time, looked fully at him.

“To-morrow—at two o’clock I will see you—alone—in the old place,” I whispered. Then, turning away to avoid his renewed pleading—for Flonsette, with some seeming suspicion that she must not listen, had already parted from us, and was within the building, and he appeared disposed to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded,—I also broke from him and gained the stairs. Running up at first with nervous haste, as though fearing to be pursued,—then subsiding into a mere snail-like progress, as my troubled thoughts gained new control over me,—so, at last reaching my own room, where I flung myself down

upon my bed, and, in that easy retirement, vainly sought for such reflection as might lead to composure and peace.

For now, there began to steal upon me a new and terrible thought,—coming upon me insidiously at first, creeping slowly onwards degree by degree like the first faint glow of dawn,—then, when the way seemed fully prepared for it, bursting upon my startled world of revery with the dazzling fullness of the uprisen sun. Was I so sure,—I began to reason,—that I was altogether sorry for this, or, if I were sorry as for a thing which had ended all my pleasure, that it was displeasing to my heart? Though my late joyous life was now no longer capable of being pursued,—though that which Fluvian Chamant asked of me could never be, was there not some secret kindling of my heart, unknown until now, making me wish that it might be, after all? Had I, in my blind composure, all the while deceived myself, waking up at last too late to the knowledge that I had unwittingly been nourishing such growing inclination as made the words of love not unpleasing to my ears, though I must forbid any further utterance of them? Could it really be true that all this time, Fluvian had been becoming more and more dear to me?

Vainly I sought to reject the thought, as some mere diseased phantasm of the moment,—an idle thing which could have no comprehensive being, and which

would almost immediately pass away of itself and thenceforth be to me no longer known. Still it clung to me, and when I retired and endeavored to find oblivion in sleep, it tinged all my dreams. Not as yet appearing, in any settled, sobered form, indeed, but rather mingling itself with all kinds of distorted fancies, coming in here and there in new guises, but always, no matter how it stole forward, ending by obtruding itself in something partaking of its first created nature. The skeleton of a thought, sometimes, bound up amidst the wildest and most impalpable visions, yet ever clothing itself at the end in some likeness to its original self. A thing that would not let itself be laid aside; but whether I dreamed that I was in castle court or upon sandy plain, in the midst of brilliant throngs or in utter loneliness, each moment I seemed to be turning aside from every attraction or care and asking myself whether I did not regret, after all, that it could never be as Fluvian wished!

These thoughts took clearer shape again, of course, when I awoke. Even then, I had full opportunity for reflection; for I was almost as one alone, Flonsette moving around me in moody silence, and in continuance, it seemed, of what had been her state the whole of the previous evening. Again there came over me the suspicion that she might have overheard Fluvian's whispered appeal,—and I thought that perhaps she was troubled in heart because I had not at once con-



fided in her. This, indeed, I could not do,—and why after all, should I feel beholden to it? In all my thoughts and actions was I not my own mistress? Therefore, I left her to her own disconsolate withdrawal, and in silence, still endeavored to unravel my perplexities.

And now, while with the sunlight, my thoughts no longer appeared in phantom guise, but in all the certainty of distinct perception, there came to me a newer train of speculation. What if, after all, it was not true that this thing could never be? Why might not circumstances have so arranged it, that what before was simply impossible could now become reality? At this new conception, again my soul seemed to shrink back within itself, affrighted and dismayed. It was a thing of which, coming by itself, I could never have dreamed. Only now did it gain partial admission to my mind, prepared as it had been by the passage of that previous thought; and even then did I strive to drive it away as something monstrous,—not for one instant to be regarded.

Surely it were, indeed, a sin to think of such a thing,—to encourage the slightest dream of ill faith. For was I not bound in betrothal to my Cousin Gervais? Such was the first current of my thought,—the remedy with which I would fain harden myself against unbecoming longing after the impossible. And yet to that, there came instant and ready re-

sponse. For how was I really betrothed,—or what claim of that kind upon me could rightfully be held by one who, accepting me at the first as a gift from politic and wordly-wise guardians, had never tried with whispered words of love, to touch one tender chord in my nature,—had always maintained apparent indifference towards me, as though fearing to make mockery for others by display of any tenderness? What though there might really have been love in his heart, and all that reticence were the mere affectation of a courtier, maintaining the life and traditions of our court,—are there not words to which any young girl would innocently be glad to listen, and which could be uttered at chance moments when no mocking courtiers might be at hand to overhear? Truly Fluvian Chamant, had he been Baron de Montfaucon, would never have worn his prize thus calmly. But with that thought, again I shrank back appalled. It was a comparison that it seemed disloyal for me to utter, even to myself, and though I had that moment been arguing away my sense of loyalty with all the logic my poor unsophisticated soul could gather.

But there was the king,—I said,—who with his royal hand had sealed consent to my guardian's intentions for me;—was not his will to be respected? The charge had fallen upon a successor,—it was true,—and he now a prisoner in the Temple; but did not his prerogatives follow him? Yet here there was less logic

needed to set me aright, for I knew that the king had other things to think of than the maintenance of such a small prerogative as this, while, in addition, it was by no means certain that in anything but name he would ever be a king at all. Be that as it might, how at any time, could he have the right to give away my heart and hand like mere ancestral heirlooms, to any one towards whom I might not myself incline? What is the king to me? I said to myself, with sudden boldness of revolt. And then, once more I shrank dismayed. It was my first impetuous disclaim of real unfettered loyalty, and I felt almost terror-stricken at my audacity. It almost seemed as though my secret thought must, by some instinct of subtle perception, have reached the Temple prison and there caused grave offence, as of allegiance rudely broken. Yet closing my lips, I forbore, even inwardly, to withdraw the thought. Disloyal or not, it must there remain, for I felt that it was a just and true utterance of my soul.

And then I sat and reflected upon the many chances of the future,—how it might happen that the court, with all its belongings and traditions, was really swept away forever,—how that then my own patrimony must surely be gone from me as well,—and how that, inasmuch as an union of estate had been at first the only bond between Gervais and myself, it might well be that other interests would supervene and that even now we had had our final parting. Nor did the prospect

of my poverty dismay me, for with it there seemed to come a sweet, tranquilizing dream. No king to command my troth,—no court to criticise my course,—no interested bridegroom to demand allegiance as mere matter of honor and respect. Only Fluvian,—and no one near with the right to bid us nay. The atelier for my only saloon,—but he would there be with me. The coloring of maps a reality at last, perhaps, instead of a mere pretence; but what of that? When the day's work was over, then would be the ramblings through the picturesque old streets, the row along the Courbevoie bank, or the quiet lounge upon the Montmartre slope; for all these pleasures which I had supposed were over, would then be renewed, and for our lives' duration.

I awoke from this pleasant dream with a sudden start,—almost a thrill of terror. It was too much joy that this should ever be true. The king and court were not yet swept into oblivion, but would return. There were responsibilities upon me which I could not avoid,—and which I could not dare to sacrifice. Were I so to do, how could I ever endure the gibes and sneers of that restored world from out of which I should for ever have shut myself? What, too, if this after all, should prove to be only some wandering girlish fancy, unstable and hence unworthy of any loss of birthright?

I looked at my watch. During my silent reveries

the morning had glided away, and it was now near two o'clock. Soon, Fluvian Chamant must have his answer, and it could be of only one purport. To this intent I must stifle every longing of my heart. How I should tell it to him as yet I did not know,—only that somehow it must be told. Doubtless the occasion would bring the manner, and far more suitably than, in advance, I could ever hope to contrive it.

“I am going out,” I said to Flonsette. “For a few minutes, only. Do you remain here, for to-day I wish to be alone.”

She looked at me in something like wonderment, but remained speechless. It was not for her, indeed, to question me about my goings. Therefore it was that now she said nothing. And yet, there was a pained expression upon her face; for I had never previously ventured forth alone, and there could not fail to be a suspicion in her mind, inasmuch as my action seemed so closely to connect itself with what she might have noticed upon the previous evening. Still I forbore all manner of explanation, and so left her alone and passed along the hall on my way towards the stairs; glancing in at Madre, according to my usual custom, as I reached her room.

As generally now happened, her door was ajar, and I could look in without being myself seen. Somewhat to my surprise, she was not busy at her work, but sat, apparently lost and abstracted, with her back par-

tially turned towards me, her face to the window. There was something mournful and saddened in her expression, and I saw that she was gazing upon some object which lay upon her lap. In both face and attitude there seemed such an earnest longing for sympathy, that I felt my soul touched. What, after all, was my desolation to hers,—a solitude prolonged throughout so many years,—day by day, with corroding tooth, eating into her heart? I remembered that I had not visited her during the whole morning, and that, at various times of late, I must have seemed neglectful of her. Surely my own discomfort of soul should not make me neglectful of her friendship, and there were still a few moments before me. Therefore I pushed open the door, and quickly advancing, knelt down beside her and placed my head and hands in her lap. She started; and, with the motion, I saw that what she had been gazing at upon her lap was the little faded piece of paper with the enclosed lock of light brown hair,—the token which she had once shown me, of some long past sorrow or romance.

“Tell me about it, Madre,” I said, seeing something in her expression indicative of a desire for confidence. “Was it so long ago that it is now gone forever?”

“It was very long ago, indeed, my child. Nearly forty years. It is too late for it ever to come again, except in thoughts which are of no more tangible

shape than so many vanished dreams. And yet, at times, when I look at this, it sometimes comes up before me, even like a present reality."

"But did you love him, Madre? And he,—must he not have loved you? Why, then, did it never come about? Perhaps he was not worthy of you."

"He was worthy, in heart and soul, of better than me," she answered. "He was pure and honorable and upright,—a man among men. But—it was while I was living at the Chateau Valery, during the lifetime of the Duke, my grand-uncle. I was very happy at first in the sunshine of that great love, which for the while we kept secret, fearing opposition. And when at last they found it out, they made me give him up. It cost me many bitter tears, child, nor has the shadow passed entirely from my life; but yet—he was not of our rank, and perhaps it was right that I was made to obey them."

"But could he not have waited, Madre? Had he been faithful, it seems to me that in after years—"

"Why should he wait, when I had told him so firmly that it could never be? I know that, at the time, he mourned for me, and more than this I could not ask. Then new lapse of time healed his wound, as it heals almost everything, and I heard that he had married;—mating, in his own class, with one who doubtless loved him faithfully, but surely not better than I would have done. Anyhow, it was over—and

of all the past I have only this little lock of hair. Nor did I ever see him afterwards. Sometimes I had it in my mind to visit at his place and gain one more look upon him,—not letting him see me, but standing veiled before his house so as to watch him pass out. But I was always too poor to make even that little journey, and so the years flew by, and now I know that I can never see him more, even were he yet alive.”

“It is a sad story, Madre,” I said, “nor can I believe that you did well to let it come to such an end. Noble in heart and life, you say he was ; only separated from you because he was not of the noble blood. Should there never be any exemption from this ban ? May there not be times when merit may override mere social state, so as to take its honored place among the great and powerful ? Suppose that he had been a man of noted genius—a poet, painter or sculptor of high renown, as perhaps he was—might it not be—”

“He was none of these, dear child. He was no man of genius at all—merely a good citizen of fair worth and reputation. But had he been a Moliere or Titian, even—what then had been the difference ?”

“Only this, dear Madre,” I answered ; and I felt the blush stealing to my face, for now first I became aware that, through the example of her unhappy lot, I was arguing for a better fate to myself—striving to impress upon her a principle that I might adapt to



my own career—"only this, that we have the example of Moliere and Titian to show that genius can for its own merits have recognition among the lofty. Did not the Emperor Charles do homage, as it were, to the great Titian—stooping, even, to lift up the painter's fallen brush?"

"A story which is often told, my child, and has so few counterparts in history, that it stands almost alone as royalty's recognition of true genius. Nor has it been told so much in Titian's honor as in flattery of that imperial condescension. It was the monarch's whim of the passing moment,—and he could do that, because the painter was so far beneath him that there could be no loss of caste in the civility. What Charles then did, none of the courtiers would have dared to do;—for to them there might have come suspicion of degradation. What Charles once did, he might never have thought of doing again: and after that, had Titian ever, with meaning delay, awaited a repetition of the act, how soon would the emperor have punished the effrontery with banishment from court? And what one of those men of genius who have adorned the walls of Versailles and were there petted by their royal masters, would ever have dared to presume upon a chance attention, or to receive their caresses in any other spirit than as the favored lap-dogs of the hour?"

Even as Madre spoke, I looked inquiringly into her face,—half affrighted, too, with the fear that she had

read my heart and had heard of all my late adventuring, and now was speaking less from some general principle than for my own counsel and guidance. It seemed so true, all that she said,—so fitted to my own unhappy case; and as I listened, more and more my heart sank into deeper despondency, with the conviction that what I wished could never be.

“Ah no, my child,” she continued, rising and putting away the little lock of hair;—and, though I was not certain, I thought that she pressed a kiss upon it as she bent over the box within which she carefully laid it by—“he—my one love, was no genius such as any of whom we know or read; nor, if he had been, would it have availed. We of our class, have our duties to maintain, nor should we ever be tempted to depart from them. He whom I so much loved was worthy of better than myself—that I have said already. But he was a plain citizen, not of ourselves, and therefore I was warned that it must not be. And so we parted, never again to meet. Did I do wrong? It was a sore trial to me, nor has the bitterness of it ever passed out of my life. And yet, when I think of it and of my duties to my own class, I cannot but believe that I acted for the best.”

And I, as I looked upon her, knew full well that she had not done rightly. In her inordinate concurrence with the traditions of her race, she had worked herself into some exalted impression of a duty owing

by her, without whose strict payment society itself, might become disintegrated ;—and I knew that she was wrong. Even in matters of rank, there is a sliding scale, and there may be circumstances which will justify desertion in one of lower degree, though others far above must still stand firm. And here, it seemed that Madre might well have deserted, and not thus, in overstrained obedience to an artificial principle, have given up love and a happy home, and all that could make life pleasant,—taking upon herself the continued burden of loneliness and poverty. Doing this, too, at the behest of those who, when she separated from them, gave her no further thought, nor would have cared if she had died of penury in her garret. No—she had not done well ; but yet, though I did not now excuse her, I felt that my own heart sank yet lower into misery with its own weight.

For this, at least, I could not but acknowledge. If she, in her poverty and isolation, had felt so fully bound by prejudice and custom that rather than throw down defiance to them, she could give up the happiness of her life,—if, refusing to take this martyrdom upon her, she would so surely have encountered the scorn and ridicule of all her kindred,—how now could I—the owner of a proud name and patrimony, and so lately the ornament of a brilliant court, dare to bring such reproach upon myself by yielding weakly to the tempt-

ation set before me? No,—it was surely fixed—never could it be.

“I will come again, dear Madre,” I said, lifting her hand caressingly to my lips. “I must go away now, but soon I will come again.”





## CHAPTER XI.

**W**HEN, unhappy under the trial devolving upon me, but resolutely bracing my soul for what I had to do, I descended to the street. At a little distance from the door stood a single chestnut-tree, marking one corner of the open garden. It was here that Fluvian Chamant had been accustomed to linger, watching for our appearance that he might walk with us. And here, of course, he now stood with more than usual impatience awaiting my coming.

At the first glimpse of my dress he came forward, and at once I felt that, indeed, I had committed a mistake. I knew now, that I should have given him his answer upon the day before,—firmly and decidedly and with one blow, harsh as that might have seemed, then crushing out his unfortunate and misplaced hopes,—even though Flonsette might have overheard and understood the whole scene. I knew this, the very moment I now lifted my eyes to his. I saw it in the

joyful beaming of his expression, in the eagerness with which he could scarcely withstand stretching out his arms to receive me, in forgetful disregard of the publicity of the place. For I saw that, in consenting to receive him once more, he had prejudged a favorable answer to his appeal. What else, indeed, could he have thought? And how, now, could I the better say to-day those words which I should have uttered yesterday?

Placing my hand lightly upon his arm, I turned away with him, asking, in low tones, that he would lead the way into some more retired street. For I felt that there might be a scene between us,—a painful explanation, probably—and that it had better be in as quiet a place as possible. Again this brightening up of his countenance, and again my perception that I had made a mistake. For how could he help the feeling that I desired some unfrequented spot, in order the better to listen to and return the avowal of his love? But, without a word, for the first few moments he turned with me down the most narrow street of all those that opened upon the public square,—for an instant or two leaving me in peace to compose my troubled thoughts, if ever I could,—since they grew the more troubled all the while, as I perceived that he was endeavoring to frame his own thoughts and feelings into more perfect utterance.

And at last, when the way had become still more

narrow and deserted and the houses less near together, court-yards and gardens supplying the vacancies that elsewhere would have been filled with close-built shops, the words of his heart's passion found vent. Never had man ever spoken as burning vows to me before—never did utterances flow forth so tumultuously from a full heart. It was a pleading for return affection,—a pleading for even one little word. And yet with it, there was mingled evidence of that assurance of success which I, in my blindness, had done so much to encourage. He would give the world for my love,—he knew that I loved him;—this was the substance of all his words. Meanwhile I listened, not displeased, perhaps, yet very unhappy, also,—wishing that I could, for the moment, arrest the flow of his eager speech—for a moment only—so that I might explain to him what a mistake it had all been. Yet, when now and then the pause of that moment ensued, I was powerless to frame anything that might fairly embody my thoughts. I could only whisper :

“Indeed,—indeed, Fluvian, if you knew all—it cannot be!”

“Cannot be, dear Adele? Nay, you jest. It is not for this result, most surely, that we have been so long together,—that in our many wanderings we have drank from each other's souls. Is it that you think we do not yet know each other? But it would be for me, perhaps, to say that,—not for you. It is you alone

who have not spoken of yourself, not I. And I have not asked it, ever. Dearest, you know that, surely. I was content to see you—to know you for yourself alone. Other than that, I would not ask. From the very moment when first I looked across from window to window and saw you, I knew that I loved you and that henceforth I was only yours. You remember the time, Adele? I was painting a landscape, and, as I thought of you, I changed it continually. I pictured you as with me in that very scene. I would have nothing belonging to it that would not assist our love. The stream with the stepping stones across from bank to bank—these I put nearer together, in order that you might cross them with me. The sloping bank I covered with greener turf, for it seemed as though there you might sit beside me. And I moved the forest tree closer up behind, in order that it might give you its shade.”

“But Fluvian—”

“Nay, Adele, answer me not so gravely until you have heard my whole plan. This Paris—we have enjoyed it much—and yet it is a cruel place, after all. It reeks with crime and bloodshed,—it is no place for us to live in. I have so long thought upon that. We will go away from here to some other country where revolution is unknown. There we will make our home in peace and liberty. Little by little we will build up new fortunes for ourselves; and all the vio-



lence and corruption of this city will gradually sink away from out our minds like some unpleasant, frightful dream. Perhaps after very many years, when we are old, we may return for a little while to revisit the old scenes ; and then we will recall the by-gone days, and hug our hearts to think what scenes of wickedness we have meanwhile escaped, and how, if we were happy then, we have been more happy since in our tranquillity.”

I almost gasped for breath as then I listened to him, for it came upon me with something of more than mortal temptation. All that day I had felt in my heart the longing to answer his appeal with loving words and thoughts of my own ; and then again had come the frightful picture of the scorn, contempt and insult from that higher caste which I had forsaken,—the never-ceasing rebuke and mockery of the class that I had betrayed. And here, now, was refuge offered from it all. Yes, we could go into another land, —away from every indignity. Why then need I care at all what the men and women of a restored court at Paris might think of me, as long as I could be away from the reach of all ? It came to me as the temptation of an archangel—not to be withstood even in idea. Who indeed, when I might consider it aright, had any claim upon me to tell me that I should not do this or that ? What mortal earthly influence was

there which could claim the right to fetter me in my will ?

Only this, indeed. As I paused and endeavored to stem the torrent of my eddying, boiling thoughts, and reach the happy conclusion of the further bank—feeling that I would be weak to yield and yet that it might be my real strength to break away from the ties of form that bound me, and give myself up to the sole desire of my heart, I chanced to raise my eyes ; and I saw, drawn across my path as a warning spectre, the grey façade of my own chateau Sainte-Maure. Hither our unguarded purposeless steps had brought us,—but hither, amid all our former wanderings, we had never yet chanced to come. Nor had I ever visited it at all since that evening three years before, when I had fled away through its low postern gate. There was therefore something almost ghostlike in being thus confronted, at that momentous instant of my life. To my superstitious fancy it spoke of warning—of the soul of my long ancestry pleading with me that I should not betray their memory,—of a duty to my class that I should not dare to neglect, and that, if unregarded, would ever after haunt me. I imagined that if I did not now stifle my recreant longing, evermore, in any land, the image of this my slighted home would rise up in my dreams to punish me.

Little harm or damage seemed to have been done to the building. There had evidently, indeed, at some

time, been a mob of rioters gathered before it, for much of the glass in the front windows had been broken out, and there was an ominous blackening of a portion of the wall, as though a fire had been ineffectually kindled against it. This, however, and the scarcely at first noticeable fact that a rude attempt had been made to obliterate the arms carved upon the stone work, were all I could see that spoke of wanton destruction. That upon the very day of my flight the chateau had been taken into possession as the property of the nation, was probably all that had saved it from spoliation and fire. At the first, doubtless, it had been well guarded. Now, however, inasmuch as long months of government protection had proclaimed and sanctioned the nation's claim upon it, the guard had been diminished. More for form sake than from any actual necessity, probably, there was a single soldier in front, lazily leaning against one of the gateposts. He, gazing at us with sleepy eyes, left his musket to drop between his knees, and took no further notice of us, suffering us to stray at will hither and thither before the chateau.

“Let us pass down this way,” I said to my companion ; and I led him along the side wall and so to the rear which looked upon a narrow, tenantless lane. I did this partly from natural curiosity to see how far my property had escaped injury,—partly from the longing wish once more to look upon it from every familiar

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point of view. And then also, it was a diversion from the thoughts that so terribly beset me ; and I had a feeling that the longer I again familiarized myself with those ancestral walls, the better could I obtain some new inspiration of fortitude to resist any further temptation of my heart.

In that narrow lane at the rear of the garden wall, there was no guarding soldier,—no chance passer-by. A few steps brought us to a little narrow door in the surface of the wall, half covered up with a running vine that had found fair hold for its tendrils in the inequalities of the stone, and so had climbed up to the very top. This was the doorway through which I had fled upon that memorable evening. When doing so, I had retained the key, holding it in some self-asserting spirit of continuing proprietorship in the domain, and, with that sentiment afterwards carrying it around my neck and concealed beneath my dress. I had never expected to make further use of it ; but now, stealthily gazing around and seeing myself still unobserved, I drew the key from my bosom, with trembling and excited hand unlocked the door, led my companion into the garden, and relocked the door behind us.

“How is it that you have admission here ? And what great place is this ?” said Fluvian, startled at the unexpected action. And I noticed in his face some anxious presentiment of doubt—of doubt, perhaps, in me. Who was I, indeed, that could have the power

thus to lead him into the precincts of this evidently lordly residence? There flashed upon his features an evident expression of distrust. He seemed very far from stumbling upon the truth. Rather did he appear suspicious—with very natural suspicion indeed,—that at some former period I might have been a menial of the household. Should I leave him so to think, in the hope that, believing I had at one time been far below even what I had lately seemed to be, his pride would take offence and cause him, of his own will, to withdraw himself from me? But I saw that now this would never happen. I had gained his heart too thoroughly for him to bear to cast me off for any cause. I must look to some other method of relief than that.

Not answering his question, I led him onward, viewing every familiar object as I went. There was little damage done to orangery or garden,—nothing, indeed, but what came from neglect and, upon reoccupation, could easily be repaired. Leaves lay dead in large heaps where the wind had collected them, and the walks were overgrown. Some of the orange-trees had been overturned and broken, and all the foliage of the garden, for want of proper trimming, had grown out of its usual shape. The fountain had stopped;—not broken, indeed, but merely ceasing its play because some careful hand had turned off its supply. The bed now lay dry, and on its parched surface, I could detect the skeletons of a gold fish here and there, like unto

withered leaves. These were all the changes the place had suffered.

Still leading onward from the fountain, we reached the stone tomb of my earliest known ancestor. Here for the moment I sat down, and Fluvian beside me. I thought of Henri Quatre and the fair Henriette, and wondered how many lovers had ever sat there since that time, and whether Fluvian and I—supposing that we, also, could be called lovers—would be the last. Then I gazed at the battered head of the sturdy old knight ;—a likeness once, perhaps, but now broken-nosed and scarred. Only the mouth and chin remained at all intact ; and it seemed as though, in their grim set, there was a resemblance to the firm, determined features of my companion. An accidental resemblance, of course ; for how could family traits descend so far and yet retain a likeness between flesh and stone ? And yet it pleased me, for the moment, to think that certain family qualities might thus have had descent to appear and prove token of nobility in a forgotten line.

“It is your ancestor, Fluvian,” I said. “He was the Count Roux de Sainte-Maure, and this is his tomb.”

“His tomb ? My ancestor ?” he cried amazed. “And how then do you—Yet what now of that ? Let that all pass for the present, Adele. Another time for such explanations. Only answer me now, the ques-

tion I have all the while been asking—the question whose reply should make me happy.”

“Let us go from hence,” I said, arising. It seemed that I felt a shiver; for looking upon the battered stone head, it was as though the forehead frowned beneath the helmet. For such a question must surely stir up the spirit of the old knight, still doubtless anxious about the honor of the family he had founded. He might listen unmoved to the soft whisperings of Henri into the willing ear of Henriette, for a king can descend in his love, and still remain a king. But as for noble maiden,—how can she ever seek a lower place and yet retain her own?

Loiteringly and followed wonderingly by my companion, who, hushed into silence with the perception of some strange mystery, no longer pressed his question, I led the way through the garden and to the back of the mansion. To have come so far and not go on, was not to be tolerated. I had no key to any door here, but in former days I had learned easily to unlock one of the long terrace windows with a peculiar shake. So now I did. The window fell quietly back at my skilful touch, and, in a moment, we stood within the main hall.

Here, too, everything seemed comparatively uninjured. There was discoloration of the seats, and some battering of the walls, as though, for a time, rough guards had made the place their bivouac. But it was

the injury of careless use and not of wanton spirit of destruction. Those who had been inside the chateau had loyally held it, not as their own conquest but as the nation's property; and in their rough way they had evidently sought to keep it all intact. Not merely in the main hall, where there was little of furniture or art, but in the rooms upon either side, where there was much which might have tempted to theft or destruction, but all of which was still safe. And in the upper story as well; whither we now ascended, I mounting first and Fluvian following me in his same uncertain spirit of mute wonderment.

Gaining the upper hall, I saw before me, in a distant room, whose door stood partially open, the edge of the carved frame of my full-length portrait. With that, a sudden impulsive idea flashed upon me. It was the way out of all my difficulty, it seemed, and I wondered that it had not occurred to me before. Quickly I now strode forward, at the same time imperiously waving Fluvian to keep back.

"Do not come hither yet," I said. "A moment longer—and when I call, then you can enter."

Thus alone I reached the distant end room, passed in and closed the door. Before me was my portrait in its quaint shepherdess attire, fresh and uninjured as when it had left the painter's atelier. How it had so far escaped was a mystery to me; for, though furniture and vases had remained uninjured, the portrait



of an aristocrat should have given fair temptation for prodding bayonets. But there it stood, bright and lovely,—even the frame untarnished,—the pleasant smile upon my lips, the innocent joy suffusing my countenance, as freshly as though I, had never since known a sorrow. And now, standing before it, I quickly took off my close disguising cap and let down my hair, suffering it once again to fall in thick curls about my neck and shoulders. I had no shepherdess dress, to be sure ; but that which I was wearing could easily be loosened in folds so as to give something of the same sense of rustic freedom. In one corner of the room there stood a gilded staff not unlike a shepherd-crook in length and thickness. This I seized in my right hand, and then reclined myself against an ottoman, even as in the painting I lay upon a flowery bank. So placed, I could observe in an opposite mirror both the portrait and myself, and I saw that, as of old, the likeness was the same, and that the faint resemblance of costume was properly suggestive. With my excitement there was a flush upon my face, and with my late free life, my temporarily sunken cheeks had rounded out again into full health and youthfulness.

Then, once more carefully adjusting my costume into yet nearer similitude, I called to Fluvian that he might approach. I listened to his step along the hall ; and in that moment, with a flash of thought, I imagined, in every detail, the coming scene. He would

enter ; and of course, at one glance, he would comprehend the whole,—would recognize me for what I really was. He would start back astonished, then would stand abashed, perhaps overborne with the sudden knowledge that unwittingly he had soared so high. Perhaps he would even sink upon one knee to ask my pardon. Then, rising from my seat, I would lift him up and let him sit beside me. There would be no need now, for me to answer his late questions, for he must know that of course such matters must be all over between us forever. But with kind words I would cheer him out of his abashed state,—would tell him how greatly I had always loved him as a friend,—how that as such I would always care for and watch over him, if ever I had the power ;—and so, at last, the explanation fairly made, we would part in mutual good will, esteem and peace.





## CHAPTER XII.

HE came. I heard him slowly enter. He turned from me to the painted portrait and back again. I saw that at once he took full comprehension of the mystery at last unravelled. But when I looked to see him fall back abashed, I saw him on the contrary advance a step, draw up his figure to its full height, and cast upon me a quick sharp glance that almost pierced me to the heart. It was I who now shrank back with tremor, and, in my new fright scarcely did I dare to look him in the face.

“What is it, my friend?” I almost whispered, for I could scarcely speak aloud. “You know me now, Fluvian; but why those harsh looks upon me? What have I done that you should thus gaze at me?”

“What have you done, do you say?” he cried with a voice that was not loud, but to my startled perceptions seemed to ring through the hall, so that it might well have awakened the dozing guard outside. “Why truly, nothing I suppose, but what is well done indeed.

Nothing but what, in some future time, when olden things are restored, may furnish a lively jest to all the mocking court of Versailles. How that the beautiful Marquise de Sainte-Maure, being in temporary hiding to save her slender neck, could not resist the chance to make a fool of the first poor blinded creature whom she met."

"Fluvian, my friend," I hoarsely cried, aghast at the suddenness of his attack—stricken to the heart at such unexpected words from him, "What does all this mean? Surely you do not think that I—"

"I can see it all," he frantically interrupted, "the king and court,—all there, as once of old. For, of course, there will come a time when they will be back again in their gilded palaces—and you in this, your own. King and court,—all restored to what they call their rights; which means the right not only to hold their titles and their revenues, but also to launch forth their scorn and merriment against all who are born in any lower degree. Yes—I can see it all. It will be here, perhaps—in this very hall. There will be brave audience for you. There will be fair ladies of honor at your side—almost as fair as yourself; and there will be nobles and knights, for again you will be clad in rich attire and your beauty will have every accessory of art to add to it new attractions. You will sit below this picture, perhaps;—and you will tell how that a year or two before, when you dared dress only

as a working girl, nor could claim even remote knowledge of yonder painting, you met and made sacrifice of a poor young artist."

"Tell me"—I cried, "is it fair and just that—"

"You will tell them how you saw him from your garret window, caring only for his art and happy in that, because he was fancy free in all things else. You will tell how, with that kindling glance which you know so well to use, you set his heart on fire for you. How, day after day, he thought upon you, gazing hour by hour for a single look at your bright face.—How even then, he might have escaped, not knowing you all the while to speak to you, but that your sister or your maid—for now I know not which it may be—doubtless at your request, gave invitation to him to come across and talk with you. That then—"

"False—false indeed!" I cried; and now I would be heard, so that he was compelled to cease his own complaint and listen to me. "That beckoning in,—it was not done with my consent. It was Flonsette alone who did it—and sorely against my will."

"So let it be," he gravely said. "It is a correction that I will accept. I know that I must accept it, for that the blood of the Sainte-Maures—that blood of which I own perhaps a little unconsidered trifle,—is honorable and will not falter with the truth. To believe otherwise, would be to deny, in that small extent of

which I have spoken, the chance of any heroic virtue in myself. Therefore, let that go for a thing about which the noble Marquise will not speak. But what of that, when there is so much else that she can truly tell? How that, from the same day, the soul of the poor artist was on fire, burning only for her! How that by revelation of her true position, in the commencement, she might have quenched the fever of his love and so saved him from the coming of the great misery before him; but that, in wanton pleasure at his poor attentions and the love he so openly bore her, she let the flames burn on, higher and higher, even adding daily to them the fuel of bright glances and friendly utterances, until at last he was all but consumed! How that at the end, when he spoke of his love, believing that he poured it forth to one of his own class and therefore had the right to speak it, she cruelly revealed herself for what she really was;—even then not softening the blow with any kindly word, but putting on all the wealth at her command of new adornment, and more alluring smile and grace, so that, while she made him hopeless forever, she might almost slay him with a new misery!—Yes, I see it all,—and how that the laugh of courtiers will circle round; while perhaps some able artist of the pen may send down the cruel story to a distant age, in cunningly devised farce or drama!”

I listened to him in a sort of stupefaction, hardly

believing my ears,—so different was all this from anything that I had anticipated. And yet I was not angry. There was something in the very vehemence of his rebuke that spoke of truthfulness and of a sorely wounded heart, and made me wonder whether, in reality, I had been guilty of this thing, sporting thus idly with his feelings and thereby deserving the worst he could say of me. Almost I believed it possible;—seeming now to bear the weight of a great wrong upon my conscience, so startlingly did he present that picture to my mind. And how grandly he looked down upon me in his indignation! Even in my remorse and stupefaction, I could not help taking note of that. How the kindling of his eyes and the very poise of his head imparted to him new manifestations of physical beauty, hitherto unnoticed or unknown to me! As yet, in fact, I had never taken much studied note of his face or figure. At the very first, indeed, I had perceived that he was not of unpleasing appearance, but further than that, my girlish powers of observation had not extended. I had learned to long for his company because his tones were gentle and his actions kind. And I had begun to love him, at the last, because there was sympathy of soul between us. Now, for the first time, it seemed as though I saw him as he truly was. Could it be that I had really tempted and beguiled into misery of heart, such a man as this? If not—and when I thought upon it, I knew that I had

not wilfully done so—should I dare to defend myself against such weight of censure?

“Listen now to me,” I said at length, finding that his words had ceased and that he waited for me to speak. “You have held up before me a hideous picture. Do you really think that it is a true one and that in it I should recognize myself? If so, and I were such as you now paint me, I can only say, God help me!—Now let me show you the more truthful contrast. It may well be that at some future day the king and court will come to their own again. Such things have happened before in history, and there may be influences already at work to bring them about once more. It may well be then, that at some time, this room will be thronged again with courtiers and that they will naturally interchange the stories of their troubled adventures and escapes. What then, will the Marquise de Sainte-Maure tell about herself? She will tell how that being prevented from reaching the frontier, she lay concealed in Paris,—in a garret-room and in the poor disguise of a working girl! How that then, in those days of terror and loneliness, when her heart was bowed down with anxious thought and she longed as never she could have deemed it possible, for kindly sympathetic words, there appeared to her one whom she did not know, had never seen before, but who somehow cheered her spirits and made her to smile again, at the mere aspect of his honest



kindly face,—at even the furtive glances with which he looked across and seemed wishing that he might venture to greet her! How that chance or circumstances which she had not prepared or controlled, bringing them into better acquaintance, she trusted herself to him and to his care; believing no wrong, thinking no harm, accepting his proffered friendship in innocent spirit, grateful for all his kindness, trusting in him with simple sister-like confidence! How that she never dreamed in any way, of influencing him to think more kindly of her than true friendship would admit;—and how that, when suddenly the truth broke in upon her, it was with a shock that seemed to shatter all her joy and happiness, and brought to her tenfold the misery that she could even suppose herself able to inflict upon him.—All this she could tell, perhaps;—but there would be one thing that she would never suffer to pass her lips. Can you imagine what it is, my friend? It is this—this, which out of dear regard to his memory she will keep secret to herself;—that when the explanation came between himself and her, and she had told him everything as kindly as she could, trusting her very life to him, he would not believe that her long friendship had been an honest one; but in his anger, overpowered her with bitter reproach, as though her life had been a long deceit, and all her intent the mean and guilty one of plotting his unhappiness!”

Borne down by the agony of all this sorrowful defence, I now sank lowly upon the seat and burst wildly into tears. While I had been speaking, Fluvian's manner had gradually changed. At first, the fire had gone out of his eyes, his lips lost the strained pressure of resentment, his head bent forward from its angry erectness. Then there flitted across his features expressions of doubt and wonderment, lasting a moment only ;—and soon all these were swept aside and I saw nothing but the swift sharp agony of contrition and remorse. And when my unrestrained tears burst forth, he flung himself wildly upon his knees beside me, and I could hear that there was something like a choking sob impeding his own broken utterance.

“What can I do or say ?” he cried. “What punishment could be too hard for me, since I have so greatly wronged you? Yes—I see it, now ; to me was all the cruel sin,—how should you have acted otherwise than as you have ?—Can you now ever pardon? See! I own that I do not deserve forgiveness. But treat me not according to my deservings. Let not the picture you have given have any lame conclusion. Tell them all ;—how that the young artist, stung to the death with his disappointment heaped reproaches upon you. But let the Marquise, de Sainte-Maure be able also to say, that before they parted she had pardoned him.”

If he had seemed glorious in my eyes, when he was

heaping his condemnation upon me, how much the more now, when he knelt at my side and asked forgiveness? There were tears in his eyes as well as in mine, and his voice was broken with emotion. Those were not womanly tears, I knew. He would have been less than man in the moment of his contrition, if he had refrained from shedding them. This weakness of remorse,—I felt that it was the true complement of a character that could not be made perfect unless its capabilities for hardness under sense of wrong were balanced by the tender yieldings of kindly power of sympathy and self-confession. Much as I had found beauty in him, then, when in his rebuke he had raised himself above me as a master spirit which I must perforce obey, so much the more favorably did I feel called to regard him, now that, in his sense of wrong towards me, he lowered himself to ask my pity and forgiveness. And as I gazed upon him, the few remaining scales of self-deception fell forever from my eyes. The truth stood forth in all its uncompromising reality. Why longer talk of friendship? Why struggle further, as I had so lately done, to make believe that it was only a fickle passion which I felt and that I might bend it to my will and let mere circumstance of place or power sweep it away from sight? I knew my fate now, if never before. Oh, how I loved that man, so suppliantly kneeling before me! How bitterly desolate would the world become, if he were not at

my side for ever and for aye! How little, after all, would be the sacrifice of power and fortune and rank, if thereby I might retain his love! How did I wish I might be the Queen upon the throne, that for his sake I might show a fuller devotion, and descend to stand lowly at his side! And how now, might I best tell him of my love, so that he could realize it and take me to his heart?

“Why do you call me Marquise?” I said, raising myself partially erect, and motioning him also to arise. “Let me still be Adele. Or rather, let it be the true name that as yet you have not learned—Gabrielle herself.—Fluvian,” I almost whispered, “Fluvian, my friend, listen to me.” And as I continued, I felt the flush of shame overspreading my face. Yet still I knew that in spite of all, I must go on, or else forever lose that which made life precious to me. He had offered me his heart, and I had turned the gift aside, by showing him why I thought it must not be. Now that I knew it could be, it was for me to tell him that, after all, I would accept the gift. “Fluvian—why—why should we part?”

I perceived a sudden light flash across his face as thus I spoke, but it was only a transitory gleam—nor was it the light of any comprehensive hope springing from what I said, but rather of that phantom flame which for an instant will sometimes cause longing for the unattainable and then as suddenly will flee before

the stronger ray of reason. For how, now, should he indulge a hope, when I had so strongly proved to him that all must be past forever? Rather was I tempting him with my continued friendship—he must think;—and that were surely as incapable of being now maintained as the love I had rejected.

“It cannot be—” he said, with mournful shake of his head. “Alas! do you not yourself know that it cannot be? How, after this, could we wander as before through the streets, and find pleasure in our old haunts in park or river-side? For now I know that we are not equal in the world, as once I thought we were; and I also know that you must feel the same, and this thing alone, will ever be rising in both our hearts and hindering us from all our former unrestrained intercourse. The fatal utterance ‘Marquise’ would ever be coming to my lips, in spite of all precaution—in spite of edict of republic telling us so falsely that there can never more be Marquises but that all persons now are equal. There will come a time, most surely, when our paths will stray apart, much as we may strive to make them run together, and there will ever be with each of us, a secret anticipation of that day. Therefore, it is surely better that now we part, rather than wait, until the bitter truth is forced upon us, that even unfettered friendship is for us no longer possible.”

“It may be so,—you are right, perhaps;” I an-

swered, with a cold shiver of the heart. I was not only hurt, but angry as well. For there will be moments when, to a young girl, there will come anger even towards a loved object, if, for his sake, she has fruitlessly overstepped a beaten path. And for the moment it did not come to me how it would be almost impossible that after what had passed and with such obstacles between us, he should ever read the true intention of my heart, without words more plain than any I could ever dare to use. And after all,—I thought—this need not be our final meeting. Spite of prudent resolve, some accident will surely cast us again together, and then perhaps, it will come to him more plainly, that he may find assurance of his happiness.

“You are right, it may be,” I therefore continued. “So let us go.”

In silence I laid away the semblance of my shepherdess' crook, slowly put on my hat and veil, pressing back my long curls as before,—and was once more a maiden of the people. Then, leading the way, I passed out of the hall door into the lower story, and so through the window into the garden. Then along the leaf-covered and overgrown walk, and past the dry fountain-basin until we reached the little postern gate. There with my key in the lock and the gate ready to fly back, I paused and looked around. At one corner the tomb of old Count Roux—and this was all that

now attracted my gaze. A ruined pile, cracked and crumbling—without a legible inscription,—on top, a weather-beaten head and chest and foot, the sole relic of the original sculptured effigy,—inside no shred or bone remaining of the once stalwart figure. Even the silver encased heart deposited in the Abbaye of St. Ambrosius had doubtless months ago been thrown out by some riotous republican mob. What was there now left of the old knight—and what had we ever known about him in the flesh? Why should we fetter our lives in obedience to such an old phantom of the past as this? And even though the grim Count should again arise in the flesh and confront us, what was he, the creature of so many centuries ago, that he should now command our fealty and make us relinquish our own purposes to his will?

“Fluvian,” I said, my hand still upon the half-opened door, “the years to come are long and fraught with very many changes, of which we know not now; and it may be that after all, never again shall I be Marquise de Sainte-Maure,—never be other than the Citoyenne Adele Carnot. Why, then, should we ever part?”

He would know it all now—I thought; and again the shame-faced flush overspread my features, while, for the second, I saw the faint flicker of hope dance wildly upon his own. But as before, it passed away

with equal speediness, leaving only the deep gloom of a settled despair.

“Why—oh why do you thus tempt me?” he exclaimed. “Do I not full well know the truth of what I have just said—that hereafter the real friendship of the past is not for us? With kindly words you may for the moment make me believe the contrary, but after that, reason will have its sway and tell me how vain is any other hope. The past rises so pleasantly to me—those walks along the Montmartre steep—those lingerings upon the borders of the river—I would give years of my life, it seems to me, if I might ever renew them. But I know that if ever we walked there again, the true spirit of the past would be no longer with us. It would be only the empty form of what had been. Why, therefore, shall we so hopelessly tempt our fate, in search of the impossible?”

“True,—and let us go,” I said. And then, in bitter silence, I opened the little door, locked it upon the outside, hung the key again around my neck, and so we departed. No one had seen us enter, only one person seemed to see us emerge, and he a stranger leaning against a fence and with his cap over his face in careless disregard of us. All had been accomplished in apparent security. I had again seen my ancestral home. But within it, I seemed now to close up, as in a grave, the memories of the only really unrestrained happy days that I had ever known. Still in silence we walk-



ed along, homeward. The streets of broad courtyards gave place to the other streets of narrow shops,—again we came among the crowds of passers-by, in the midst of whom we could not well venture to talk,—at last I stood at the door of the *Maison des Capucins*. Glancing up along the carved front, I saw the stone corbel heads above my window, seeming to look down upon me with a sardonic grin,—a look that, in all appearance, directed itself towards me especially, and with torturing sneer,—a queer contortion of diabolic sarcasm, as though for ages they had waited there for me, their victim, and now, at last, rejoiced to shower down their fiendish malice, taking their pleasure in my baffled hopes.

Once more I would try, I thought, turning away my eyes, and seeming for the moment, aroused to new entreaty with my fate, even though to disappoint the malice of those carved stone faces might be my only object, so thoroughly had I become the sport of dis-tempered fancies. It was possible that, after all, I might never see Fluvian again, so firmly did he seem planted in the resolve that it were best for him we should no longer meet—and it were not worthy of myself that for any ordinary scruples, I should now lose what made the world so dear to me. Would that I were again with him behind the shelter of the garden wall! Then, if my words failed me, my looks and actions might suffice. I would then cast such love

in every glance that he could not fail to comprehend. I would gaze into his eyes with an affection that I could never dare to manifest in these public thoroughfares. Rather than, by excess of maiden modesty, lose all, I would even cast myself upon his heart and tell him to take me and shield me there forever.

“Fluvian,” I said, gazing into his eyes with all the tell-tale expression that I could there summon up; “Dear Fluvian, speak to me as kindly and as freely as you can or ever might desire.”

“What can I say, dearest friend?” was the reply. “You know—you cannot fail to know, how ardently I will watch over and strive to protect you, even though we may never be destined to meet again. You will know, too, with what sadness of heart I will henceforth think upon that past wherein I believed I was so happy. With sadness, always, indeed; for even if ever I succeed in conquering the misplaced love that has hitherto been my all, the traces of the conflict will remain to keep me mindful of it. Yet for all this, I blame you not. Do not think that I shall bear aught of malice in my heart. You could not foresee my folly. Therefore, that you may be ever happy, will always be my prayer. You will think of me a little sometimes, will you not? And so, God bless you. For there is a God, is there not? We know there is, though the Convention may every year otherwise decree. God bless you, therefore, ever and ever.”

He pressed my hand in his, for a moment ; and when, struggling to speak and finding my words failing me, again I looked up, he was gone. No kindly face looking down upon me any longer,—nothing more, except the grinning corbel heads ; now, in their still more abundantly gratified malice, seeming almost to scream aloud with their sense of diabolic exultation.





### CHAPTER XIII.

**T**URNING into the house, I was confronted just outside the porter's lodge by Hyppolite, who presented to me a letter that had reached him through some mysterious secret channel. From the single cypher upon the outside by way of direction, I recognized it as from my Cousin the Baron de Montfaucon. Inside, were three closely written pages ; but in all respects it differed little from the letters I had previously received. It told me how that he was still upon the frontier, waiting with some one of the royal army corps for an onward movement—and that was all. No news, as yet, of a decisive character. A hope of a victory here and of an alliance there, which, if effected, might inspire the king's adherents with fresh courage, and thereby perhaps, more speedily change the face of affairs. Plots and counterplots within the kingdom, some of which might go aright, but all of which seemed destined to go wrong. In fact, a repetition of what he had so often, written previously

hoping now to encourage me with fresh delusions as he had then striven to encourage himself. This story of military or political aspirations and events, however, gave me little concern or thought. It was not now in my mind to have much regard for the re-establishment of the legitimate authority. To me, this epistle contained only the one wounding fact, that, like the previous letters, it had no word of fond affection for me, but dealt in all the old courtly refinement of reticent etiquette; addressing me, however, all the while, as one upon whom he had a valid claim and proprietorship. Wrathfully now, I crushed the epistle in my hand, longing to have the writer on the spot, that I might show to him my scorn for such artificial cold appreciation of me. How differently, indeed—I thought—would Fluvian Chamant have written, were it known to him that he could address me in words of accepted love?

“Bring me no more such letters as these,” I cried to Hyppolite, who stood amazed at my scornful treatment of this. “Does he think I have no heart at all, that I must be spoken to as to a stone?”

“Is it bad news?” responded Hyppolite.

“Bad news? Nay—neither bad nor good, perhaps. But I forget. You can know nothing at all of this, and I should not have spoken it.”

Endeavoring thus to soften the strange impression I had produced, I turned, and leaving Hyppolite still standing amazed—as much now by my incoherent

language as by my previous áction,—proceeded up the stairs. Arriving at the top and peeping into Madre's room, as I was about to pass, I saw that she sat at her work. The little lock of hair had long been put away, and she was softly singing at her fine embroidery, as though her life were all one scene of pleasant content and luxury, and labor the sweetest amusement of her existence. There was something in that calm spirit of repose that, for the moment, angered me. Why should she, with all those troubles behind her in her life, throwing their fitful shadows across her path and clouding every future thought,—with nothing, in fact, to live for, excepting the mere negative joy of physical comfort—why should she now be happy, while I, with youth and wealth, was miserable because my heart could not attain its one darling wish? Goaded by this impulse, I threw myself into her room; and almost before she could look up to mark the intruder, began my rude complaint.

“Why should you thus sing, when you have so wilfully cast away all your happiness in life?” I said. “Do you not know that you should have acted differently? Did no instinct at the time tell you that you had done wrong—wrong not to yourself, alone, but to him as well?”

“My child,” she exclaimed, astonished; “You mean—”

“I mean, Madre, that when so many years ago,

you had the chance of happiness brought before you, it was your duty to have accepted it. What though there were those who told you that you would be doing violence to the traditions of your class—that they had rights over you which you must needs respect? Their rights, indeed! Was it the Duke himself that told you so?—And, when he died, did he leave you one sou from his wealth, such as it might have been, to save you from your daily labor and recompense you for what you had given up at his command? Were there not also others who talked to you about family pride,—and did one of them interfere to save you from open penury? Is it all of your life to be brought up in a gloomy castle, hardly seeing the sunlight, and then to be turned out to live by your own labor? Was it for this that you were born? And was it needful that you should continue in this career, giving up, upon some point of duty, the love of a good man—his arm to sustain you through life—the joy of having a home of your own,—and all for this ruinous pride? Do you not know that you have done wrong, Madre?”

“It may be—it may be so,” she responded, musingly, “I have sometimes even thought so myself. But why now, do you speak of that? It is not as though it was a matter to be yet determined. All that has past and gone forever. What I have done or what I may now think about it, is of little moment, except as it may either make me cheerful with the

consciousness that I have acted rightly, or else unhappy with the belief that I have thrown away my life. Sometimes, when the memories of the past steal over my heart, telling me what I might have been, and I then look around me and see only what and where I am, my faith in myself is, for the moment, shaken; and with my regret for what might never have been, I am almost inclined to feel repentance, in that I had not been obstinate and wilful. I know, child, that I must have been right in deciding as I did; but for all that, there are moments when I am very weak, and might not be able to sustain myself in faith as I ought. It might then, take little for any one to strip me of all that sense of rightful conduct which has comforted me during so many desolate years. You will not be that one, dear child? Reflect—you would remove from me everything that now can ever comfort me, and you would thereby make of my life only one terrible regret."

It was true, indeed. She had now little in life, except her memories of the past, gilded with her sublimated belief in a duty rightfully performed. Why should I change those memories into dead leaves and thereby make her miserable? Why shake the faith of any martyr, though it lead to death, and though it be a mistaken martyrdom, so long as it makes that death a happy one? Therefore, without another word, I now softly leaned over and kissed her upon the fore-



head, and so quietly left the room. Yes,—I would leave her alone with her idol—the idol of ancestral pride and duty—that idol which I had just determined I would shatter into fragments and sweep away from before my path.

It might be that there was something in this gentle pleading resignation of Madre that softened my heart. I had ascended the stairs in a wild fever of disappointment, regret and passion, which turned me against anything or any person not standing in direct sympathy with my state of mind. The happiness of others, it seemed as though I could not look upon, for no one could have the right to be happy as long as I was miserable, and yet no one ought dare to feel miserable as long as I was so; for whose troubles could be equal with mine, and why should others venture to give way when I restrained myself from tears and open complaining? But when I left Madre's room, I felt that my soul was somehow more tranquilized with the contemplation of her resignation to a life-long grief,—and my heart all at once grew tender. Hence, when I entered my own apartment and found Flonsette in tears, I did not unsympathizingly rebuke her, as otherwise I might have done, but rather addressed her kindly.

“What is it, dear Flonsette? Tell me, now, all your grief and it may be that I can aid you.”

“It may be, dear Mademoiselle, and yet perhaps

you will not," she answered, raising her head. I had found her with her face bent upon the table, buried in the folds of her sleeves. It was not her attitude, merely, that had told me she was weeping; for, as I stole softly within the room, I had heard her heavy sobs.

"Nay—Flonsette—if it is anything that I can—you may be certain that—"

"Will you, then, promise never to speak with him again?" she cried, turning upon me with sudden energy of passion. "Never to look upon him if you can help it? To put no hindrance in the way of my seeing him?—Nay—I know you will not promise that. It is too much to expect that you should cease amusing yourself with him, though all the time it may be life or death to me. And even to-day—you cannot deny it—you went out alone and met him secretly!"

Surprised at her unexpected outburst, I remained in silence. I had never seen her like this, before; and I told myself that I ought not to regard her with anger, inasmuch as the very phenomenal character of her present state, betokened the need of compassion rather than of indignation towards her. Even at the time, I felt wonderment at the tenderness with which I listened to her, my own heart more and more softening in equal degree with the seeming increase of her agitation and revolt.

"You met him secretly!" she continued. "You

have walked with him, where until now we have all walked together! It was not enough for you this time, that we should both go out. I might overhear some words of love from him, and then you could not answer them as you would. To be sure, he could never be anything to you, knowing yourself to be what you are. But that, after all, was nothing. You could still flatter and give him pleasant loving glances;—and be amused to think that you were leading him onward to unhappiness and disappointment. And all the while, I—”

“Listen to me, Flonsette, I—”

“I will not listen,” she cried out. “I must myself speak. Have I not been silent long enough? In all our walks, have I not been quiet and submissive? Did I ever say a word, when I thought you might be wishing to speak to him? Have I not let him always turn to the side where you hung upon his arm, only hoping that once or twice he might rest his eyes upon me? Always must this be so? Have I not a heart that can be wronged, mademoiselle, and that at times may feel its wrongs and turn?”

“And yet I never dreamed of all this, dear Flonsette—believe me,” I said.

“Why should you not have dreamed it, mademoiselle?” she responded, in more subdued tone. Already the unaccustomed character of her outburst was softening itself beneath the influence of my sympathetic

accent, and fresh tears began to subdue the violence of her utterance. "Am I so different from all others that I am never to have regard for any one than myself? When first I saw him at his window, did I not tell you then how well he looked to me? And it was I who brought him over, into this room; and then, though fairly he should have been mine, from that time you began to take him from me."

"But I knew not of it, Flonsette. Come,—sit beside me and we will calmly talk it over. Let me do all that I can. I will be kind to you, as much as is possible in me, and surely I have not thought to wrong you."

Drawing her with my arm about her, I sat with her upon the edge of the bed and led her into new confidence with me. Already all her passion was at an end, and she was subdued into quiet confession by the sympathy of my tone. Her face bent over against my shoulder; and a tear or two still glittering in her eyes, with now and then a little sob, she told me all. How that she had thought she had cared for Fluvian Chamant from the first moment she had seen him, yet had not been altogether certain of it. How that, afterwards, when she had heard him speak and we had begun to walk abroad, she had become sure about it, and how precious, then, every word he had addressed to her had been. How that, in proportion as he had acted kindly to her or not, hope had arisen or died

away in her heart, from time to time ; and how, as she saw that he gave me all his attention, her jealousy of me had begun to grow. How that, upon duty to me still bent, she had restrained herself, though daily her heart became more and more embittered, until at last I had left her behind and had gone out with him alone. And how that, then, her whole soul had risen in revolt ; and had she died for it, she felt that she must give utterance to her indignation, as she had done.

“ And after all, have I done so very wrong, dear mademoiselle ? I am sorry if I did ; but there must be times when a poor girl will rise up and speak for herself. For who else will there be to speak for her, and all her life at stake, perhaps ? And I so cared for him ;—and but that you were by, he might have cared for me. I am not ugly, am I, that I should have no one love me ? ”

“ Ugly, Flonsette ? I would that I were half as handsome as you,” I answered, and I really meant it, too. How could I help it, when I gazed upon her pretty features,—irregular, it was true, but in their very irregularity, radiant with every charm of loveliness and sweetness of expression ?—And more particularly now, when the glistening of recent tears gave new softness to her eyes, and the flush of late passion not yet untraceable, imparted fresh color to her cheeks ? It was a beauty, indeed, that stood forth so conspicuously as to attract upon the instant every passing admira-

tion ; and I could not help envying it, as I thought upon my own more severe style,—quiet and regular in tone,—replete with every requirement of high birth and culture, it is true, and thereby perhaps, standing the more careful test of continued scrutiny, but still deficient, it seemed to me, in that more desirable sparkle and vivacity which could so easily attract immediate sympathy.

“You are kind, mademoiselle,” she said. “I know that I should not think to vie with you. But yet, I cannot help also knowing that I have some attraction of my own, and that therefore it might not be impossible to win his love. If only you would not see him again, dear mademoiselle. When next he comes, do not go with him. Tell him that you are not well, and then perhaps he will go with me alone. He has never heard me talk, and I know that I can not do so as well as you ; and yet, if I tried my best, it may be that I might succeed in pleasing him. I am a poor girl and in station, maybe, below him, but never in my manner would I remind him of that. And for his sake, I would study much and learn all about art and pictures, so as even in the end, to be of assistance to him. But you, mademoiselle, could never care for him, being so far above anything that he could look at ; and so, when you have neglected seeing him for awhile, or even purposely been unkind to him if ever you are forced to meet him, he will forget to love you any longer, and

then perhaps he will bring his bruised heart for me to heal.—Tell me, shall not this be so?”

Alas! how could that be so? Had Flonsette spoken thus to me a few months—even a few weeks before, I might gladly have assented. Surely I owed enough to her to make me attempt everything for her happiness—everything, indeed, excepting this. But this I could not give up. I had set my happiness upon it,—it was to me the very life of my heart,—I had gone through the struggle and come forth, my soul torn and bleeding, it might be, but still victorious,—with me now, there should be no faltering, either for fear of some or pity to others. I had crushed wealth, station, ambition, pride, prestige and caste all under my feet for the sake of my strong love; who now could bid me relent for her sake—knowing not, too, but that her passion might be a mere temporary flame that would expire in a day and leave scarcely a cinder of memory behind?

No, I could not recede. And yet, it seemed to me that here my troubles were already being too urgently forced upon me.—I had foreseen that there would come a time, when, my choice becoming known, I should be obliged to combat scorn and argument and pleadings, all the means that my betrayed class could bring against me, to turn me from my purpose. But all that was so far off—I thought. It would have to await the return to power of the old regime—for how, else, could

any one reprove me? And meantime, after all, that might never happen—but the olden regime being now ended forever, I might quietly settle down into the new position I had chosen for myself, and, since all others of my class were scattered, might not be assailed by any one, forever. Yet now, within this very first hour of my resolve, the choice was forced upon me of either cowardly concealing my weakness or else avowing the truth and to one who had no natural right to demand any explanation at all. It was a startling ordeal; yet here my pride of blood came to my rescue. It had never been the way of the Sainte-Maures not to dare confess their will;—Flonsette should know the whole.

“Flonsette,” I said, winding my arm more tightly around her. “You plead with me too late, alas! I cannot—I cannot give him up.”

I looked steadily forward as I spoke, at the opposite wall—in a kind of daze of stolid petrification,—even as I had gazed forward the time that Fluvian had first told me of his love. And as then, some instinct rather than power of mere sight portrayed to me what was transpiring beside me, and I could see how Flonsette started and gazed at me with incredulous and wondering expression.

“You, dear mademoiselle?” she murmured, “You, the Marquise de—”

“There is no longer a Marquise de Sainte-Maure,” I responded, almost in a tone of joy. “There are no



longer any Marquises at all. Has not the Convention settled that? And though there are some who say that at a future time all olden things shall be restored, yet who really believes that it will be so? Almost do I hope that it will not, for then the closer can I cling to this my love. Oh, Flonsette, I cannot give him up, even to you for whom I would otherwise do so much. I did not seek his love nor did I know that he would ask for mine. Innocently I went with him, only because I found it pleasant so to do. Nor was it until yesterday, when he whispered to me what perhaps you overheard, that I knew at all how much I cared for him. But knowing it now, Flonsette, it is my very life to me. Nor yet have I told him so—but it will not be long before I do. And then—then I will see him every day, more nearly than before. And you—you cannot help seeing him, too; but you will not be angry at me, or too greatly blame me, will you, Flonsette?”

For only answer she laid her face closer against my shoulder, and I could hear a faint murmur which might mean either resignation or dissent, I could not tell.

“And you, Flonsette, you will never leave me, will you? That is, I mean, not now—not for a long while, perhaps, and until some one else may take you away with him—some one whom you have yet to know and who will make you love him more than you have ever

fancied you have loved Fluvian. And you will be with me more than ever you have been before—not merely as now, a companion, submitting to my will, but a very sister, indeed. For we have suffered much together, and now that all ranks are for ever abolished, we should be always hereafter equal.”

Thus, still drawing my pleasant pictures of the future, I sat and talked with her. There need be no long tarrying between Fluvian and myself—I said. He had spoken about some distant land where we might live and love secure from all harm, and thither we would go. We would not think of the wealth I might leave behind ; what use to think of what I might probably never be able to re-possess—now that the republic had taken it for its own? Even if the day ever came in which it might be restored to me, the time would be so far off that it were madness to waste our lives in waiting for it. Grey hairs would probably be growing on our heads before that day, and all the while we might be living happy and free in another country. Let then the wealth and title go. Fluvian, with his genius, would make amends for all, and I might help a little with some cultured art of my own. And she—Flonsette—would be with us and see our happiness and be happy also. I did not stop to think whether it would really make her happy to be in constant sight of one whom she had learned to love, and to see him always wrapped in the affection of another,

nor did she now say anything. It seemed so natural that she should follow me wherever I went—and after all, it was the best that I could offer.—Yes, we would soon depart—all three of us. It had once been impossible for the Marquise de Sainte-Maure to escape from France; but there was no longer a Marquise. I had so long been growing into my new character, that surely I must now be known in that and in no other. It need not be a difficult thing for the Citoyennes Adele and Jeannette Carnot to obtain a passport to the frontier; and that step taken—

“What—what noise is that?” cried Flonsette, suddenly lifting her head and listening intently.

Nothing,—nothing at all, beyond what at that date was often to be heard in Paris. Nothing to any one who was not directly concerned in the matter. Merely the sonorous regular beat of the footsteps of a squad of men outside—the muttered command “halte la!” and the ring of half a dozen muskets crashing down upon the stone pavement—that was all!





#### CHAPTER XIV.

**W**E looked affrighted at each other and our expressions showed, plainly as upon an index, that there was only one thought between us,—that we knew the great crisis in our lives had at length arrived. Why this dread perception should have thus equally struck us, it was hard to explain. Twice before had a guard of soldiery in like manner halted before our door and we had not been afraid ; and as the result had shown, all fear would have been thrown away. Each of these times there had been no ascent beyond the third floor. Some one had disappeared from the house,—who or how many or whether they had ever returned again, we could not tell. It was sufficient that we had remained unmolested. But now there was to each of us a horrible instinct of dread, and we stood silently listening with pallor upon our faces.

Three of the little squad of soldiery remained below, with their muskets carelessly at rest upon the

sidewalk. We could plainly see this from our window, needing not daylight to count them, so plainly did the flaming of the nearest lamp gleam upon their arms and the polished buckles of their belts. Others seemingly of equal number entered the building, and after a muttered conversation with Hyppolite, began to ascend the stairs. We could hear their steady yet irregular tramp as they advanced from story to story, not pausing at either floor until they had reached our own. At the head of that last flight of stairs there was a momentary pause, and a strange kind of dread came over me,—the fear lest they had come for Madre instead of for myself. It was not that I would have preferred to give up my life for hers. I was young and eager to live, now that I had found so much before me to make life worth having ; and there was surely no reason why, for mere friendship, I should sacrifice myself. But I remember it now, as a singular instance wherein, amidst all my fear, a feeling of taste and the fitness of things controlled my thoughts. It was not right that they should take Madre,—I seemed to reflect. She was old and had lived a life of privation and regret ; there was nothing for which she could fitly be punished. Even if she were allowed to live out the rest of her life in sudden access of affluence, it could not atone for the troubles that she had already undergone. But I—I had lived in careless, unthinking gayety and pleasure. All my sur-

roundings had been joyous,—unbounded admiration had been my lot,—every day had, in some form or other, been a day of triumph. Surely if the wrongs of the people demanded a victim, it was a suitable thing, almost a law of the universe, that I, and not a feeble, harmless old lady, should be selected as the sufferer.

The fitness of things did not seem to be broken. The men had paused merely to arrange themselves in proper order. Now again advancing, they passed along the hall with more regular tramp than that with which they had ascended, and, in a moment, there was a loud rap at my door. In another instant and before I had time to reach the door, it was thrown open and those who sought me appeared to view,—three men with a sergent-de-ville at the head,—all standing in line and erect, and with muskets held alert for instant use, if needful.

“Which of the two is the Citoyenne Adele Carnot?” demanded the sergent, advancing. He held a small lantern in his hand as he spoke, and by it was laboriously reading from a written paper. “Yes—that is it—the Citoyenne Adele Carnot—so known upon the register of the house—otherwise and formerly recognized as one Gabrielle, Marquise de Sainte-Maure.”

“It is myself,” cried Flonsette, springing forward with sudden alacrity of purpose. “I am the Marquise de Sainte-Maure. What is your will with me?”

“Thou,—pretty one?” retorted the sergeant, placing his arm upon her shoulder and slowly pressing her back, giving utterance to a little laugh as he did so. “Nay, I can easily tell by the very glance, that thou art not she whom we want, even if I had not the true description here. Eyes grey and large,—nose straight,—hair curling but arranged out of sight beneath a cap,—that is much more like one whom they may once have called a Marquise than thou art, with that saucy little nose and those bright, quick flashing eyes. Stand back therefore, my pretty damsel, and let the true one present herself.”

“It is I whom you want, of course, Monsieur,” I said. “And you will believe me when I say that in no case would I have allowed my maid to represent me, to her own peril. I am the Marquise de Sainte-Maure. There is no Adele Carnot. And what do you desire of me?”

“It is an order for thine arrest, Citoyenne,—upon the usual charge of conspiring against the Republic,” responded the sergeant, unfolding the paper and touching his hat. “It is to the authorities that thou must answer for it all, Citoyenne,—I am only an agent in their hands and must do my duty. As for this other one, whom they call your maid, I have nothing to say about her. She is not mentioned in the paper—having probably done nothing more than to follow thy

fortunes. Until further notice, therefore, she can go where she pleases. But thou—”

“I must depart with you, you would say? I understand. In a minute, therefore, I shall be at your disposal. Suffer me, however, first to enter this other room and make some preparation for departure. You will see that I am not supplied with clothing for a long absence, and moreover, that there is no other passage through which to escape.”

The sergeant—somewhat shame-faced, but still obliged to do all his duty in guarding his prisoner,—advanced into the little bed-room, looked around to see that there was no private outlet, opened the window and assured himself that he stood five stories from the ground,—then returned and took his place beside the others of his command.

“It shall of course be as the Citoyenne requires,” he said. “Thou wilt not be long?”

“Thanks, Monsieur,—five minutes is all that I shall require,” I rejoined; and I passed into the room and closed the door. Five minutes was more than enough for everything that was necessary for me to do,—to put on my hat and cloak, make up a little satchel of other garments, slip into my pocket such jewelry as might most easily be converted into money in case of need, and separate out for my own use, half of our store of ready money. The rest I left for Flonsette. But there was in my mind, more than all this for me



to do. Going to the window, I gazed across into that of poor Fluvian Chamant. It was closed and a thin inner curtain was drawn across, but the outside shutters were not fastened. There was a light within, gleaming through the curtain, but there was no shadow moving to tell me that there was any one at home. Yet it mattered little, after all. Whether at home or not, it would not be long before Fluvian would get what I purposed to send to him.

Seizing a scrap of paper, I hurriedly wrote upon it these few lines, "*I may tell you now, dear Fluvian, that I love you, for I am going to my death.*" Then I looked around for some means to convey the paper into the opposite window. There was my watch, a little jewelled trinket, heavy enough for the present need, and not unworthy to serve for future keepsake and memory of my love. I wrapped the scrap of written paper closely around the watch, binding it firmly in place with two or three folds of the golden chain. Then, with all my force, I hurled it across the narrow alley-way. The strength of a woman's arm is not great, nor her aim usually accurate; but either good fortune or my intensity of purpose now gave success to my effort. The direction was true,—I heard the watch go crashing through the opposite glass, and saw with delight that it fell inside, where it could not fail to be discovered. Then I emerged into the outer room, in time to meet the sergeant, who, hearing the

clash of breaking glass, had not known for a certainty that I had not been throwing myself out of my own window upon the pavement below.

“The citoyenne is ready?” he said, again retreating.

“I am ready, Monsieur,” I responded; now, as once before, abandoning the salutation of the day and recurring to courtly language, since it gave me a sort of defiant pleasure to do so and it was not worth while, seeing that I stood detected, to persevere in the artificial style of the Republic. And I turned to Flonsette, to say farewell to her. She could not accompany me, and I knew that it would probably be a long farewell, indeed. She was standing where I had left her, no longer animated by that access of strenuous impulse with which she had endeavored to represent me and take my place,—her soul seeming to have been driven in upon itself by the sudden shock of my arrest,—her eyes dull, staring and lifeless,—her whole position statuesque. At my touch she turned, and I thought that she was about to fall into my arms for a long last embrace. But almost at the instant she flung herself away from me, the brightness of new resolve coming again into her eyes and animating her with some insane idea of impossible rescue. Before I could even attempt to thwart her, much less read her intention, she had thrown her feeble little person against the soldiery and commenced wildly battling with them.

“ You shall not—you must not take her from me,” she cried. “ Will you not believe me? I tell you, it is I who am the Marquise.”

“ Gently—gently with her. Do not harm her,” cried the sergeant ; and he tried to hold her back by the arm, treating her, indeed, with all the softness that he possibly could, consistent with the necessity of forcible removal. So, also, the other men endeavored to subdue her with all gentleness. But in that raging access of temporary fury, it was difficult for any one to manage her. No sooner did one appear to have control over her, than she would break away, and another would be unexpectedly feeling the force of her struggling attack. It all lasted only a minute. What happened could not have been prevented. I felt sure of it at the time, and have never seen reason to change my mind upon the subject. It was difficult for any two of them to hold her back ; and she had thrown herself upon them so suddenly that none of them had had time to lay aside their muskets. It was awkward work, struggling with one hand. And when, after a moment of that confused tumult, Flonsette sank fainting upon the floor, there was no one who distinctly knew what had happened or who was to blame for it.

We thought, for the instant, that she was in a swoon, produced by the mere intensity of her passion ; but a stream of blood that trickled down upon the

floor soon undeceived us. Then we supposed that she had been wounded to the death. But the sergeant raising her to the level of his knee, stripped off her sleeve, and we saw that the wound was in her arm—a deep, broad wound, but seemingly not dangerous. The men looked pityingly at each other, but no one could tell how it had happened. There was a stain of blood upon one of the bayonets, but the man who carried that musket had been furthest of all removed from the struggle. It was probable that Flonsette herself had inadvertently run upon that bayonet, carelessly projected from behind among those struggling in the front and partially borne back.

“It is better for her as it is,” said the sergeant. “She is in no danger, for it is a flesh wound, and she will be taken to the hospital. There she will be free from arrest, for no one would bring a charge against a wounded woman. Had it not been for this, who knows but what, before another day, she might be taken to the Conciergerie as a conspirator with thyself?—But come,—let us be moving.”

“You will see that good care is taken of her, Monsieur?”

“I will leave two of my men in charge of her, Citoyenne. They will carry her to the hospital, and will treat her as tenderly as a child.”

“Thanks, Monsieur,—and give her this;” and returning to the bed-room, I brought from thence the

little hoard of gold I had separated for her. "Let your men take out what will be needful payment for their trouble and leave the remainder to be applied for her. When she revives, let her know that all things remaining in these rooms belong to her. And let her know—do not forget to tell her this,—that at the very last, I kissed her good-bye."

With that I kneeled down beside her yet inanimate form, threw my arms around her and pressed my cheek against hers. "Farewell, Flonsette," I whispered, "but only for a little while." I knew that she could not hear me,—I knew that in all probability I was not speaking the truth, and that it was not likely we should ever meet again. And yet it gave me a sort of satisfaction to say this, even as sometimes we will take comfort in whispering kindly adieux to the dead. Then I raised myself from off my knees.

"I am ready, Monsieur," I said, "let us go."

We descended the stairs. Here and there as we passed along, I could see that doors were furtively opened and stolen inspection made of me, but I was known to none of those lower occupants, and no remark was uttered. I would have wished to say farewell to Madre, but her door was closed as we passed, and I would not ask to enter, for fear of bringing suspicion upon her. So, like the stranger I really was, I passed out of the house and entered the little carriage that had been prepared for me.

The sergeant took his seat before me, one of the soldiers clambered up beside the driver and we started off. Where to, I did not care to ask; I would let time resolve that question. And as I now look back, it is with a strange recollection of that evening journey. It is as of a drive wherein, at times, all seemed distinct as of a studied picture, and yet there was all the while a misty uncertainty hanging like a veil over my confused perceptions. It is probable that there were real fluctuations in my brain, whereby at one period all its energies were aroused to unwonted vigilance and then again were crushed beneath overpowering fatigue. I know that as we passed along, I would find myself gazing curiously into the little shops, watching the going in and coming out of the customers, even turning my head at one time far back to get the last look at a woman who seemed purchasing a little colored flower-pot. Would she bear it away with her or was she merely haggling about the price and would leave it? I pondered deeply upon this and felt aggrieved when the carriage turned the corner so that I could not see whether or not she emerged with her purchase. But when the next moment we met a revolutionary club parading with drums and pikes and torches, and almost filling the narrow street from house to house, so that my carriage could proceed with difficulty, I felt that I could distinguish nothing—not even the leaders—but that all was a confused warring mass of inter-

mingled darkness and light, incapable of separation into distinct elements of individuality. Even perception of distance seemed lost to me ; so that, when the concourse was near by, it seemed to sway and waver with apparent retrocession—and when it had altogether passed, the cries and the lights stunned and dazzled me as though close to the carriage window.

At last—whether after minutes or hours I could not tell,—we stopped before a low stone doorway, and I was helped out. Was this the prison to which I was tending ? Or was it the judgment-seat ? The latter, apparently ; for the next moment I was supported up a flight of steps and led into a room feebly lighted with three or four short candles. Now again, whether from the mere physical change of position, or because I felt borne in upon me that I had reached a crisis in my fate, my powers of perception seemed again illuminated and strengthened. Not an incident or trivial detail of the scene escaped me. The low ceiling of the room, seemingly spotted with the damp,—the table at which sat three men in the costume of revolutionary leaders,—the inkstand with two long feathered pens,—even the slovenly guttering of the wick of one of the candles,—all these trifling minutiae fixed themselves upon my mind, so that I can yet see them. One of the men,—rough-bearded and cruel-looking—was writing ;—another sat a little one side breaking a fig in two ;—the third was motionless, his

feet crossed,—his face bent down and partially covered with his cocked hat so that I could not distinguish his features. Around the side of the room were stationed five or six soldiers, and the sergeant who had me in charge stood at my left hand, partially supporting me.

“The Citoyenne Adele Carnot—so called of late—is this she?” demanded the man who had been writing.

The sergeant nodded, and handed up to the desk a folded paper—doubtless his warrant for the arrest.

“Known, formerly, as the Marquise de Sainte Maure,” continued the man, making a note upon the paper, and at the same time reading from a record before him. “Accused of conspiring against the Republic. What hast thou to say in answer to this, Citoyenne?”

“I—I am very tired; can I—may I sit down, Monsieur?” I succeeded in saying.

The questioner looked fierce and scowling at this. I could see by the shake of his head that I had injured my cause with him, if with him it were possible to have any cause at all. I had demanded permission to sit down in the presence of my judges;—was not this, of itself, disrespect enough to constitute crime and treason? But before he could speak, the one on the right—he who had had his head bent down,—raised himself, evidently in kindly sympathy with my request. Now that I looked at him, I recognized him



as the youthful orator of the Jacobin club which had so often raised its parting clamor beneath my window. Seeing him thus close at hand, I could note that though his bright burning eyes shone with enthusiasm for the revolutionary cause, it was the ardor of a soul not debased with cruelty or self-laudation, but given up to its admiration of the new government as of some great principle fraught with good to mankind. There were kindness and compassion in his glance; and at once I felt that as far as could be, he would be my friend. Nay more, standing so closely to him, it seemed to me as though somewhere I had seen him years before, but when or where I could not tell; while the impression, at first vivid, grew with my uncertainty almost immediately so indistinct, that I felt I must after all be mistaken. And yet I knew I was not mistaken in believing that, if possible, he would act towards me as a friend.

“She is certainly very weary. Let her sit,” he said; and advancing, he pushed closely behind me a low bench, upon which I almost fell back, rather than seated myself. The man who was eating the fig paid no attention to all this, but continued his pastime, seeming to look upon the whole proceeding and its incidents as a mere form that could have only one result, and therefore was not worthy of being regarded in detail. The central judge of the three, however,—he who had first addressed me and appeared to be con-

ducting the whole examination,—frowned and shook his head more dubiously than before, and turned an angry look upon the one assisting me.

“Is it well, Citizen Courbeye,” he said, “to be so officious in attention to traitors?”

“The prisoner has yet to be proved a traitor,” the other made response. “Nor, had she been already convicted, is it right that she should be left to suffer unnecessarily. Proceed with the examination, Citizen Maltrate. All other matters are now not to be considered.”

With a parting scowl—showing that there was no love lost between the two,—Citizen Maltrate turned again to his papers, slowly gathered up the thread of their purpose and so continued.

“Yes,—here it is—accused of conspiring against the Republic. Has been suspected of being what she is, but no real proof of it, until seen this afternoon going, with her own key, from out the chateau Sainte-Maure, now the property of the Republic. Also supposed to be in traitorous correspondence with one Gervais Montfaucon, to whom she has been betrothed;—he claiming the false title of Baron, and being now ascertained to have been in Paris in disguise some months ago. What hast thou to say to all this, Citoyenne?”

The three men simultaneously bent their eyes upon me to hear my answer; the speaker with expression

of malevolent pitilessness,—the one whom they called Courbeye with evident sympathy for me—the third with total listless unconcern for anything beyond his figs. Thus they sat and awaited my motion.

“What can I say, Messieurs?” I stammered forth at length. “I am a poor weak girl and know nothing of this sudden proceeding—hardly comprehend, indeed, of what I am accused. That I have not conspired against the Republic, I can truly affirm. All I have asked is that I may be permitted to live in peace and seclusion. That I am the Marquise de Sainte-Maure, I cannot, of course, deny. It would be foolish for me to attempt so to do.”

“She has confessed,—what more is necessary, Citizen Courbeye?” cried the leading judge.

“Nay,—but what has she confessed, Citizen Maltrate?” was the soft response. “Not the charge of conspiracy, but merely that she is the one whom they once called Marquise. Surely this may be a mere inadvertence,—the result, even, of past habit. Let us not forget that she has also called herself the Citoyenne Adele Carnot; and it may well be that, out of regard to the rights of man and the glory of the Republic, she prefers this name to the other. Is it not so, Citoyenne? Is it not true that thou hast abandoned the title of Marquise and, with proper deference to the public good now preferest the more simple term of Citoyenne?”

He bent forward and gazed earnestly, even pleadingly at me. What could I say? Should I accept his evident suggestion of defence and thus publicly acknowledge the lower grade to which for so many months, I had privately bound myself? There might not be full safety, even in this,—probably there would not be,—and yet it was a chance. Beyond that, there was certain destruction. It seemed, indeed, as though I should not hesitate what to do. Had I not already resolved for the dear sake of Fluvian to cast aside forever all those trammels of mere rank, and in some distant land live unknown and unregarded and for him alone? Why, then, should it be difficult for me now, when it might be an alternative of life and death, to avow and live up to that well-considered conclusion? And yet, there was something of the obstinacy of my race's pride and haughtiness which, at that critical moment, withheld my speech. The sacrifice that I might resolve upon for the love of another, was very hard to be endured at the beck of illegalized judges, or with the supposition that I was acting against my true nature and traditions and in obedience to some false sentiment of equal rights. And I thought how bravely even Madre would have conducted herself in my place—how she would have resented any enforced self-degradation from her class,—with what pride and constancy she would have clung to her poor little valueless birthright,—how she would despise me if she ever

heard that for mere love of life or liberty, I had denied my greater privileges, and thus fallen from the faith of the old regime !

“ Messieurs,” I said,—and with some sudden inspiration of boldness, I arose from my seat and advancing a step, stretched forth my hands, giving unneeded emphasis to my words, “ I was the Citoyenne Adele Carnot for a little while, but am so no longer. I am now and ever shall remain the Marquise de Sainte-Maure.”

At these last words, my friendly defender drew back with disappointed, saddened expression, as in regret for a false step that could not now be retrieved. But the leading judge smiled grimly and with a sort of ferocious joy ;—making as he did so, a final note upon his paper.

“ Is it not now sufficient, Citizen Courbeye ? ” he enquired. “ Is there more that thou wouldst urge in defence of the traitorous prisoner ? ”

There was indeed nothing further urged,—probably, under the circumstances, there was nothing now that could be said in extenuation of me. I had cast the die for my own destruction. I had wilfully rejected all overtures looking towards my safety. What was the manner of judgment entered against me,—whether it stood as confessed or whether there was further consultation among my judges, I did not know. The forced impulse of my proud avowal passing away, left me once again weak, lifeless and unregarding. I felt

myself sinking back exhausted upon the little bench—and when I recovered myself, I was once more in the carriage, with the sergeant at my side, and riding again through the narrow streets.

In a different phase of mind, however, than that in which I had been carried to the judgment-chamber. Then I had been feverish and excited, and, as I have shown, there were recurring intervals of close attention to little trivial details and of dreamy failure in the perception of matters of near and immediate prominence. Now, however, that I seemed to know my fate and that the uncertainties of the long day were over, I could look about me with the correctness of ordinary every-day observation,—neglecting nothing, distorting nothing,—but only tortured with a sense of utter weariness. A weariness that left me indifferent how soon the trials of life might end ;—making me almost wish, if I took any especial thought upon the subject, that they might end now,—anything rather than to endure a continuance of that cruel state of tired prostration.

A condition of mind that exemplified itself most fully in one incident of that drive. Leaning back in the corner of the carriage, I could distinctly as before gaze into the shops along the street-side and the people walking upon the pavement ;—more distinctly than before, indeed, for within the hour the moon had risen above the house-tops and poured a flood of bright

light below. And at one point of the way, the carriage rested for a moment, and I saw that we were near the centre of a wide paved area. More than that, we had stopped beside a broad wooden railed platform surmounted with a frame of beams, and within the frame hung a heavy iron mass with sloping edge. I had never seen it before, but I knew as well as though I had been told, that this was the dreaded guillotine, before which, as it stood in our route, our driver had arrested himself. Upon the platform were two men ; and by the now needless light of a lantern, they were toilsomely filing the edge of the axe that had been lowered near the bottom of the frame. And round about were five or six street boys, playing their games upon the wooden railing and steps, and taunting the two men with wild whoops.

The dreaded guillotine, itself. And now the thought crossed my mind,—had the judgment against me been one for instant execution, and had I reached the end of my career at last? I had supposed that I was being conveyed to prison ; but was it fated that I should now descend and present my neck to the axe? And in this, it came to pass that the listless prostration of my spirit through utter weariness exemplified itself. For now I feared not the axe nor the death it brought, but merely shrank back from the exertion it would require to approach my doom. Six steps to the top of the platform—in the bright moon-

light I could easily count them ;—but why were there so many ? Death had no longer any terror for me ; but how, in this tired state, could I mount those steps ? There was a hand-railing at the side and that was something ; but not all. If they would only execute me on the ground below,—or if the guard would kindly carry me up and lay me under the axe,—why then—

“How many to-day, Antoine ?” I heard our driver ask one of the two men.

“Seventeen, only. But one of these was a Duchess,” was the answer.

“Sacrebleu !” cried the sergeant, starting up from my side in a rage ; for, rough as he was, he knew that all this proceeding was not only an impropriety but a cruelty to myself as well. “Wilt thou never drive on ? They are foolish fellows, these of mine, citoyenne, but they do not mean ill. It is only their way of informing themselves. Do not regard it, I beg.”

The coach rolled on, and I knew that I was not then to die. But after all, how very little while hence might it not be ? As I again leaned back in my corner, I wondered whether, indeed, it was well to have waited. Each moment I found myself half wishing that it had been then ; for now, by that time, it would all have been over. The pain and what I dreaded most, the trouble of it,—all finally over and I at rest. But while I reflected, we rolled each instant further



away, and at last arrested ourselves again before a low stone door-way, and alighted.

A flight of steps, up which I wearily crawled, upon the arm of the sergent, thinking all the while how many more steps there were than led to the guillotine platform, and how much easier a punishment, consequently, was the latter—a cell-like office where sat a man at a table, an open book before him, and a lantern at his side,—a few gens d'armes with tri-color cockades, pinned to their chapeaux, standing near,—a question put to me which I did not hear but which the sergent seemed to answer for me,—a minute made in the book,—and then I was led off down a long passage and into a little cell furnished with a single chair and a low pallet bed. I threw myself down upon the bed, and almost before the door could be locked behind me, fell fast asleep.





## CHAPTER XV.

**Q**RULY, it is not wise to believe that the events and scenes of our wakeful hours must always give their especial impress to the sleep that follows. For I well know that there are seasons when their influence, if unhappy or malign, becomes arrested and rebuked by some kindly overruling power. Or, if it is not often so, am I, then, a being differently constituted from all others? For now again, as many times before,—and more particularly as upon that eventful night when in the little garret-room in the Maison des Capucins, I slept my first sleep of exile from my home,—I laid myself down oppressed with the burden of troublous and terrible reflections that seemed as though, with bitter intensity of purpose, they would utterly destroy my overwrought feeble frame ; and lo ! no sooner did I fall asleep, than in their place again came cheery forms, sweet fairy messengers of peace and joy, weaving gilded imageries before my brain, binding in helpless im-

potence whatever had disturbed me, driving away the unholy alliance of distempered fancies and brightening every perception of my nature with festive radiance. No longer did the real, living troubles of the past beset me ; but in their stead, and for a little while, I saw myself careless and free of thought, looking forward to that happier lot which I had chosen for the future. For in my dream, my own Fluvian stood beside me,—his arm around me and his face bent down lovingly to mine ; and looking up to him, I felt the firm assurance that our fates as well as our hearts, were at last immutably bound together. How could I resist that feeling, when in my dream, not only my present self, but also the spirits of many centuries past, concurred in smiling approval upon me? For now it seemed as though we stood once more in my little room in the *Maison des Capucins*, and in long procession, the ghostly forms of the buried dead filed past us. First a train of hooded monks preceded by acolytes with gilded crosses and swinging censers. They seemed to emerge in indistinct shadowy outline from the wall, and so disappear in opposite direction ; yet, as they drew near us, their forms acquired more certainty, and, wonderful to relate, the monotonous hymn with which they approached, gradually changed its character and swelled into a wild wedding chorus, to which they gave pointed effect by throwing back their hoods and showering down some congratulatory

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blessing upon us. So they passed away, growing again indistinct, and the song changing anew into a droning hymn as they melted through the further wall. And then a different scene appeared. There was a long table in the middle of the room, and around it sat a score or so of mailed knights of the Middle Ages. Richly chased goblets stood before them, and they were holding high festivity. And now, all flagons being refilled as by preconcerted signal, every face was turned towards us. At one end sat a knight whom somehow,—either from intuition or from a likeness to the stone effigy in my garden, I could not tell—I recognized as my ancestor Count Roux de Sainte-Maure. He also, looked towards us; and as a loud toast rang out, pledging the company in wishes for our happiness, he repeated it more uproariously than the others, and grimly smiled content with us and drank the cup to the very bottom. Then every flagon was dashed tumultuously to the floor, and, in the confusion, the belted knights faded away, as previously had faded the monks.

Had this dissolved like any other passing dream, it might not have cheered me otherwise than through the slumber it attended. But I awoke with its kindly influences still extending over me, and I felt certain that it must have been sent to me for my continuing happiness. As I sat up in my prison pallet, and let the mists and uncertainties of the night pass away,

and began more accurately to comprehend just where I was and the stern manner of my coming there, that dream still lingered in my brain as a charmed reality. Little by little, I gathered up its threads until I held them all complete. There was no break in the pleasant chain,—no look or gesture lost,—nor did its singular confusion of ghostly impossibility cause me to look back upon it as mere fleeting phantasm. I was in the mood of mind to let it speak to me rather in the spirit of prophecy and to carry that impression onward with me. Mingling my perceptions of the present and my imaginings of the past into one actual living picture, it seemed to me that the Church, so far from frowning upon my love, was blessing it,—that my great ancestor was approving it, rather than nourishing resentful arrogance and pride,—that henceforth my happiness was all assured,—that nevermore should I be destined to repent what I had done.

Therefore, it was not strange that, as I looked around upon the four blank walls of my little cell, they seemed to bound a land of promise. That hard pallet, the single bench and the rough floor,—those were the poor array of visible discomfort; yet in the air, invisible to any one except myself, still floated over me the fairy messengers of hope and promise. What though there might be some present hardship of the body? My mind, at least, was filled with the firm assurance of peace. What though from just such cells as this,

those who were as innocent and harmless as myself were each day dragged away to execution, and, in the intent of my self-constituted judges, the same fate may have been marked out for me? Could my bright dream come true, as it surely would, if it were not destined that at the end, I should escape? And this had now become the firm, unyielding attitude of my thoughts, henceforth not to be shaken except, perhaps, at some of those chance fleeting moments of depression in which there is no reason or philosophy that can drive back black care and offer consolation; and hence it was not merely with resignation but with buoyant cheerfulness as well, that I now arose and made the humble toilet for the day which the place allowed.

There was abundant light passing into the cell through a lattice in the door; and, while I had slept, the door itself had been unlocked and thrown partially open, doubtless in indication that I might emerge at will into the outer court. It was the noise of this, probably, that had given effect to the clashing of emptied goblets upon the floor. Upon the chair at the foot of the pallet, I now saw that, at probably the same time, a slight repast had been spread out;—not luxurious, indeed, and yet far from being of that coarse quality which is generally given to mere prisoners for crime. This seemed to show that my incarceration was not intentionally to be made more severe

than security demanded. Of this repast I slowly partook, from moment to moment, while making my toilet ; conducting the latter leisurely, in fact, inasmuch as, at first, I hardly knew in what guise or manner I had best appear.

Whether, in fact, to persevere in my late, and now accustomed, disguise of working-girl, or, on the contrary, as far as lay in my power, to resume my own condition of titled state. But the former plan was no longer a protection, since already I stood confessed to the authorities for what I really was ;—and ought I not, therefore, reveal myself to all alike, in the same rigid maintenance of my true position? It seemed proper, indeed, that I should do so,—and, moreover, there was a defiant attitude in it that pleased me. It would be nothing more than the fitting sequence to my outburst of ancestral pride upon the previous evening. Therefore, once again, I arranged my curls, which, during my sleep, had fallen loosely astray ;—no longer gathering them beneath the unsightly cap, but letting them fall into their natural luxuriance of flow about my cheeks and neck. From the little store of clothing that I had brought away, I selected and put on such as most nearly adapted itself to my real position, looping up here and there a fold, so that the fashion of the dress's form might compensate as far as possible, for its poverty of material. In my ears, I hung a turquois set that, for many generations, had

been an heir-loom with the Sainte-Maures; and upon my left wrist, I placed a golden bracelet of Venetian work, in the centre of which was a miniature medallion portrait of Marie Antoinette. She herself had originally clasped it around my arm, and I determined that it should remain with me to the end, whatever that end might be. Though I might surrender all my olden state, I would retain this token in defiance of oppression and as a grateful memory of one who to me was not merely Queen, but friend as well. And when I had done all this, I looked into a little glass that hung upon the wall, and I felt that I was satisfied with the view. Silks and brocades there were none in that hastily improvised costume; but still, there was in it something of the fashion of the Court, and I knew that I had youth and beauty sufficient to bear it out in triumph. I was again the Marquise de Sainte-Maure; and, in proud despite of the revolutionary ban would continue so, until, in another land, I might myself choose to lay aside the title.

Then I passed through the half-opened door, into the outer narrow court. It was lined upon one side with little cells, similar to my own, but I saw that they were now all tenantless, their occupants having apparently already risen and departed. But to what place could they have gone? Or was there some other passage, in addition to that in which I now stood? As I remained for the moment irresolute, I heard the



tumultuous yet somewhat indistinct hum of many gathered voices at a little distance, mingled now and then with a shout of merry laughter; and slowly following the sound, I emerged at length from the narrow passage and stood the witness of a picturesque and, to me, a novel scene.

A large hall, three or four times the width of the passage leading into it, and crowded with a motley throng. Over an hundred persons, I should think,—women and men socially intermingled, and here and there a young girl hardly yet to be counted more than as a child. A few of these, like myself, seemed to have indulged themselves in my own proud defiance of revolutionary criticism, their soiled and even ragged vestments being fashioned with art into something of courtly grace, and adorned, as far as possible, with the glitter of rich jewelry. A mere glance served to show me that these few persons, along with that assumption of approximation to aristocratic dress, abundantly in form and face carried out the same pretention; being themselves of that condition and lineage which will attest itself in misfortune often more rigidly than in prosperity. In fact, in this prison were now gathered many of those who had stood highest before their fall; and while in every direction I could observe groups of the base or lowly-born, here and there I saw arrayed before me, much of almost unconscious and at least unstudied manifestation of courtly dignity and

presence, casting, somehow, a refining influence upon the bare rough walls, and thus seeming to convert the cruel prison into a royal hall of audience.

With much else, as I have said, that was uncourtly and unrefined. For, as I stood irresolutely at the passage-end, unknowing whether to advance or retreat, and for the moment, undetected as a new-comer by any of that floating mass, I heard a low murmur almost at my feet, and looking down, beheld a figure that I well remembered. The figure, in fact, of the little chocolate-maker, once my neighbor of the opposite window. He sat upon a low stool, apart from the others, whimpering and wiping his eyes with the back of his hands, in a condition of abject despair. Seeing me gazing down at him, and detecting, perhaps, something of compassion in my face,—for it was hard to look upon such an old man reduced to misery, without feeling pity for him,—he arose and feebly staggered towards me, wringing his hands together and holding them thus clasped before him, with something of an imploring air. I do not know whether he had recognized me as his olden neighbor, or whether, in fact, he had ever seen me from behind my window-curtain. It seemed sufficient, now, that I was regarding him.

“You will ask them to do something for me?” he muttered. “It is so hard for an old man like me to die. I am too old to have been brought here. You are young and beautiful, and therefore would have

many trials before you, if you lived. Lovers might slay each other for your sake, and, in every way your life might yet be one of trial and misfortune. It might be well, then, that you should die and escape it all. But I—I have already lived through all the troubles of my life. I have lost my wife and my children, and am as poor as I can ever be. There is now nothing left for me but to keep on getting older and all the while to feel that everything has passed by, that should vex me any more. Is it not right, then, that I should be spared to enjoy my life to its proper end? And yet I have been brought hither;—and only because I forgot myself at my work, and sometimes sang a little song of King Louis the Grand, not thinking, at all, of what I was about. Can you not, therefore, tell them that—”

“Peace, old driveller that thou art!” cried a voice at my right hand; and turning, I saw that at last my entrance had been noted by the others. Many of them stood in little groups facing towards me, with an air of scrutiny as though canvassing my claims to any examination at all, and one or two of those nearest advanced in seeming readiness to welcome me, if I exhibited any disposition for friendly attention. He who now spoke, was a youth of scarcely twenty years,—slight of figure, pleasant in expression, noble in air. His dress, at one time doubtless rich, was now well worn, and even ragged in places. Yet, after the fash-

ion of many others, he had succeeded in giving it something of a polished and courtly appearance; and, upon his breast he displayed a single jewelled decoration, probably the sole remaining insignium of his rank and state.

“Peace, old driveller,” he repeated. “And to you, fair Mademoiselle,” he remarked, lifting with refined air of greeting, his cap, which had a single ragged plume hanging over its side in broken helplessness, “to you, let me make my best obeisance. You know me not? I am—I was, rather, before the constitution told me that in future I must be nobody—the young Duc d’Assaylt, and was beginning life as Page at the court of good King Louis. It was not so many years ago, Marquise; and yet I was so much smaller then, that you might well have forgotten me, never perhaps remarking me at all among the other train-bearers of her Majesty.”

“Yes, I know you now,” I cried, clasping the hand of the fair and still beardless youth. And glad enough in my heart was I to find a familiar face. “And you—”

“I came hither a week ago, fair Marquise. I had reached Lisle, —for, on my faith, I had concluded that it were better to be out of the kingdom than in it. But the agents of the revolution seemed to think differently from me, and so they escorted me back hither. But enough of that. You have come in good time,

beautiful Marquise; for at this very moment we nobles of the Conciergerie were looking around to see whom we should appoint for our Queen."

"For your Queen, you say?"

"Aye, indeed. Surely we must have a Queen to pay our allegiance to,—else this were a poor Court that we are now holding. Yesterday, it is true, we were not unprovided, for the peerless Duchess Mathilde de Vaudemont sat upon the throne and gave law to us. And right well did she hold the place, with gentle grace and dignity, doing honor to us her subjects as well as to her own regal beauty. But alas! she has gone."

"Away from here?"

"Yes,—to another Court, some will say. As to that, who can tell? But let us not speak further upon that score. It is sufficient for us now, that the throne she filled so well, has become vacant by her departure, and that your people here assembled call you to it with applause. For see, kind friends, I now present to you one whom you cannot help loving as your true and only sovereign,—the fair Marquise de Sainte-Maure. Allow me, Marquise, to offer you my humble arm, and conduct you to your throne."

So speaking, and with graceful affectation of respectful homage, he held forth his right hand. Confused and troubled at his speech and action, I yet felt no power of resistance; and mechanically placing my

hand in his, suffered him to lead me whither he would. I could dimly conjecture, indeed, that all this was the development of a desire upon the part of those present, to occupy their dreary hours, and thus, perchance, relieve their minds from a portion of the oppressive weight of anxious thought. Exactly what might be purposed by this simulation of stately Court, or if anything was purposed at all,—how long the fancy might have lasted or would last,—and why I, the new-comer, should thus be selected as the central object of it,—this was, of course, beyond my comprehension. But I could see that the faces of all around were bent pleasantly and kindly upon me,—and that they seemed to look upon the play,—if play such travesty of state could ever be called,—not as a mere transitory whim of the youthful Duke, but as a settled and well understood occupation of the hour. And therefore it appeared that I ought to make myself content to aid them all I could, by entering as fully as in my power into the humor of the moment.

Leading me slowly by the hand and through the little crowd which, as we advanced, parted and fell back with low obeisance, the Duke conducted me to the extremity of the hall, where, upon a raised platform, stood a single chair. This was my throne, it appeared ; and there, taking my seat, I looked around upon my subjects, who, following in my steps, had again gathered closely about me. I was somewhat

frightened and confused ; and yet, as I have said, there came upon me a disposition to enter as fully as possible into the spirit of the scene, growing upon me each instant more and more, until, after a few moments, I felt wonderfully calm and composed, and gazed around with something of the assurance and complacency with which an actual sovereign might look upon her people. And now, giving me very little time to wonder what was next to come, my self-constituted master of the ceremonies commenced the routine of the court, by leading up to me a grey, grizzled, weather-beaten man of sixty.

“The Colonel Duisson, your Majesty,” said the young Duke, “late of the king’s army in La Vendee. He has done much honor to France during past times, in the open field ; but being now charged with intriguing for the exiled Court—and it must be confessed, suspected with justice, being the faithful soldier that he is,—all that he has once accomplished must go for nothing, and he has been brought hither to await expiation of his crime.”

The Colonel knelt and kissed my extended hand, and then instantly fell back to give place for another introduction.

“Mademoiselle Saint-Cler, your Majesty,—more properly known, perhaps, as Sister Agnese. With her high birth, she might have been a lady-in-waiting at the Court ; but being of a devotional frame of mind,

chose, instead, to prepare herself for a convent, in which, doubtless, her influence and goodness combined would speedily have elevated her to the dignity of abbess. From the convent to the prison is not, perhaps, as severe a step for her as for the others of us, except that it leads more directly to the grave. Yet we feel assured that the good blood which is in her will not betray her at the end, but that she will meet her fate with all grace and fortitude."

The fair young girl,—thin and pale as much, perhaps, from the confinement of the convent as from her later trials,—in her turn knelt before me and placed her lips to my hand. Rising from my chair, I stepped down and kissed her upon the cheek. Then she, too, retired and standing apart beside the Colonel Druisson, gave audience to a successor.

"And here, your Majesty, is the Chevalier de Quelmar, simply a gentleman of the precincts, caring nothing about the court or to engage in plots and stratagems, and only anxious to remain uninterrupted with his mathematical study and his games of chess, which are his only relaxation. You think, indeed, that this might well have been allowed? But if your Majesty will reflect, the playing of chess is the movement of kings and queens; and though he might always seek to ruin his adversary's king, it was all without justification to him, so long as he endeavored to protect his own."



“But let us hope, your Majesty,” said the Cavalier, “that, in reality, my arrest was ordered for something different than a mere game of chess. What the true reason could have been, I know not; but surely for such a trivial—”

“It may be,—it may well be,” interrupted the Duke. “And yet what matters it, after all, as long as every road leads to Rome?—And here, now, is the Abbe Fontelle, who—”

“The Abbe Fontelle?” I cried, again rising from my chair of state as I saw the well-remembered and dearly-loved face of my long-lost Confessor, beaming upon me with smiling recognition. I could almost have wept for joy. It seemed as though this pleasant surprise made full amends for everything that had gone before. Now, at last, I had found a friend whom I had sadly missed, and all the trials of the past were as nothing to that great gain. I made a hasty movement to descend, and kneeling, reverently kiss the ring upon his hand; but with a kindly gesture he restrained me.

“That will be for another time, my child,” he said with a fatherly smile. “You forget that now you are not my penitent, but the sovereign of these your people. Ill would it be in me to let you break up the Court and disappoint our friends who yet remain to make their homage before you.”

With that, he urged me gently back upon the throne, and the Duke continued:

“The Abbe has just reached us, three days ago,” he said. “It is strange that we have not seen him here long before, for he has not entirely hidden himself, though wisely, of course, living not altogether with imprudent exposure. It was thought by many that he had escaped from the kingdom; but all the while he has been in Paris, moving to and fro, tending the sick and giving ghostly counsel to those who needed it. There must have been many who, all throughout, have known his occupation and his whereabouts. And now, Abbe, let us see who is to follow you in this royal reception.”

And so the audience went on,—courtier after courtier presenting himself before me, kneeling to kiss my extended hand, and then giving place to others. It was a strange scene; and in the course of it, there came before me many whom I had supposed I should never hear of or see again. Some whom I had believed to have escaped, and who, like myself, had the while, been in hiding,—others whom I had erroneously heard of as having already fallen, and who might better have done so, since they were now merely protracting an inevitable doom. There were names, too, which I had often heard pronounced as of the most exalted in the land, but of which I had never yet chanced to see the bearers; and finding those bearers of them

now thus appearing before me in person, it gave almost a reality to the pretence of Court, for I knew they so rightfully held their high places in the nation, that it seemed as though wherever they were, royal state should be about them as of course. There were others whose names were as yet unknown to me, as belonging to comparatively undistinguished families, and yet of sufficient importance to hold some little position at the Court; and some of these I now easily recognized, having seen them three years ago, in their first coming forward in that little world of Versailles. And there were men whose names were of somewhat plebeian origin, but who had raised themselves by culture and genius so as to take their rank with the wisest and the best, and now were enabled to ask my recognition with as proud confidence as any of the titled around them. One after another,—so the crowd approached, until at least one-half had been presented, each with more or less of explanation or commendation from the introducer. Until at last, the progress of the audience began to grow monotonous, with this recurrence of new introduction, even those names of rank and culture failing to prevent a growing satiety; and, with the weariness of it all, I began to look wistfully around for some relief.

Which came, indeed, almost at once, and before I had clearly informed my troubled mind that I really needed it. For of a sudden, there fell upon that little

crowd an appalling hush,—a silent looking around, as in dread expectancy of something terrible,—a deathly pallor in the faces of many and an unutterably anxious expression to all. Following, now, the bent of their gaze, which in almost every one was directed towards the door, I saw that it stood partially open and that in the doorway were two *gens d'armes* with shouldered muskets. Further within the hall there was a third, who, while I looked, drew from his belt a folded paper, cast a careless glance upon it, and then pointed towards the young Duc d'Assaylt. He, observing this, and that, in a moment he would be loudly addressed if now he were to affect unconsciousness of the motion, gave a single short nod in response, and for the moment turned pale. It was not, indeed, in the power of any man to do otherwise than look disturbed; but instantly, by some strong effort of the will, he seemed to have subdued almost all emotion, and with gay affectation of abandonment, approached me more nearly, and, as the others had done, kissed my hand.

“It is in farewell, your majesty,” he said. “May your reign continue long and prosperous. But I, alas! shall not be here to enjoy its sunshine.”

“You go away from here?” I asked, “and where?”

“Aye,—where indeed? That is the question, your majesty. My friend, the Abbe here, would say that it was to some different and distant Court, for good or

bad, as the case might be. But my other friend, over yonder, Monsieur Casoul the encyclopedist would say that I was going nowhere. Who shall decide between them?"

"It will soon be decided for you, my son," said the Abbe, pityingly. "Shall I not now absolve you? Put aside, then, this reckless spirit, and kneel before me."

For an instant the young noble hesitated, seeming as though his pride forbade. Then his lip trembled with emotion, a better frame came over him, and he knelt down before the Abbe and received his absolution. That done, he arose, and without stopping to make farewell to others,—fearing, perhaps, lest his resolution might desert him at the end,—he passed lightly through the open door and was no more seen. Looking around from his vacant place, I then saw that others in the company had been pointed out by the soldier at the entrance, and that all around me was a scene of weeping and heart-breaking farewells,—groups hanging together here and there in mute despair,—men and women dragging themselves towards the door with others clinging to them,—in every direction a terrible change from the late appearance of composure and gayety. Then I comprehended it all,—wondering, indeed, that I had been so blinded as not to have done so at the very first. There was now no longer any thought of playing at Court. I de-

scended hastily from my throne, and no one further regarded me. What if I were myself to be summoned forth by that dread disposer of all destinies at the door? Was it not terrible to think that I alone of all these people might have to go forth with no dear one near to bid me farewell,—no one, even, of all my late Court, caring to mourn for me? But as I thus bitterly reflected, I chanced to gaze into the further corner of the hall; and there beheld, sitting apart and bending over her beads in silent prayer, the loved figure of my Madre.

12





## CHAPTER XVI.

**H**ER face was bent over and her lips gently moving, as one after another she let her beads drop softly through her fingers. It was evident that for the time her mind was withdrawn from all earthly affairs,—that she saw nothing of the great scene of trial and suffering which was passing beside her,—neither the open door or the attendant gens d’armes nor yet the tearful farewells of agonized groups. Perhaps not merely her frame of devotional utterance but also some confusion of mind from change of scene contributed to the forgetful isolation. Certain it is that, though I stood before her and gazed wistfully into her face, she did not at once know me ; nor was it until I had addressed her by name that the light of conscious recognition seemed to come into her eyes. Then, however, she brightened up with the perception that even here she was not left alone, and she tenderly folded me in her arms.

‘ You also here, my child ? ’

“I also, Madre. And you—did they arrest you last night? And was it because you were understood to be a friend of mine?”

“How do I know, or what can I tell about it?” she said. “It seems all in a maze to me, when I think upon it. I only remember that they came—five or six soldiers—and ordered me to go with them. That they carried me before three other men who asked me questions which I hardly heard and did not comprehend, so confused was I;—and that then I found myself here. It was very chilly in my cell; but I do not think that it was more than by accident or that there was any wish to make me suffer. And here, of course, I must stay, until I am taken forth with others to the death.”

“Nay, nay, Madre.”

“Indeed, yes; my child. Have they not found out that I am of the De Valeries, and is not that of itself enough to seal my fate? And truly, I am content that it shall be so. I am becoming very old, my child; and life, which has never dealt very kindly with me, is little worth preserving in its few poor scattered grains. Rather should I give thanks that I am permitted to lay it all aside, in the company of those of our own degree, sealing my faith with theirs, than ignobly to breathe my last in unheeded obscurity.”

“Not so, Madre,” I cried again. “And you shall not die,—either by this violence nor yet in any unknown



seclusion. For when this trial is over, you shall live many happy years with me,—and that I am to remain unharmed, full well I know.”

“How can you know, my child?”

“It is a dream, Madre,—a dream that has told it to me.” I spoke the words with hesitation; for though I felt in my own heart, all the secret assurances of that dream, I knew that to her it must seem only an idle fancy, not to be relied upon with thoughtful mind. Then, too, were she to ask me for explanation, how could I give it and tell her all? That I myself might escape, it were easy to say. But that I was destined to find myself in safety with him,—with Fluvian,—that the vision of the future was gilded with his dear presence,—that half the joy of the deliverance was comprehended in the perception of his sheltering love thrown over me,—how, indeed, could I whisper this to her? For not only would she then believe me distraught with foolish confidence in an unsettled empty vision of the night, but she would mourn more deeply over me, as one who, for a passion of the heart, was throwing away a noble birthright. She might even despise me for that; therefore—I thought—it were better she should never know, until she heard it with all the rest of the world.

“Alas! my dear child,” she sadly uttered. “A dream is a very poor dependence. Have I not often had them myself? In the days of youth, with me

there was scarcely a night in which my thoughts were not cheered with presentiment of joys to come. How have these all been answered? How baseless and deceiving have they not all been? Look at me now,—poor, unknown and in prison; and then tell me whether a dream can ever be a thing worthy of any trust.”

Something in the solemnity of her utterance for the moment almost terrified me. Why, indeed, should I, more than she, be spared in the deceitfulness of any play of fancy,—what was there in my dreams that should make them more true than hers? For a minute I stood depressed and perplexed; then recovered all my faith and my elasticity of spirits. There was something too life-like and real in this my dream, that it should ever betray me. Had its bright promise been the sole distinct feature in some aimless, shifting maze of other circumstances,—a single truth amidst mere phantasmagoria of fleeting uncertainty, I might not have believed in it. But all was so plainly spread out before me—the words that Fluvian whispered to me were so distinct and natural in tone, as of his everyday waking conversation;—how could I help regard this, not as a vision, but rather as a true prophecy of the future?

How, from that moment, it comforted me to think so, hardly is it worth while to state. Looking back upon those days, I can even now read my mind, as though it had been a printed page, which ever since, I

had kept near me. I know that in the firm conviction of much good in store for me, I was cheerful at times when all others were sad ;—that I was calm and composed in moments when many counterfeited a wild glee that plainly came not from their hearts. I know that not only did I sustain myself with courage, but by my example imparted much of the same firmness to Madre, at periods when otherwise she might have sunk beneath the brooding shadow of death. It is true, indeed, that at the very first there might be even to myself, occasional moments of despondency. With the best assurances, there will be times when the spirit is weak and the burdened heart is faltering. There were hours when in my longing to hear again from Flonsette,—to look upon Fluvian, if for only a single instant,—to have some sweet knowledge that he was still thinking lovingly about me,—I felt an unutterable restless chafing against those prison bars, and then for the while my soul would sink with doubt. Could it really be,—I then asked myself,—that the dream was true and that I was to be saved through all? Why, in the nature of the thing, should it be that any kind fate would interest itself in me rather than in others as deserving? At such moments, when the prison-doors were opened for the departure of those who passed through them to their doom,—and now there came the time when not a day elapsed without the setting forth of that despairing cortege,—then of-

ten came to me, also, the dread fear of death, and I felt my cheek blanch and my strength fail, as felt the others around me. But as the days flew on and I found that I was still spared,—when I began to see that hardly any had remained as long as I, some coming one day and passing out the next,—many tarrying only a few hours,—almost all excepting Madre and myself at last being of later imprisonment than us, so that it began to seem as though we and we alone had been forgotten,—how could I help gradually learning to believe that not only myself, but Madre also, was destined for a pleasant life beyond those prison-walls—that she, too, was reserved by fate for some future recompensing happiness at my side? So firmly did use and custom at length fasten upon me this conviction, that very soon I began no longer to have a doubt or feel a tremor; and when the hour of trial each day came, excepting for my sympathy towards others and the grief I felt at the severing of friendships, I could have looked upon the scene unmoved, dreading nothing for myself and contemplating the whole in philosophical vein, as though from the height of some inaccessible security.

It was a terrible, yet wonderful picture thus day by day unrolled before me. As I now think upon it, I feel as though I could not comprehend it aright;—as though, indeed, I had failed in comprehension of it, at the time. It may be that then I stood too near to

take in other than the most salient incidents, neglecting properly to observe the under-coloring of emotional life so hard to be properly depicted. It may be that now I can more clearly see that under-coloring, yet fail in true realization of the incidents that gave the whole groundwork its vivid glow. Who, indeed, could accurately describe those events, so as to impress them with truthful force upon the mind of one who was not there?

I have read many narrations of that scene, and yet in all of them there has seemed to be something wanting. It may be that the writer was not one of the participants in it, and has too carelessly drawn upon his imagination, trusting to make up with brilliant coloring of fancy, for lack of the fine shades of truth. It may be, on the other hand, that he was there,—suffering for days the same terror as did the rest, and in the acute memories of his own startling experiences has neglected to note those facts which most readily create comprehension of the common life to all. Certain it is, that whenever or by whomsoever written, these several descriptions have failed to satisfy me. How then, with any hope of success, can I do better than those others?

Yet there is one topic upon which I must dare intrude. Many have written glowingly about the fortitude of the condemned,—their carelessness concerning their fate,—the alacrity with which they went to

meet their doom,—the reckless sports with which they beguiled the long days during which they awaited the inevitable call to go forth and mount the platform beneath the axe. How that, in mimic sport, one after the other would bend the neck across a chair; and counterfeiting the coming execution, thus practice for the dread occasion, the graces of the ball-room. And reading this, one would easily believe that such mockery was the daily pastime; and that, in all the concourse of the condemned there was no actual dread of pain or death, but only a reckless buoyancy which fostered indifferent contempt of either.

It is true, indeed, that there had been some such wild pastime, designed to show despite of whatever the revolutionary tribunals could do, as well as to attune the mind to its coming trial. Practices such as this, might for the time deaden the thoughts to what must so surely ensue; mitigating, perhaps, with the forced familiarity of the present, something of the sting of anticipation. And yet, it was not fated that I should witness any of this grotesque manner of sport. It had happened before I came,—it had pleased, with its novelty, for a few days,—it had then been dropped and never again renewed. In like manner, other pastimes had been from day to day invented, had enjoyed their short moment of popularity, and then had passed into disuse and comparative forgetfulness. As had happened indeed in the case of the mimic Court,

in the which I had been hailed as Queen, succeeding one who, the day before, had been led to the guillotine. She had ruled her Court for barely two days,—I for only one ; and then this play had followed the others into its merited oblivion. It was not that they found me on trial more wanting than my predecessor in the attributes of a Queen. It was rather because in such a life of constant apprehension and feverish thought, nothing except novelty could allay the perpetual craving for excitement ; and when the zest of freshness had departed from a pastime, it fell at once from the original power to produce forgetfulness.

And it is true, also, as has been so often narrated, that there were instances of wonderful fortitude in the passage from life to death. Those men and women who were collected in the Conciergerie prison were many of them from among the noblest of the land. Not all of them, indeed, as I have already said. The time had long gone past when only those who had thronged the Court or dwelt in their provincial castles were subject to imprisonment and death. Of the nobles of the kingdom, hundreds had already fallen victims. Others had long ago made timely escape,—some, in the earlier period, leisurely reaching the frontier in their own coaches,—others, later in the day stealing off in some half disguise,—others, still later, obliged to skulk trembling through the by-ways to reach some place of refuge, and of these not a few be-

ing taken on the route and put to death before their safety had been half secured. Thus, little by little, during three years, the ranks of the nobles had been thinned ; and, as the standard of danger to the state continually descended to a lower level, the prisons grew to know the presence of the mere untitled gentry,—then of the simply wealthy citizens,—after that, of the Girondist leaders,—and finally of such of the Jacobins themselves as had become obnoxious to their more powerful fellows. Yet still, all the while until the very end, here and there, as in my own case, arrest was made of some noble of the land, who through inability or insane recklessness had not fled ; so that in every prison could be found little coteries of the old regime,—who bore unstained names of historic value, emblazoned in the annals of the past, almost sanctified by centuries of heroic deeds,—and who, in this hour of misfortune, readily recognized each other and clung together with sympathy of class unexcelled by any other instances in history, and in the end, strove by the manner of their deaths, to maintain the reputation of their race, as well as to gain glory in each other's eyes. It was not in any case to be entertained, indeed, that these mén who remembered how their ancestors had fallen upon the battle-field, smilingly, with face to the foe, should now prove cowardly and recreant to their blood. The axe would prove not more painful than the sword ; and in after days, these later



victims would be registered as martyrs fallen for the throne as surely as though they had died on green-sward, amidst the tramping of servile hosts upon the far-off slopes of the historic Rhine. And so, each one nerved himself, bravely to meet his doom. Now and again, it is true, there might be one whose courage was weak, and who quailed at the end; but for the most part, in their deaths those men and women were sublime. Even children, half grown—and some such there were—caught the inspiration of their elders, and followed the brave example of their fortitude. With steadiness of step and calmness upon the brow, even with a smile upon the lips, those doomed victims each day passed, one after another, through the opened door; and when at last it closed again, those who were left behind bore testimony to the abundant glory of that end and felt, if possible, a better faith in the capability of human nature.

All this I will admit. What I would here seek to deny is the false impression that in the prison there was continual festivity and merriment,—a blind intoxicating forgetfulness of the terrible scenes each day preparing,—a careless, senseless mockery and laughter over the end, when to each, at last it came. To believe in all this, is to allow that man can assume a brutish spirit and die miserable and unreflecting, as falls the soulless beast in the shambles. For it is not in the nature of human kind to make a mere jest of death

when near at hand. The criminal in his cell who knows the moment when he is to be led out, turns pale at the thought of it, even while it is weeks away. How much more, then, must the heart fail when the day of doom is shadowed in uncertainty and each hour one's name may be called by the inexorable fate, and the escape from one summons may be only a short reprieve! Therefore, if to those destined for the scaffold there was the blanching of the cheek and the tremor of the frame when at last the dread mandate to go forth arrived,—if there were momentary tears at the parting from loved ones,—who should complain? The stout heart and the stern unyielding pride teaching the manner of a becoming death failed not to assert themselves in the end; and many a noble of the old Court, who wept wildly at parting from wife and child, composed his features into unfaltering serenity at the going forth to face the outer mob, so that the flush of health reappeared upon the face and the smile of scorn was fixed upon the lips, often before the tears had dried upon the cheek.

This, therefore, is what I saw, as day by day I sat with Madre in our silent corner, and watched the doomed for the morning's sacrifice go forth. With something of dread about myself, at times as I have already said; but afterwards, when I found myself continually spared, with a growing sense of security in the thought that my own call was never to come.

And penning now my memories of those hours, I do it not—as I have also already said—with hope of better success than others, in giving faithful conception of the scene. It is, indeed, with no idea of even attempting so to do, but merely to cull from my recollection a few of the more open incidents, to add something to that volume of narrations from other pens, and from all of which, at some future day, the true historian of the times may gather their actual delineation and philosophy.

First to be spoken of is the little chocolate-maker ;—for, as it happened, he was summoned forth the earliest of all whom I knew by name or sight. No one there knew him,—he had no friends or relatives to mourn for him,—it was only by some chance, indeed, that ever he had been placed in that prison-house at all. Thus friendless, and old and infirm as well, it would seem as though life could have few charms for him. Yet when he was called, he flung himself upon the floor and there lay clamoring in a wild frenzy of terror. At times he was inarticulate ; and again could be distinguished above the surrounding voices, the burden of his lamentation ever the same as when first I saw him ; sobbing forth the same strange complaint at being taken in the evening of his life when seemingly he had passed through all the troubles incident to existence and hence believed himself so much more worthy to live than those who were younger and

had their trials still before them. At another time, the singular nature of this line of pleading might have moved a smile; but now, there was no time for laughter, even as there was little thought of pity. Who, indeed, excepting where the life of much-loved ones was at stake, could compassionate others, when, all around, there was so much natural regard for self? Here and there I could see a cold, critical glance cast upon the poor fellow as he lay upon the floor; and that was all. Perhaps there were some who felt a scorn for him, in that he did not meet his fate more bravely; and it might be that in the minds of one or two, there would have been secret disappointment if he had borne himself too resolutely,—so firmly was a courageous death looked upon as the especial prerogative of the titled and high-born,—so acute the feeling of trespass, if any of the low-born had ventured to pass that line of demarcation and conduct themselves at all becomingly. At last the two *gens d'armes* stepping forward carried the victim forth in spite of his frantic struggles;—and so we saw him no more.

Another day, we bade farewell to Monsieur Casoul the encyclopædist,—one of those genial well informed men whose talents and courtly manners give alternate lustre to each other, making him the favorite of all who came in contact with him. It seems as though I saw him now, tall, thin and somewhat stately in his manner,—endeavoring to give comfort to such as were

obliged to go forth from among us, but almost indifferent as to his own death, so resolutely had he argued himself into belief in the mere transient materialism of his own nature. Thoughtful and considerate, nevertheless, of the feelings and opinions of others;—and never regarding with anything other than kindness and forbearance, the many acts of devotion and sometimes of superstition that transpired around him. Now, being himself summoned to the guillotine, he arose with unfaltering mien, made a few steps towards the door with the manner of one who having no relatives to part with, would fain avoid farewells altogether; then, as though withheld by sudden thought, turned and approached the Abbè.

“A farewell to you, at least, dear Abbè,” he said; “for, inasmuch as we are the leading apostles of two great systems, it is fit that we should not part without a kindly word. And after all, much as we are convinced in our own minds, one of us must necessarily be wrong. Which is it, I wonder?”

“I know that I am right, Monsieur Casoul,” responded the Abbè.

“Parbleu!” rejoined the other, tapping the lid of his snuff-box. “It is very easy for one to say that he knows;—but how is he to prove it for others? And yet it well may be, indeed. I have lived sufficiently long to find out that the strongest opinions may be shown, as wrongly based. Well, Abbè, we

may not argue the matter, now. You see that the time is short, and I have been too much fixed in my own doctrines, to be suddenly changed. What then shall we say? I cannot believe in absolution from you,—nor, thinking as I do, would you grant it to me, if, for greater assurance, I were to ask it. We can, then, merely part as good friends. I do not believe there is a future state; but should there be one, Abbè, it may come to pass that what you call Providence will not deal as hardly with me as you think I deserve, but that we may meet in some happy condition where I may have the pleasure of acknowledging to you that I was wrong.”

With that he grasped the Abbè by the hand; and before any of the others of us could speak to him, he had turned around again and passed out through the open doorway.

It was the Chevalier De Quelmer who next was summoned to the national sacrifice. He was sitting at the time before a little table beneath one of the grated windows, and was playing chess. He had thus sat many hours a day since he had come into the prison. I believe he had obtained his chessmen with some difficulty; but having secured them at last, seemed perfectly happy and oblivious of all troubles. His adversary was a young man,—an officer in the late royal army; the Chevalier, on the contrary, was more than middle-aged, and possibly through constant study,

looked older than he really was. It was always to me a pleasant picture ;—the dim light struggling down through the grated window and shining upon his polished bald head as he bent over the pieces upon the chess board. Now being called to go forth for execution, he looked up for a single instant, then back again regretfully upon the game.

“So near the end !” he muttered. “Can we not yet finish, Lieutenant ?”

“A minute or two may do it,” said his adversary. “And some of the others do not seem to be ready yet.”

“Check, then !” cried the Chevalier, exultingly, moving his knight. “And is it not checkmate as well ?”

“Pardon me, Chevalier, but you will see that in the excitement—or rather let me say, in the hurry of the moment,—you have exposed your castle, and that it gives me the game. Therefore take back your move and play more cautiously.”

“Nay, that I will not do,—it would be unfair. And I did not think that I could be so easily discomposed,” sighed the Chevalier.

“And yet I cannot accept the game so readily,” responded the Lieutenant. “What then ? Shall we not call it a draw ?”

“It must be so, I suppose,” said the Chevalier, “since we have no time for another game.”

So they arose and embraced in farewell; and, in a moment, only the Lieutenant was left gazing upon the board.

“After all,” I heard him mutter to himself, “it was checkmate, and it is I who am confused. If I could only see the Chevalier for a moment longer and tell him so,—how happy it would make him? And alas! it is now impossible.”

Again,—it chanced that among certain of those who entered the prison many days after myself, there were two young men, so similar in figure, air and features as to be instantly recognized as brothers. I did not know either of them at the first; but upon the morning after their arrival, the two presented themselves before me, with their arms thrown around each other like loving schoolgirls, and then I saw that one of them was something of an old acquaintance. None other, in fact, than the youthful orator of the Jacobin Club, who had afterwards appeared as one of my three judges. And I said as much.

“But carry thy mind still further back, Marquise—for such I will still call thee,” he said. “Dost thou not remember a young law-student who was born near the bridge at the gate of thy chateau, and there lived until he came to Paris?”

“Antoine Courbeye?” I exclaimed.

“The same, Marquise. Naturally, I was soon lost from sight. But none the less did I remain mindful of



early kindnesses, holding them ever in my grateful heart. And afterwards growing into notice, and attaching myself to the fortunes of the Revolution, it was as leader of the Club, Marquise, that I was enabled so long to preserve thy life from molestation. For when thou fled'st to the garret of the old Maison des Capucins, I knew of it, almost at the very first day, and from my own apartment below, was enabled to maintain watchful guardianship. And when the secret could not any longer be kept, and the arrest was made, thou mayst remember that, as one of the judges, I tried to save thee."

"I feel it—and I am ever grateful," I said. "More especially as I am afraid that your efforts in my behalf may have contributed to your present trouble."

"Nay, not so. I had made enemies long before that time, be well assured, and had I never known thee, I should still be here. Perhaps I was always disposed to be more lenient than the other chiefs had thought desirable. At any rate, for many weeks I have been suspected; and, as my enemies were more powerful than I, here then I am."

"I deeply regret then, Monsieur—"

"Not Monsieur, but citoyen, all the same, Marquise," he interrupted with a laugh. "Thou seest that, though some have made the mistake of distrusting me so that I must suffer at the end, I am none the less devoted to the Republic. Citoyen I am, and Citoyen I

shall remain to the last. It is my brother here—my twin brother, indeed,—who is the aristocrat. Marquise, let me present to thee my brother, the Duke de Rochenelle.”

“And how can that be?” I said, astonished and perplexed. “What jest is this?”

“It is, indeed, no jest, Marquise. My brother and myself were born in fourth cousinship to the then living Duke de Rochenelle. It was too far off an honor to regard at all—for many years we scarcely knew about it,—certainly the Duke knew not of us; and we grew up side by side,—my brother and myself,—almost unambitious and in obscurity. But the Revolution came and the Duke and his two sons fell,—and then his brother and his brother’s child. Nearer then it came to us, though still seemingly far distant. But the revolutionary axe moved swiftly and cut away all between us and feudal aristocracy as the scythe mows down the grass; and so one day it happened we learned that the last intervening head had fallen. I was still the simple Citoyen Courbeye;—but my brother here, born five minutes before me, had become the Duke de Rochenelle. Does it not seem strange?”

“Strange, indeed,” I said.

“And think, Marquise,—poor, simple fellow that he is—what then he did! He should have held his tongue and moved out of the land; and it might be that if the Revolution ever failed, he could then take

up his title and perhaps regain the confiscated estates. But, foolish boy, he was elated, and half in fun and half in earnest, called himself 'Duc'; and so the magistrates, considering it all in earnest, made his arrest as an aristocrat of deepest dye, and here he is. Was he not a simpleton, Marquise, to act so inconsiderately? And yet, I might have done the same myself—who knows? I cannot surely tell; for having been born five minutes too late, I do not know how it feels to be a Duke."

"He would be grander—more fitted than I to bear the title," the other said. "And now, Marquise, it is our only remaining wish that we may die together."

"Ah, yes, indeed. For how else would I know how to die at all?" was the rejoinder of the first. "It greatly troubles me, so that at night I have lain and pondered upon how I should act if Eugene were taken earliest. For then, thou seest, I should become the Duke De Roehenelle. And could I then still take pride in my citizenship? Or must I rather abjure it all, and hold to the true maintenance of my rank, as a noble of the kingdom? Whereas, if we die together, I can first mount the scaffold, and so all will be well."

They had their wish. The very next day, both their names were called, and I watched them go forth lovingly together, with arms about each other. Reaching the doorway, they turned around for an instant, and I could read the expression with which they

gazed into each other's eyes. It was not merely the fraternal love which made them rejoice to die together,—it was, also, the encouragement which each gave the other to die bravely as became his condition,—the one as patriot, the other as noble of the banished Court.

“Long live the Republic, Citoyens,” cried the one.

“And God save the King, Messieurs,” responded the other.

And then, still in fraternal embrace, and even with a smile upon the lips of each, they turned again around and disappeared.

Last of those to be here mentioned was the Abbè Fontelle. I did not see when he was called. Somehow, I had thought that for his goodness, he would be permitted to stay by us, and I had almost ceased to feel anxious for his safety. It was himself who told me of his fate, for he came to the corner where I was sitting and there bade me farewell.

“I know you will grieve, my child, but do not weep,” he said. “It might even unman myself: and at this hour of trial, who might not be unnerved? Reflect,—I may need more courage than others, for it is to me that some may be looking up for example. Others have died becomingly, because their high lineage required it;—and that was well. But I must die uncomplainingly for a better reason,—because my faith gives me a sure hope of Heaven. There may be some around

me who are now watching to see how I endure it,—some who are already doubting, and who, if they see me falter, will altogether disbelieve. Therefore, be strong in sustaining yourself bravely, and it will help me as well.—And take, here, my last absolution.”

I knelt upon the floor; and, with hand upon my head he there absolved me. Then, struggling to keep down my tears, I took him by the hand and accompanied him to the door. Calmly he passed out, and with fortitude did I succeed in bearing myself at his departure. Whether I should have afterwards broken down, I cannot tell. But looking up, I found myself suddenly distracted by a new object, which did not obliterate the thoughts of the other, and yet mingled itself with them so as to produce confusion. For, chancing to cast my eyes upon the nearest of the gens d'armes, I saw beneath the military hat, the simple, beardless face of Hyppolite, our concierge of the *Maison des Capucins*.





## CHAPTER XVII.

“**H**YPPOLITE,” I whispered, “how is it that I see you here?”

It was not difficult to talk with him, for the only duty of himself and his comrade was to guard the door, while the third one, advancing into the hall a little further, read out the list of names. Meantime the guards could stand with arms at rest and converse with whom they pleased, even at times detailing such portions of the public news as had reached their ears. Hearing himself now thus addressed by me, he started,—not having been aware, probably, in which of the many prisons, I was confined, and consequently, being taken by surprise at my sudden appearance before him. For the moment he gazed down at the lock of his musket, and something of a shame-faced blush spread across his features.

“I could not help it, mademoiselle,” he softly said at length, peering around with quick, fugitive glance to assure himself that no one noted the omission of

the more familiar word 'citoyenne.' "They learned that I had known of your disguise, and also that I had once been in the royal guard. If I had refused to show my faith in the Republic by now joining the army, I should have surely suffered for it. And I did not think that I should be put upon this sorry business."

"A sorry business, indeed. And yet you are not to blame for it, Hyppolite. And there is no reason why you should not do honor to France in her army," I said. And indeed, what had he to do in the keeping up of royal authority or feudal lines, that he should risk his life by refusing service wherever the ruling powers might demand it of him? Such rebellion as this was the province surely, of those who should profit by it—not of the poor and lowly. "But tell me, Hyppolite, what of Flonsette? For you should know where she now is?"

"It would not be myself, mademoiselle, if I did not inquire about her, every day. She is at the hospital, but she is getting better. She had a more severe wound than we had at first supposed, but they tell me the danger is now over."

"Thank Heaven for that!" "And you will inquire about her every day and let me know, Hyppolite?"

"Each day will I go to the hospital, mademoiselle ;

and if I am permitted to be put on guard here again, I will let you know all about her.”

The last one of the condemned for that day here passed through the doorway, the captain of the guard closed his list and tucked it down in his belt, the word was given, the two soldiers shouldered their muskets and walked away, the door closed behind with a sullen clang, and the performance for that day was over. Of those who remained within, many drew a long sigh of relief—rejoicing even at a respite that might be for only twenty-four hours,—the color of hope came back to pale faces that had vainly struggled to show composure,—and, in a few minutes, the occupations or sports of the day re-commenced. And I—betaking myself to the side of Madre, told her the good tidings I had received, and impatiently awaited the news that another day might bring me.

Slowly—too rapidly, indeed, for some, but with tortoise-like crawl to me—the next day came. Again the door opened and once more Hyppolite appeared. I almost flew to him; and, as before, he whispered that Flousette was rapidly gaining health. Another day—and yet another—and each day the tidings came as favorable as before. But on the fourth day—oh black and bitter time! my heart sank as I saw that Hyppolite’s face wore the livery of gloom and that he turned his eyes away from me, hoping that I might



not see the tears which, do all he could, would have their flow.

“ Oh, Hyppolite, is she worse ? ” I said.

“ Mademoiselle, she is dead,” came the broken rejoinder. “ And I loved her so dearly. They thought that she was almost well, but—there came a fever—and in a few hours—she died.”

Dead ! It could not be—no, it could not be ! All else might be taken out of the world—the soldier who made warfare and the statesman who stirred up the strife ; for that was their destiny and their retribution. The low, the base, the scheming—all these might die ; but surely not my own pure-hearted merry little Flonsette. She who had never done wrong to any one,—who had played with me through childhood upon flowery banks—who had given me her devotion through all the maturer years—that she should die, a sacrifice for me, before the bright days might come again in which I could strive to find new ways to make her happy,—oh, this surely could not be ! It was some jest of Hyppolite, to plunge me into sorrow in order that the surprise of a succeeding joy might be the greater. He must even have brought her with him perhaps, to visit me,—it might be that even now she was standing behind the door, ready at his signal to rush into my arms, and tell me that it was meant for sport. But as I now gazed half stupefied at Hyp-

polite and saw the tell-tale tears at last rolling down his cheeks, I could no longer doubt.

“There were kind people with her at the end, mademoiselle,” he said. “And she knew that she was going to die, and they said she sent loving messages to some one, who must have been yourself, though she mentioned not the name. I think that she knew, somehow, that the messages would reach you, but did not speak your name, thinking that perhaps you had been forgotten, and that it was not well to remind them of you. And it must have been with the same thought that she wrote this little paper, mademoiselle, writing it painfully before she died, but putting no name upon it. They found it afterwards, in her hand, and they gave it to me because it was I who had most often come to ask about her, and it might be that I would know to whom it was to be delivered. Mademoiselle, this it is.”

A poor little scrap of paper, indeed, torn probably from the leaf of holy missal while the nurses had their backs turned away,—written upon with pencil that some doctor might have left behind, upon the table beside her, after ordering his useless prescription. Folded all awry and bearing deep creases where it had been shapelessly clenched within the grasp of dying hand. But oh! so precious to me, that little paper, the last legacy of love! So touching to know that at the very end, her sweet spirit of self-sacrifice

had shown itself, anxious then, as at other times to give up everything for my welfare. For I could not misunderstand the unselfish heart that had dictated to the dying fingers, these few trembling words.

"*Adieu,*" so ran the writing. "*He is in the same prison with yourself. Be kind to him in memory of me.*"

My breath came thick and short, as thus I read. Who could he be, of whom she spoke, excepting one person? Why was he now in peril, and if so, wherefore had we not already met? Were there other wards in that same building—and had thin walls been keeping us apart, even while the same roof had covered us? Why had my dreams—my instincts—not told me of all this already long before? And yet, how long had he been so near me? Perhaps not for many days, indeed. One thing was true, at least. I must see him, now, if human energy could any way contrive it.

There came a pang into my heart as I thus reflected, and realized that even in the moment of learning Flonsette's death, my mind could have been at all drawn away to considerations of my own happiness. A regret at the instant, which afterwards, when I had more time to think of it, grew into continued bitter self-reproach. And yet I could not help it. Those were days when one emotion followed another in quick succession, and they who could dwell long upon one

event would find the whole world of their lives slipping away from beneath them. There was need of action mingled with sentiment. And at least I tried, before all else, to be just. For, having a few of my gold pieces left, I poured them all into Hyppolite's hand, telling him to see that poor Flonsette received proper burial, and, if ever there came a change allowing it, that a cross should be planted above her grave and masses said for her repose. And then—

“Hyppolite, there is now in some other ward of this prison, one about whom Flonsette thought very much,” I said. And again a sharp pang passed through my heart, and this time with the consciousness that I might be committing great meanness, in thus sheltering my own sentiments and preparing my purposes beneath the disguise of her strong love for Fluvian. And yet how else was I to act, without betraying my heart to this poor soldier? And how else would Flonsette herself have bade me act, had she been there to counsel me?

“Another prisoner, Mademoiselle?”

“A young artist,—Fluvian Chamant, by name,” I said. “You must find some method by which I can see him, for it is necessary that I should speak to him about her.”

“I do not see how it can be done,” responded Hyppolite, shaking his head. “The guard to the other

ward is different from this ; and though I know them—”

“ You know them, Hyppolite ? Then surely you can arrange to have it done. Only for fifteen—for ten minutes, even. There can be no danger in that. I seek not to escape, nor could do so, if I desired.—Look, good Hyppolite—give them this—for only ten minutes conversation with him,” and I tore the bracelet of my Queen from off my arm. It was all I now had left ; for I would not think of recalling one of those gold pieces I had already devoted to a sacred purpose. Only, I now wrenched the medallion portrait from the bracelet and hid it in my pocket. The gold of the setting was all that would be of value to rough soldiery. “ Tell them to take this, Hyppolite, and let me have only five minutes speech with him. You would not hinder it, simply because you are jealous that Flonsette cared for him ? ”

“ You know I would not think of that, mademoiselle,” responded Hyppolite, flushing scarlet at the thought and now driven by the imputation—as I had somewhat ungenerously meant that he should be—into a stronger determination to bring about my purpose. “ I will offer it to them and see what they will do ;—only, mademoiselle—do not say that thing to me again.”

With that, the time having come, he went away. The next day when he reappeared he shook his head ;

so far he had had no success. The ensuing day the same,—and so on, for nearly a week. Then I began to despair. But one morning as I chanced to be lingering near the portal—it was not yet the hour for calling the roll of death—the door softly opened and Hypolite beckoned to me. No one regarded me as I slipped through and stood outside, the door closing again behind me.

“For only fifteen minutes, mademoiselle,” he said. “It was all that I could do and that little may bring us into danger. I could not have obtained even that, had not one of the other guard been thinking about his own young girl in Avignon and how quickly she would travel many miles on foot to see him, if she could. And to gain his sympathy, I was obliged to let him think that you wished the interview for yourself and not for any third person. It was a lie, mademoiselle ;—and yet what else could I do ? You will forgive it, will you not ?—And, mademoiselle, none of them will keep the bracelet, which here I bring back to you. They say that they are French soldiers, and will not take payment for bringing true lovers together. It was a strange speech to make about a person like yourself, and you would have been angry to hear it said ; but of course, I could not stop them. And now, be pleased to follow me, mademoiselle.”

We passed along, turning to the left and away from another closed door that led directly to the outer

air and the dreadful tumbrel,—through a short dark passage, and so to the end where, upon a stone bench, sat two or three other gens d'armes. At a nod from Hyppolite, they sprang to their feet and one of them unlocked a little door at his right.

“Only fifteen minutes, citoyenne,—remember,” he said. “We might all lose our own heads, if this became known.”

With that, he pushed me through the doorway, the others remaining with him outside. I found myself in the gloomy ante-room—if such it could be called—of a narrow passage, lined with cells as in my own quarter. At the other end were probably similar halls for the daily assemblage of prisoners;—at this end, merely a wider space, such as might be made by removing one of the cells. There was only one person in this place, standing expectantly in an angle of the wall; and at sight of him my heart bounded, for before he could come more fully into the light, I knew that it was Fluvian.

With one eager forward step, I was in his arms,—my head upon his shoulder, my eyes gazing into his own. There was no time, indeed, for reticent, bashful hiding of my love, to be gradually drawn out, by soft words of gentle pleading. ~ And why should that ever be? I had told him all, in that single sentence which I had thrown into his window, and now there was nothing left but that with my lips I should as honestly avow

the truth, and no longer, with assumed coldness and restraint, postpone his happiness. Therefore it was that I now stood unresistingly clasped within his arms, a willing captive; and for the moment, I spoke no word, hushed into silence by the mere consciousness of my own contentment,—hearing only the loud beating of his heart against my own.

Then, partially disengaging myself, I placed my two hands upon his shoulders and gazed earnestly into his face. I saw that he was pale,—it might be from present emotion, and yet it might also be that his confinement was wearing upon him. I could almost have wept at this. To me, a few days more or less away from the outer air would count for nothing; but why should he suffer, whose daily life was one of joyous wandering through the broad streets, in a man's full vigorous enjoyment of the blue sky overhead?

“And why—why are you here at all, dear Fluvian?” I murmured, in open continuation of that secret thought. “What have you done, that now you should be imprisoned?”

“Could I bear to go free, my love, while you were here?” he said. “And therefore, thinking the sooner to be with you—”

“Surely you do not mean that?” I cried. “It was not yourself that did it?”

“And yet it was, dear Gabrielle,” he answered,



once more clasping me closely to him ; and oh ! how sweet it was to hear again my own name, and uttered so lovingly by him. “When I came in and found your little note upon my floor, I felt mingling with my despair at losing you, the one great happiness that you were mine, and I knew that I could not live without you. And then I resolved, as the only thing that I could do, to get myself arrested, as well, for I had the daring hope that I might be put into the same prison with yourself. There, although others might be present, I could see you, even were it at a distance ; and surely that would be something.”

“Ah, Fluvian, if so it could have been ! How much—how very much have we not already lost ? And yet, how could you—”

“How could I manage to be arrested, you would say ? Ah, Love, it is an easy thing, in these wild days, to see the inside of a prison. I had merely to expose more publicly my picture of the Queen, and the work would be done. And yet, perhaps, now that I think of it more closely, it was not such an easy matter after all ; for there is a queer fate in human life, whereby one cannot always speedily attain that which he wishes. Had I skulked away in secret places to avoid arrest, it would have come almost upon the hour, perhaps ; but wishing for it, it seemed to flee me. So when I showed my picture and even at times talked a little treason in the public places, for a while my fate

avoided me. What was I—a poor artist, caring nothing about the politics of the day, that the Republic should fear me? So when at night I waited and sometimes heard the tramp of feet coming up my stairs and hoped they were the gens d'armes, it would turn out to be only my companions of the studios. But at last, of course,—only a week ago, it came. But why was it not in the same prison with yourself?”

“Why, indeed, dear Fluvian! And yet, we may often again meet, as now. And it may be that before long we shall be released. Sooner or later, that must come. I have no fear as to myself, indeed. But to you—the present danger—”

“There is no danger to me, my love. Have no dread about that. What have I done, that I should be made to suffer anything for it? An indiscretion or two of speech and action,—that is all. And then, you will reflect that I am only known as one not mingling in the feuds of clubs and parties, and therefore not likely to make enemies who would desire my destruction. And yet again,—I see the signs that tell me this bloody rule is coming to an end at last.”

“Oh, Fluvian! can you feel sure of that?”

“As sure, dear, as that we stand here. Already, and before I was arrested, I could hear the mutterings of the people, ready to make their declaration that it had all gone far enough and must be stopped. In the Latin Quarter—even in Saint Antoine, where most do

fetter us, and we will seek that foreign land. I can almost see it now, indeed. A pleasant shore, with the water gently rippling up against it, and far off amid golden clouds the—”

“Yes—yes!” he eagerly interrupted. “I see it plainly now, myself. I have seen it, indeed, for days. It came to me in a dream; and now that you speak of it, it almost seems as though you had looked into my own heart. It was the border of a great sea that in my dream I stood upon,—whose surf, as it dashed upon the sand, almost washed my feet. There was a beautiful glow of sunlight upon the water—the sparkle of the sun just newly risen. We stood there side by side and watched the play of gold and purple upon the dancing waves; and we spoke together and told each other how that the scene had somehow entered into our own souls and become a portion of ourselves,—how that for us the sun of a newer, more natural life had now arisen and that all our nature was aglow with its divine effulgence.”

“I, too, have had my dream, Fluvian, but it was not that. And yet mine was really the same, as far as speaking with some voice of prophecy, about our loving, united future. Different only in those accessories with which my imaginings of the past and your true heart of artist have tinged the dreams diversely,—in all the real spirit of essentials, the same. How strange, how mysterious is all this! And how plainly

this coincidence of vision shows that it was not merely a fleeting fancy, but that a kindly fate has been marked out for us; and that meanwhile our bright guardian angels, loving us so tenderly, have striven to soften our present lot with sweet, anticipatory pictures of the future! Oh, Fluvian! how, after this, could any one doubt that our lives were meant to flow on together?"

How, indeed? And standing there beside him, with his tender arm around me, we spoke joyfully about the future. We would prepare our departure as soon as we obtained our release from the present tyranny of circumstance. We would gather up what little we might from his little store and my once large but now ruined possession. If it were much, we would not refuse it; if it were nothing, we would rely upon our own exertions, and we would be sure to find our labor softened and ameliorated with our earnest love. How sneeringly, when it was found that we were gone, would some of those whom we had left behind shrug up the shoulder and make their foolish epigrams! And yet, how little would we know about it, or knowing, care; so long as we held ourselves secure from outward harm and thoughts of molestation, in the shelter of our mutual affection.

And speaking thus about the future, naturally it led us to review the past, as well. For tracing up the coming years, our sanguine hearts looked forward to the time, when, our first difficulties being triumphed

over, fame and fortune would await us. To him the fame of a great artist who had at last made his talents known to all the world,—to me the only fame I should ever care about, that of being his wife. Then, in those after years, we might return for a little while to France. There, the people would be sure to honor him; and if there were any of my friends and kin alive, they would press about me and tell me how their minds had changed regarding me, and how they must confess at last, that in leaving them, I had done well. And then, we would revisit all those scenes of our youth which had brought us so near together. The garret-room where I had lived—ah! why could not Flonsette still be with us as of old!—the narrow streets through which we had wandered, while I blindly, had been thinking only of friendship,—the bench before the little out-of-doors café where he had quarrelled, and where the small sallow officer whom they called Captain Buonaparte had interfered to keep the peace,—and lastly, we would go to the Courbevoie bank once more. We would take a little boat as we had been accustomed; and again we would row across to the narrow open space upon the further shore of the river, at which, with our backs against the tall pine tree, we had so often loitered away the afternoon, listening to the soft plash of the ripples against the gnarled roots, gazing up at the fleecy clouds drifting over the tree-tops and watching the passing of the

distant sails. An idle fancy, one might say. And yet it was not so to ourselves, for it was one of those fancies that spring from the heart and are bound up with all its tenderest ties.

“And even this prison, Fluvian, we shall come to revisit; for, at the least, it has given us these happy moments. Let us therefore, leave something about it which will remind us of this day. Reach up, my love, and write your name upon the wall. I will write mine beneath—Adele Carnot, for the last time, perhaps—but not now despising the name, for it was as such that first you met and loved me. When we come back, years hence, we shall, among other things, look upon those names, and so more nearly recall the present hour.”

And with that we wrote our names as high up on the wall as we could reach—his name the first and mine beneath it. And as I finished the last letter, there came a low rap against the outer side of the door, and we knew that it was the signal for my departure. The fifteen minutes were more than gone.

“Adieu, dear Fluvian; shall we succeed in meeting here again, do you think?”

“I know not, dearest Gabrielle. These men have perilled themselves even now to assist us, and may not often again be willing to do so. And then, it will not be many days before we are both set free.”

He wound his arms close about me, and I turned my

face up to his own. He kissed me upon the forehead upon the cheeks and lips, and, for the moment, I lay in his arms, unresisting. It was no time, at that moment of parting, though it might only be for a day, to make pretence of maidenly bashfulness. He was my love—my life—my everything. I had confessed it all to him ; and unrefusingly I placed my lips to his, and spoke his name endearingly. Then, releasing myself, I struggled towards the door.

There turning, I saw him standing in the middle of the floor, gazing enrapturedly towards me. There were joy and transport in his face—and mingled with them, a fleeting perception of puzzled thought, as though his happiness was too complete, and he could not, for that moment, realize that it was anything other than a dream. For a single second, I stood and watched the flickering play, upon his face, of this emotion. The thought was in my mind to fly back into his arms, once more ; and, again, with my lips pressed to his, assure him that it was all reality. But at that moment, the guard outside repeated the warning rap, and now even softly opened the door an inch or so, in intimation of the growing necessity for departure. And therefore I merely, with my finger-tips, threw one parting kiss to Fluvian, and turning, passed into the outer court.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

**A** MOMENT more, and I was in my own prison-hall again. No one seemed to have observed my departure or return. If they had, it had been noted only for the instant, and had passed at once out of mind as a matter of little interest. Certainly I had not been missed. It puzzled me, indeed, that this should be so. It was hard for me to realize that I had been away for less than half an hour. Those few minutes had been so fraught to me with emotions and events—so abundantly filled with the glorious reality of reconciliation, confession and love, that it almost seemed as if I must have lived for years away from my own prison-company. When, therefore, I slipped lightly through its cautiously opened door, and saw that, during my absence, those whom I had left had scarcely even altered their positions, I felt, for the instant, dazed and confused. Those two young women sitting beside each other and still, as before, reading from the same book, the leaf not appearing to



have been turned,—that old grey-headed General yet standing as I had left him, against the post, with arms crossed and one foot extended,—the royalist boy of fourteen still nestling half asleep with his head in his pale worn mother's lap,—were these mere statues? Could they be living beings and all apparently nursing some single tedious train of reflection, while I had been enjoying a cycle of tender transports and emotions,—laying in such a store of glorious recollections and fancies as should forever after gild my thoughts?

Recovering my perceptions, I passed through all these people, few of whom I even knew by name—and sought for Madre. It was not difficult to find her, for she was almost always seated in the same corner and in a chair which long prescription had made exclusively her own. She, too, had not taken note of my absence. She sat in the dreamy attitude, which had now become peculiar to her, her hands holding the rosary lying clasped upon her lap, and her face bent slightly forward. Now she did not regard my approach until I knelt before her, and placing one arm partially around her, laid my cheek upon her hands. Then she lifted her head, smiled, and softly took my curls between her fingers, gently toying with them.

“My child?”

“Ah, Madre,—I am so happy,” I exclaimed.  
“And I must tell you all about it.”

Yes, I must tell her; but a pang shot through my

heart even as I spoke. I must surely tell her all, for she had well entitled herself to my utmost confidence, and therefore should be treated as my earliest, dearest friend. Not she, indeed, should be one of those from whom I would depart without farewell or thought of explanation. And yet, how could I tell her, so that she would not despise me as one who had fallen basely from ancestral faith and pride? If she, who had had so little to lose, had given up her whole life to solitude simply out of principle for that little, how could she look even tolerantly upon my more startling defection? It seemed to me, for the moment, that I would put off the confession until I could point out to her, Fluvian himself. With my exaltation of him, it seemed as though if she only saw him, and knew how good and noble he was, her heart would be drawn towards him, and she would forgive me for my error. But yet, it might be many days more before we could be released and I could present him to her; and meanwhile I would have at my heart that heavy burden of keeping the great secret from her. No, it must not be so. I must be brave and tell her now. And therefore, once again I said;

“I am so happy, Madre, and I must tell you about it.”

“Why should you not be happy?” she responded musingly. “You are young and have the health and courage of youth, and you believe that before long,

you will be released from this place. And it may be that you will ; for it seems to me that no one who was not a fiend would wish harm to you. And being set free, who can predict the happiness of the long future before you? But I do not expect to be released, and if I were, could look forward only to a few years, and those of trial and desolation. And yet do you know, child, I too am happy, perhaps at this minute more happy than you are? And I must tell you why it is."

"Let me tell my story first, dear Madre," I said. "And yet—no, Madre, do you now speak and I will do so afterwards."

"I will speak," she responded, "and yet I hardly know how I shall begin. It is all very clear in my own mind, but for all that it may not be easy to have you put yourself in my place and see with my eyes. The old and the young are separated in feeling, far more than in years, it sometimes happens. You have loved your life? You have dreaded, at times, lest it should be taken from you; and you had calculated, as beyond price, the years to come, which will be yours if wicked men do not take them away from you?"

"Ah, Madre, life is truly very sweet," I murmured assentingly. "And of course I cannot help looking forward to pleasant years to come," I added, still thinking about Fluvian.

"And to me it is the same," she said. "I can look

for very little in the future, and yet there have been times when that little seemed priceless to me. Calmly as I have sat here day after day, seeming not to regard my fate, it has been with inward dread that I have looked forward to it. Life is sweet, indeed, even to the old, and I have feared the pain of death as well as the death itself. There have been so many times when I have morbidly dwelt upon all the particulars of it—whether the axe would be cold and I would have time to feel it so—whether the air would be chilly the day I would be brought out—whether the people would respect my white hairs enough not to hoot at me—and the like. This has been my feeling ;—and if I have shown no symptom of it, my pride alone has sustained me, since I knew how necessary it was to show that our order can die bravely.”

“ Well, Madre ? ”

“ So I have felt, I say, for many days past, and while it was uncertain whether or not I was decreed to die. But now that it is an assured thing—”

“ How mean you ? ” I exclaimed, in sudden terror.

“ I mean that last night it was revealed to me—how or by whom I know not, excepting that I have awakened with the full conviction of it—that the uncertainty is over and that I am not to be spared much longer.”

“ It is a lying dream, Madre. Trust it not,” I cried impetuously.

“And why should I not? Have you not believed in your own dream that foreshadowed your future?”

“The dream that tells me I am to live and be happy, must necessarily be from the good God,” I said. “But the dream that says you are to be lost to me—from what foul source must not that come?”

“What matters the fate it predicts, my child, if to me the result is peace? Since it brings me happiness and content, may it not come from the good God, as well as your own brighter presages? For I tell you that I am now in peace at last—quiet in heart, beyond anything I have felt for years—résigned as an unthinking, innocent child to my fate. How it is that I could lie down troubled in spirit and arise so calm and assured, it is hard to tell. I can only conjecture that it is because what was before so shadowy has now been made certain; and with this, I feel that the great struggle of my life, which has made me so often unhappy, is coming to its end.”

“The struggle, Madre? I do not understand—”

“Listen, then! I have once told you how there was a time when love and family ties and domestic happiness—all which a true home could give, indeed—were offered to me, and that I rejected them all, lest I might be considered recreant to the traditions of my order. It was a struggle for me, and I came forth from it with a wasted heart. It was a thing that, once done, was done forever. There was a moment only to

make the decision—the opportunity could never be recalled, though years of regret might follow. Did I feel that regret, my child? Ah, think upon my weakness. There were long periods, indeed, when I assured myself that I had done rightly, and then for a while I felt content. But there were also, other intervals when my soul rebelled against the loneliness and isolation I had brought upon myself; and then I would ask myself whether any duty to my class was worth the sacrifice I had made, and I would eat out my heart in all the bitterness of secret woe. Once you yourself told me that I had done wrong; and you can scarcely think the agony this gave me,—the cruel perturbation that came over my soul, at that very moment not half tranquillized.”

“Forgive me, Madre, if then I—”

“Nay, there is nothing to be forgiven. You meant it not for wrong. It was not that you had spoken those words so much as the hearing you speak them which told me again that I had thrown away my real and proper destiny. And this, therefore, has been the struggle of my life—to know whether the fate to which I had condemned myself, was the result of true allegiance or of uncalled-for mistake. To me, mere poverty is of little matter; it was this terrible struggle of my mind that has embittered all my years. Then, when this morning I awoke under the presentiment of my coming death, with it was mingled an as-

surmise of lasting peace, in the presence of one single thought. It was the thought that death was, after all, a mercy, inasmuch as it made an end of the great secret struggle of my life. If I were to live ten years longer, would they not be years of regretful looking back, as had been the time already spent? But dying now, the long-fought conflict would be over, and I would enter into my peace at last. If I had acted rightly, I would have my reward; if I had done wrongfully, at least it was with a heart that did not mean to err, and so my fault would surely be forgiven. At the very least, the certainty of my death would bring peace. Was not all this, therefore, as well as your own dream, a gift of the good God?"

"It may be—it may be," I answered. "And yet all the same it may not be. Now listen to me, Madre. I think that the peace you feel may be from God, and yet, for all that, your dream not be a true one. I think that your heart is set at rest, because from this time you are about to lead a happier life. The lost opportunities of the past can never be recalled, and yet the future may be brightened into a pure glow of tranquil felicity. You shall not die, but you will leave this place with me; and then—"

"And then, child?"

I could see that, for the moment, she had caught something of my assurance of a better future for her than the quiet of death,—that, for the instant, I had

shaken her forebodings; and I hastened to press my advantage.

“Then you will go with me, and you will at last realize one pleasant dream of your life. Do you remember what that was? It was this, that some day you would visit the home of him who was your lover, and look upon him once again and for the while revive the pleasant recollections of your youth.”

“Yes—it was a dream, indeed,” she said. “It is kind in you to say that we may realize it—but how? I do not know that he is even living, now.”

“And if he were not living, will there not be those who will have heard him speak of you and will love you for his sake and memory? But, indeed, he cannot be dead. Not only would you have somehow heard of that, if it had happened, but fate would not thus have brought us together, to plan your happy future. He is living somewhere, in peace and happiness; and, I know assuredly that it is with now and then a lingering thought about yourself, his earliest love. That may very well and innocently be so, even though, since then, he had married and been a faithful husband and father. You will go hence with me, but not to hide yourself from him, as you have suggested, and merely to see him pass by—yourself remaining unrecognized by him. The rather, you will meet him face to face.”

“With these white locks, my child?” she said,



deprecatingly, but with a gathering smile upon her lip; and I could see how the new prospects of the future began already to enter into her heart. "Why, now, could he care to look upon me, remembering what I was once?"

"I do not know what once you were, Madre. I only know that now, with your white locks and your sweet smile, you are as beautiful in your old age as you could have been in youth. And will he not, by this time, have grey hairs of his own to show you in return? And will all that prevent a new friendship for each other? You will settle down, at last, in some pleasant village home of your own. You will be near him—he will not think wrongly of you for that, since we will so act that he will believe it has all come about by chance—and once in a while you will see him. Then, as a new friendship grows up to replace the love of the earlier days, you will come into the habit of seeing him each day. You will pleasantly talk with him over former times; and so the years will glide on, and you will grow older together in a mutual esteem that may prove more lasting than the love would have been, and perhaps will be more satisfying to the heart. His children will learn to love you—as none indeed could help it—and in everything that friendship can offer, you can be a new mother to them."

It was a tempting picture to her. I could see that the smile deepened upon her face, and a tender glow

of past recollection softened her gaze.—For the moment, her thoughts were fixed upon my imaginings as upon reality, and she forgot her presentiments of death. I saw that she was bringing up the coloring of the past with which to adorn that future. And there was an instant when I trembled at what I had done. Might I not have painted the scene with too glowing a pencil? What might not be the consequences to her, when we tried to realize it, were we then to fail? Would she be sure to recognize the youthful lover in the mature man? Might not her soul be hurt almost to the death if she were to find that the former freshness and generosity of heart had, as so often happens, grown into sordid meanness and vulgarity? Would it not then prove better to have left her alone in the possession of a simple dream never to be realized, than so rudely to break the chain and leave to her nothing except heart-breaking vacuity? Silently—sadly I watched her for a moment. Then the smile slowly faded away, and there came in place of it her usual expression of gentle, resigned repose.

“You have almost made me forget myself, dear child,” she said; “and in that, in making me forget my true fate as well. It cannot be—alas! it cannot be. When one’s doom has been already written, it is not by pleasant pictures that it can be avoided. No, I shall never go down to Mortagne with you. I shall


never see the lover of my youth—dear Chamant, again, except it may be in heaven.”

“Chamant?” I cried, “Chamant of Mortagne?” For the instant I stood as paralyzed. I had forgotten that I had never heard the mention of her lover’s name or place. Now, this sudden discovery almost overwhelmed me. A mist gathered before my eyes and for the moment I hardly realized what I was saying.

“You know him, then, dear child? You can tell me something about him, perhaps?”

“I have never seen him, Madre,” I responded. “But I know that he has a son—brave and handsome as he himself must have been, looking doubtless as the father must have looked those forty years gone by. If you could see him, I feel that he would surely remind you of the other. The mere sight of him would make you grow young again, throwing you back into the past. Oh, Madre, joy to me for all this! It is now so easy for me to tell you everything. You will forgive it, I know—will sympathize with me—will say that however others may feel, I have surely done rightly—will tell me—”

What sight, at that moment, chilled my whole frame and sent the blood coursing back to my horror-stricken heart? Looking up at her, I saw that she heard me not, and that her gaze was fixed in the direction of the prison-entrance. Following her motion, I saw that



the door was open and that the three gens-d'armes had entered ; and that he who bore the list of the condemned was standing with outstretched arm, pointing towards Madre.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

**J** CRIED aloud, and flung myself impetuously upon her breast, clasping my arms around her and striving to shield her, as it were, from all outward harm.

“They shall not take you from me, Madre,” I exclaimed. “Oh! they shall not take you!”

But she, calmly and gently releasing herself, arose. I could see that her lip did not quiver, or her eyes lose their soft light of composure; so truly had her spirit prepared her for the coming doom.

“Poor child!” she said. “Why should you thus cling to me? You cannot save me from the inevitable. Far better is it to submit with dignity. And it is not hard for me to yield—not as hard as it would have been even a week ago. Did I not tell you that my fate had all been written out for me, and that it was useless to draw those pleasant pictures of the future? For the moment, indeed, you almost beguiled me from the realization of the truth; now, you see, I

must return to the unwelcome present. And, though I must give up all that newer life which you so kindly painted for me, I am not afraid. I can meet death—without a shudder, even though I may not court his coming; so many of the imaginings that have formerly beset me have now forever fled.—See! it is a bright, fair day. We can even look at the sunshine passing in at the prison-bars. It will not, therefore, be cold to me,—that short ride I am about to take. Nor do I think that the people will make scoff at me. They will see that I have white hairs and that though I am to die by their will, I wish them no evil. Now kiss me, my child. And let me look once more into your kind loving face, so as to bear the image of it in my mind until the end.”

Again, and for the last time, I threw myself upon her breast; and then once more releasing her, kissed her upon each cheek.

“There,—and so farewell, dear child,” she said. “I shall not now lose one of your features from my memory, until I lose sight of the whole world together. And see how fortunate I am! I have saved this little treasure, and can bear it to the end, close against my heart.”

And she took from her pocket her sole keepsake,—the little lock of her olden lover’s hair. It was perhaps all that she had had time to rescue when she had been arrested. It was still enclosed in its worn paper cas-

ing, and she now unrolled it for one last look. I saw that the shade was that of Fluvian's hair; how in many ways else might not the father and son have resembled each other? For a moment she gazed fixedly upon the simple token of the past; then reverently replaced it within her breast.

"I must go," she softly said. "Do you remain here, for the instant, where you can most easily be found again. I must speak a farewell to one other person, who has been kind to me,—and then—"

Her words seemed to imply that she would return to give me a final farewell greeting; and obediently I remained immovable, turning my face to the wall, the better thereby to shut out unwelcome sights and think about her alone. So for a few minutes. Then, when wondering that she did not come again I looked around and discovered that the tragedy of the morning had already been completed. Those who were summoned had all silently moved away,—the guard had retired,—the door been closed and bolted,—and for another day we were to be left undisturbed. It was an innocent deceit by which Madre had thus quietly separated herself from me. It had partly spared me some of the pain of seeing her departure; and doubtless, as she reached the door, she had looked back towards me and murmured a gentle farewell. Yes,—after all, it was better so.

Yet none the less I could not be comforted. One

after the other, death was stripping me of many who were dear to me. Kind old Abbe Fontelle,—then Flonsette, sweetest and best friend and companion of my youth,—now lastly, Madre. The world was becoming very empty to me. Shock after shock had burned into my heart, and each new pang was leaving its scar. Would there never be return of peace? Was the world always to remain to me a place of bitterness?

So often had I lately suffered, that the fountain of my tears seemed dried. This, in itself, was a new affliction, for I made it a bitter reproach to my conscience. Madre had passed away and I had not shed a tear. The suffering was in my heart, displacing every joy and late-formed schemes of happiness; yet now it all seemed as nothing, beside the sense of heartlessness I felt, in that I had not outwardly wept. I was still so young, and had not learned to realize that tears are the token of childish grief, and that there are woes which are beyond such physical expression.

For the moment, I gazed around me, having in my mind an indistinct impression that I might gain sympathy from others. Yet how could I, a stranger to all, expect to gain from any one a recognition and pity for my woe, when each was so abundantly occupied with the separate troubles of himself or those who were near and dear to him? And I was unknown to



all. The access of favoritism that had been displayed towards me upon my first entrance had long passed away. I was no longer their queen,—no more was even noticed by any one. There had been no queen, indeed, for many days; and newer fancies with which I did not care to mingle had soon taken the place of that mimic Court. People had come and gone, a few each day,—keeping up the usual number, perhaps, yet making a constant change of faces. I had cared not to make new acquaintances among them; why should I do so, when the person towards whom I might be moved with interest one day could be snatched away from me the next? I had been content with Madre, alone; and now I stood a stranger in that little concourse.

There were, of course, some faces that I had begun to know, from the mere frequent repetition of their appearance before me. The two young women always reading from the same book,—the grey-headed General,—the boy with his pale, worn mother—these still remained. None of them had been taken away that morning; who could tell how soon they all might go? These people I knew by sight, but not to speak with them. For an instant I turned my eyes from one to another, almost pleading for some kind of recognition; but in vain. Either they did not comprehend the longing of my gaze, or else they had become too callous in their misery and had no sympathy to spare. And I

turned away again and sat down upon Madre's vacant chair, there to muse and ponder.

Was I glad that I had let Madre tell her story first? It were as well, perhaps, that I had not had time to speak. At the beginning, she would have been sorely hurt at what I told her, for she would have looked upon it as a cruel abandonment of my birth-right privileges; and though I knew I could have reasoned with her, and, in the end, once more gained her good opinion, there must have been time allowed for that. I could not have done so, with the ghastly guillotine awaiting her; and how dreadful to think that she might have gone away with the knowledge of what she would almost have stigmatized in me as crime, and not have had time to learn those tender circumstances attending it and turning it into a virtue!

Therefore it was better that I had not told her,—I thought. And yet, so intimate had been our later confidences, that it seemed a dreadful fault in me to have let her go away at the last with this one secret unrevealed, even though the confession of it would injure me in her good opinion. Better the open confession than the craven concealment. Which plan was the truest and the best, indeed, I could not tell. But I felt that before me I had this expiation. When I became free with Fluvian again at my side, never more to leave me,—then I would tell him what I had found

out, and with him I would visit his father and relate how true to his memory had been the love of his youth, and how she had died with his memento upon her heart and his name upon her lips. It seemed to me that the knowledge of this would almost instinctively come to Madre in her grave, and there bring a happy smile upon her martyred face.

Slowly, amid such thoughts and speculations, the day drew to an end. Worn and miserable, I retired earlier than usual to my cell and there, somewhat to my surprise, soon fell asleep. It had seemed to me that the tension of my mind and the unhappiness of my reflections would keep me wakeful ; but my young frame was tired, and my youth failed not to claim its needed rest. Therefore I slept,—mercifully untroubled with distressing visions,—enjoying a calm and dreamless slumber, indeed. Nor did I awake until the morning had so far advanced, that the bright sunlight had begun to creep again through the prison-bars.

Once more to Madre's chair, which still remained vacant, either by accident or because no one had yet the heart to take it. There I kneeled before it, as had been my custom, while she had sat there. It seemed as though, in this position, I could recall her to me,—as though I could feel my arm pressing against her form and her hand lightly passing over my hair. And now there came upon me a strange idea,—the feeling that after all she was not dead. True, she had been

carried away and had not returned to me ; for no one ever did return to that prison-house, and it was known that the axe must surely have taken them all as its destined prey. But might there not be a single exception in Madre's case? Her sweet quiet face,—her white locks so neatly parted down her placid cheeks,—how could any, the most fiendish mob of all, see this and yet demand her death? Rather would they have been moved to pity and cried aloud for her reprieve. It must surely have been so ; and that she had not returned to me, was nothing against the supposition. Certainly they would not have brought her back to the same prison, lest others should then know of her escape and thereby take courage and look for mercy in their cases, where mercy could not be shown. None the less must she have been saved ; and when I was released, doubtless I would find her awaiting me and the fulfilment of my promises for her future. It was a strange, wild thought, indeed,—but none the less did it comfort me. So that, with this inner quieting of my mind, again I fell asleep not yet having entirely rested from the fatigue of late excitement ; and so, peacefully slumbered on, for many hours it must have been, with my knees upon the floor and my head resting upon my hands crossed over the seat of the chair.

Slumbered for how long, I did not know ; excepting that when I awoke, the sunlight had crept entirely across its allotted span upon the base of the window-

grating and had disappeared, and I perceived, by the faintly gathering gloom, that the afternoon had come. Then I aroused myself and gazed around. And it struck me, at once, almost before I had banished the mist of sleep from my sight, that something unusual was happening. There was, indeed, no loud outcry or tempestuous movement. No one, for the moment spoke to me, bringing me any information. It was merely from the looks and attitudes of those around me that I gained my impression. I saw that there must be some strong nervous force at work; for, quiet as all about me seemed, there was scarcely any one who was not impelled into some position or movement foreign to his usual habit. The Royalist General no longer leaned listlessly against his pillar, but now strode to and fro, with his arms folded and his head bent down. So with the mother of the young boy, who had arisen from her accustomed seat and stood gazing towards the door, as though in momentary expectation of something, she knew not what. In fine, there was a startled movement to almost everybody; and though quiet was maintained, it was the stillness of a hushed tempest, giving impression of new outburst any moment. What tangled thoughts, too, now seemed woven across the faces of even the most stolid and unreflecting, as they stood and looked at each other in mute inquiry!

I, too, must have seemed puzzled in thought; for

the Royalist General, in his slow pacings back and forth, caught my inquiring glance as he came near, and abruptly paused.

"You have slept," he said. "Then you have not yet perceived?"

"I have learned nothing, Monsieur," I answered. "What may it be?"

"Nay, that as yet we cannot tell. We only know that to-day, for the first time in many weeks, the doors have not opened to drag any of us to the guillotine, and it seems as though something unusual must have happened. And listen! do you not hear from the street the shout of men?"

"I hear it faintly," I responded. "And Monsieur, what was that, also? The boom of a gun? Can it all portend our release?"

"Rather our death," said a cadaverous little courtier approaching at that moment. "Who is there to assist us, now? More likely none of us have been taken to-day, because they are preparing one grand slaughter of us all. Morbleau! we shall probably know this evening, when we are emptied out at once, for the delight of those who may desire a repetition of the Third of September."

"It may be,—and yet also, it may not," retorted the General, tapping his snuff-box. "Let us hope for the best. It will comfort us for the time, perhaps, and in the end will do us no harm."

He strolled away, the old courtier tottering at his side, and I stood alone, still gazing about me. It was evident, indeed, that whatever might be happening, each of the prisoners was trying to hope for the best. I observed that some, who were naturally of sanguine disposition, appeared to succeed. But what ghastly flickering of dead comfort shone in the disturbed faces of others who were of feeble powers of self-consolation, and yet would fain summon up some of the spirit of joy! Better for them, it seemed to me, the certainty of destruction, than that disturbing mockery of hope. Perhaps of all those there, I was the most tranquil, for I had never let the certainty of ultimate release pass from my mind. A longer or shorter imprisonment,—these were the only alternatives held out to my imagination.

At last,—it was late in the afternoon, now, and darker shadows were creeping over us,—there came a sudden hush of expectancy,—and a whisper passed tremblingly from one to the other, as though of news whose intensity of importance forbade loud utterance. Then appeared a flickering flush of hope upon faces that had so far refused even the attempt to grow glad;—and with that, there arose almost as by electric power, an instantaneous buzz of converse, coming each moment louder in apparent struggling to swell into something like a cheer. What could it be? Again, for the instant, no one approached to tell me. But I saw that

a gen-d'arme had opened the door for a moment and muttered a few words to the nearest person, and that it was this which had raised the tumultuous excitement.

Again I looked at the Royalist General, now striding past with more quickened pace, and rattling his snuff-box, until half the contents were scattered upon the floor. Again, he caught my inquiring glance and arrested himself.

“You hear, mademoiselle?”

“I have as yet heard nothing. Nothing more than what you told me, before.”

“And that truly was nothing, mademoiselle. But this—well, this is better indeed. They say the fiend Robespierre has fallen, and the Revolution is at an end.”

“And we shall be released at last, Monsieur?”

“Who knows? Not at once, perhaps. But it is likely that our necks are a little safer now than yesterday.”

Yes, we were safe, but might not be released at once,—so all the others said. And yet the order came sooner than any one had expected. For with the downfall of the great leader of the Reign of Terror, a new spirit seemed immediately to dawn upon the city. It was not the mere gradual growth of deliberate reflection,—it was the sudden outburst of a better soul. The people were wearied with bloodshed, and there



came to them a revivifying impulse prompting to sweep away all the old atrocity and make a new beginning of charity and peace. Not for a moment longer, either, should there be unnecessary delay,—there was a frenzy to clear away the wreck that disorder had made, and rear again the fabric of justice. There were those outside who had dear friends, loved relatives in the prison-houses. They had never expected to embrace them again; why now, should the release be delayed a moment longer than it would take to open wide the doors and summon every one to come forth?

Therefore, no sooner was the hate of the populace satiated at the Place de Greve, with the spectacle of Robespierre's broken jaw and severed head, than they began to gather around the Conciergerie doors. At first a few,—those, principally, who had dear ones within; but gradually the crowds assembled in larger proportions, and from mere expectant awaiting, there came the impatient cry for action. Why should there be any delay in again seeing their loved ones? If the authorities were inactive, could not the people who had levelled the Bastille now break through a few prison doors? And so, as the excitement gained ground, the authorities,—whoever and of whatever nature those now might be—began to yield, and in a day or two the work of release commenced.

We knew it first from the gen-d'arme who looked

inside and called the name of one who should go out. The face of the *gen-d'arme* was now wreathed in smiles, and he uttered the name in pleasant tone as of one telling good news. The very sound was indicative of happiness and release; and he who bore that name sprung to the door with excited frenzy of delight, and in a flash was gone. He happened to be one whom no one of us knew; but when the next name was called, there were many pleasant leave-takings, during which an appearance of more composure was resumed. Then came a pause. Was this to be all? So spoke our thoughts as we gazed at each other; and then were called the names of the two sisters, who for so many days had read their one book together. And so the roll of names—no longer the roll of death—was called; faster and faster, as time ran on and the eagerness of the crowd outside demanded quicker release. Now one name, now a group, here and there a pause, but never for long; until it became evident that we could all, with equal assurance, prepare for freedom.

At last my name—or rather the name by which I still was known—was called. I stood expectant, near the door. For suitable manner of departure I was once more arrayed in the plain hat and shawl in which I had entered. Once more I had twisted my floating curls beneath the brim and out of sight. In the prison I had been undisguisedly the Marquise de Sainte-

Maure ; now, for a little while longer, I must be Adele Carnot. And at that call, stepping forward at once, I reached the door. For a moment I stood there, looking around to see if there were any behind to whom I could say farewell. But there seemed none,—only the old Royalist General.

“ Good-bye, mademoiselle,” he said.

It was not the farewell of a loving friend, but merely the civility of a courtier. I knew that very well. And yet even such poor greeting pleased me, among so much unsympathetic silence of others. I sought for utterance to reply, but something choked me and I could not speak. And while I strove and struggled with myself, another name was called and I was led away by a second *gen-d’arme* from the open door and down the outer passage.

• How at the last I was released, I do not remember. I think that I did not know it at the time, so filled with confusion was my mind. There is the memory of a passage through a long stone hall, at the end of which, at a table, lighted by a single candle, sat a man. Whether I was led past him subject merely to his inspection, whether I answered any questions or signed my name, I cannot tell. Probably there was some form of release ; but if so, it must have lasted only a moment. For, before I could gather together my bewildered faculties, I was led through another door and

found myself standing shelterless and alone in the open street.

Why was not Fluvian there to receive me? That was my first and only thought. Then I reflected that he might not yet have been released, and that I must wait a little longer. Where must I go, though, while I waited? Uncertain, I stood against the outer wall of the prison and gazed around. Little by little my faculties came to me again, and I could resolve into some distinctness what at first had been mere confusion. It was evening now, and already the lighted street lamps were suspended from their cords. In the adjoining houses, too, there were lights at almost every window. Even that ordinary street-scene for the moment was a wonderment to me—something almost dazzling. In front reached the crowd of lookers-on, an almost indistinct mass in that evening gloom, but with no blood-thirsty purpose reflected in their faces. Across, and at a little distance, I could see the vanishing ranks of a regiment that, after patrolling the city in search of outbreak, was now returning to its post, its guns limbered up and tracking along behind as innocently as market wagons. Once, a Club with drums and torches came tumultuously tramping past; but they seemed alert with joyful enthusiasm over a state of matters now happily ended and their song was not *ça ira*.

“Is it Marguerite?” whispered a woman of the

crowd, suddenly advancing and pulling the veil aside from my face. "Ah no,—Pardon, citoyenne, I had thought it might be Marguerite. I must wait a little longer."

The woman stepped back again into the ranks of the crowd, and again I was left alone. Who was this Marguerite, I thought? And I wished, for the moment that I might be she, whoever she was. At the least, she had somebody to claim her—somebody who doubtless loved her—while I—

There came, at this moment, a slight pressure upon my arm; and turning, I saw before me a rough-bearded, uncouthly-dressed man, halting uneasily from one foot to the other, as if subject to a limp. For the instant he gazed silently upon me, and I noticed that a slight smile flickered over his face, giving relief with unexpected beauty of expression, to somewhat of his outward coarseness.

"Citoyenne—citoyenne Gabrielle?" he whispered in rough Gascon accent. But there was a familiar tone to me, even in that, and joyfully I cried:

"Cousin Gervais—"

"Hush! Be cautious for the moment," he murmured in my ear. "Let us first get from out this crowd, and then we can talk more unreservedly."

Upon that he drew my arm within his own with manifestation of rustic clumsiness, and then, with the olden affectation of limping gait, led me away. Nor

was it until we were far distant from the crowd and with no one near us, that again he spoke.

“We must yet be cautious, for a little while, Gabrielle. The Revolution may be over, and danger to our necks be done away with; but I must not suffer detection, being still an officer in the army of the king and in Paris only in disguise. It was to hover near and aid your safety, if possible, that I have come; but who would believe it or that I was not a political spy from the opposing camp? But enough of that now, dear Gabrielle. Where now shall I lead you?”

“Can I not go to my old abode in the Maison des Capucins?” I asked.

“Perhaps. But it is a long time since you have left it, and others may now be living there. Yet not far off there is a friend of mine who will befriend you also, and shelter you. Thither will we go.”

“Yet let us first pass before the Maison des Capucins,” I pleaded. “For I would love to look once more upon that old house, Gervais.”

“Why, so then you shall,” he responded with a smile. “It is a girlish fancy, perhaps; but what would I not do for you more than that?”

Ah, how my heart sank within me with deep sense of abasement as I listened to his kind words! For knowing that he had come so far and undergone such dangers, for nothing else than to succor me, I was deceiving him even in that little matter. It was not the

olden home of mine that I would look upon again. It was the little studio window in the adjoining room. I must gaze up thither and see if now there was a candle burning, and tell from that, whether Fluvian was yet released. Without such loving assurance how could I sleep?

“Yes, Gabrielle,” he continued, leading the way down one and another turning until we stood at the end of my own street. “Why should I not do such a little thing for you, when at last my heart has taught me to try and do more? Do you know, since I have been away, I have thought very much about you—more than ever before—and I have learned at last how greatly I have wronged you?”

“In what, Gervais?” I said. “You have always been kind to me.”

“Aye, that may be,—but after all, it was the kindness of a brother rather than of a lover. I realized it not at the time, but now I do. Ah, Gabrielle, it is a false teaching that of the Court, is it not? There, indeed, I loved you—how much, I did not learn to know until afterwards. But why did I not seek the more to win your love in return?”

“Ah, Gervais,” I shudderingly said,—“Do not now speak of that.”

“And why not now, dear Gabrielle, when I have so much to say—so great atonement to make to you—and, it may be, only to-night in which to say it? Yes,

I know now, that though I loved you well, I should have sought to win your love, and not, as I did, consent to accept it as a right. What though you had been given to me as my promised bride? Was it for me to take the blessing of the gift in all that coldness of court ceremonial and never seek to make the sacrifice a willing one to you?"

"Dear cousin Gervais, speak not of that any longer."

For I was almost frantic to think that at this very last, when I knew I must so ruthlessly abandon him, and thereby surely incur his hate and detestation, he should be moved to utter those words of love for which so often I had longed in vain. And all the while, we were drawing nearer to Fluvian's candle, the true beacon-light of my real affection.

"Nay, Gabrielle, only one instant longer. I am not now seeking any words of love from you. I know that by my unwitting coldness, I have forfeited the right to that. I am only telling you how I hope to seek for loving words in the far off future. For to me, Gabrielle, as respects yourself, the future has a different duty. I have thought much about it, reflecting earnestly for many wakeful hours in the night, when lying in my tent and gazing up into the stars. The intercourse with the outer world has taught me much, and I have learned to know more about the longings of a young girl's nature. I have seen that even the



peasant girl or the vivandiere feels not satisfied with mere protection,—that her heart craves something more—that she wishes for utterances of affection, without which her soul cannot feel at rest. And I have wondered why and how in our wise natures we should be different from these? Now I realize how base I have been to claim your love as the gift of others instead of earning it for myself. Now I feel that I have never had the right to impute coldness to you, so long as I was so cold myself. And now I see that, perhaps, I do not possess your love, as I would fain enjoy it, inasmuch as I have not learned to ask it of you as I should. But with different conduct, can I hope anything from the future, dearest Gabrielle?”

What could I say or do? I could only wring my clenched hands together and try to stifle down my choking sobs. Already we were approaching the building,—Fluvian’s home. One step more and we stood where I could look along the narrow street beside it,—could gaze up at his window.

No gleam of candle there,—all was as dark as night. A mortal terror seemed to seize me,—the premonition of terrible evil.

“Why do you stop!” asked Gervais.

Why?—Because at the outer door of the building stood two student friends of Fluvian,—who had known him well;—and, as we paused, one of them inquiringly mentioned his name.

“Have you not heard?” responded the other.  
“Alas! it was thus fated, I suppose. Three days ago—  
in the very last tumbrel that left the Conciergerie!”





## CHAPTER XX.

THEY said it was the excitement and fatigue that caused me to faint, and I never told them otherwise. Whether any one suspected more, —whether my cousin Gervais did not have clearer conjecture of the truth than he ever mentioned to me I shall never know. It was not for me to tell how nearly I died of a broken heart, or for him to reproach me with it.

How long I continued ill, it were idle to recall,—only that it was for many days. All that time I lay insensible, yet in what condition, I never learned. Whether I remained supine and lifeless, or whether in the paroxysms of fever, I tossed about and insanely babbled forth the secrets of my heart,—about that, too, it was not for me to inquire, and no one ever cared to tell me.

When at last I awoke to life and clear perception, I found that I was in one of the wards of the Hotel-Dieu. In one of six little white beds arranged along



the side of the room, all of which however, were empty, excepting mine. For a few moments at that awakening, there was a singular confusion before my eyes, as here and there different persons and things seemed mingled in some disorderly dance. Then, gradually everything settled into its proper place, and I saw a sweet, pleasant face bending over me.

The face was framed in a snow-white cap, and I recognized the uniform of a Sister-of-charity. How long or where during the recent troubles she had been in forced concealment, who except herself might know? I am sure that she would at any time have gladly given up her life, if thereby she could have done any good; but I am equally sure that she did wisely to hide herself for better work than vainly dying, until the fury of the mob was over. Not yet was the old state of things restored, indeed; but there had been enough regret for the past, to enable her to come forth again and resume the faithful duties of her devoted life. Now, hearing the long sigh with which at last I returned to consciousness, she had arisen from her seat and bent tenderly over me, kissing me upon the forehead.

“We are better now,” she said. “We will get well again, I am very sure.”

“And I would to God that I had died before returning to any knowledge of the world!” I exclaimed, as the full realization of the past began to return to me

“It is only for the good God to say whether we are to live or die,” she answered, somewhat shocked, I think; though she must often have heard just such despairing cries from stricken patients. “If we are still to live, it must be that it is necessary for us to do so.”

For a moment, I lay speechless, wishing that I could weep, yet too much crushed at heart for even such poor relief. Then, turning my head towards the Sister, I sought her hand.

“Is it true that I am to live?” I said. “And do you wish that I should soon get well? I might recover more speedily if I were happy, but that can never be. And yet, you can provide for me the next thing possible,—that my mind shall be more at ease.”

“And how?”

“There is a young artist who lives in Paris, not far from here, I think. He knew—another artist whom—whom once I knew myself. He can tell me all about him, and—and I must hear.”

“And his name?”

I told her the name of him whom, upon that dreadful night, I had overheard talking at the corner,—from whose lips I had so unwittingly listened to the announcement which had so nearly broken my heart. What the sweet Sister may have thought, I did not know—truly I did not care. All I now wished for was to have my will. Perhaps during my illness I had wandered so greatly in my mind that already she

could guess the whole truth. Of that, of course, she did not speak. She merely sat for a moment in silent reflection,—then felt my forehead and cheeks ; and then, concluding that it was best I should be allowed my way, wrote a short note and sent it. And so opportunely did it take its course, that scarcely an hour elapsed, before the young artist stood at my bedside—wonderingly waiting for me to speak. I had never known him enough to converse with him, indeed ; but what now of that ?

“ You were the friend of Fluvian Chamant,—I also was his friend,” I said. “ I have heard that they murdered him. Tell me what you know about it.”

“ Mademoiselle, I do not know that I can tell you much ;—only this, indeed. It was about ten in the morning when some one came into our class and told us that Fluvian had been seen stepping into the tumbril. With that we threw aside our work, and hurriedly got together as many of the artists and students as possible, and armed ourselves with secret weapons, as well as we could, and rushed forth to try and save him. We thought we might do so, indeed ; for at last the people were becoming weary of those murders by the guillotine, and some among them had sworn that there should be no more of them, but that, upon the next attempt, a rescue should be made. And so we hurried along and gathered a crowd of others who felt as we did, and we began to throng around the condemned, as

near as we could. We could see Fluvian standing up in the front, and we cried out to him to have good courage; and he waved his hand and smiled back to us, and looked,—oh! so grandly beautiful in his fearlessness and composure! Then we began to press against the soldiery; and they, though they made pretence of duty, evidently had no heart in the work and seemed not unwillingly to give way. And I think we would have succeeded in the rescue, mademoiselle, had not Henriot,—may curses be his portion! hurried up from another quarter with other troops, and so the day went against us and all was lost. Then we could do no more than follow at a distance and look on powerlessly to the end. And this is what I then saw. There was with Fluvian an aged lady—”

“Ah?” I gasped.

“An aged lady,—white-haired and somewhat bent, but with the fresh complexion of childhood and the sweetest calm smile of resignation I ever saw. She stood beside him, and I noticed that he had his right arm around her, supporting her against the rocking of the tumbril, and that her head sometimes rested upon his shoulder. So they stood while we attempted the rescue. When we had failed and it was known that all hope was over, I saw that those two talked together, with something of the expression of long absent friends meeting at last; though I had never heard him mention her. And once she raised her head and

placed one hand upon his shoulder and with the other parted his hair that fell across his forehead and looked intently into his face; and as she did so, she spoke to him and it seemed as though her smile became still more sweet."

"I know,—they met then at last—they recognized each other at the end," I murmured.

"Mademoiselle? Met at last, you say?" he responded, half bewildered at the mystery of my speech. "Indeed I cannot tell as to all that or about what they spoke. But then I saw that she took a little folded paper from next her heart and showed it to him, and he smiled with her. On coming to the guillotine, she first ascended the steps, but before so doing she kissed him upon the forehead. And ere she lay down upon the plank, she turned once more and held the little paper towards him and smiled as sweetly as before,—and so died. Then came his turn; and I need not tell you; mademoiselle, that he died bravely."

"Ah, no!" I cried. "Who is there, that knowing him, could have a doubt of that? And where—where is he—"

"Mademoiselle," he answered, rightfully interpreting me, "the dead by the guillotine have only one common grave."

I closed my eyes and clasped my hands tightly across them. Oh, bitter, bitter thought! A common grave! For him, so young and brave and noble-heart



ed! But, at least, he rested now in peace with *Madre*. And they had doubtless known each other, before the end. And had he told her about me, also? And had she forgiven me for my love of him, now herself knowing him for what he was? All that I could not tell,—can never learn. But that they had recognized each other, by the loving tie of memory that bound her to his father, who could doubt?

I thought it was for only a minute that thus I lay quietly with my hands pressed over my eyes; but it must have been longer. Perhaps I had even become insensible, for the moment. For when again I opened my eyes and sought the young artist-student to thank him, he was gone and another person sat beside my bed, waiting patiently for me to waken. A roughly-clothed man, with beard of two weeks, growth and tangled hair; but for all that, how could I now fail to recognize my *Cousin Gervais*?

“Awake at last, dear *Gabrielle*?” he said. “And with the fever now all gone, so that you will soon be well again?” He spoke, I noticed, in his usual sweet tones, not caring longer to imitate the harsh *Gascon* dialect. There was no one near excepting the gentle *Sister*. She was too far off to overhear his words; and though the softness of his voice might sometimes reach her ears and cause her to wonder that so rough a man could speak so pleasantly, he knew that she

would not dream of betraying him. "God be thanked for your life so spared, my Gabrielle."

"It is kind in you to come to me," I said.

"Alas, dear Gabrielle! I fear it may not seem kind that I cannot come again for many a week. But now that you are almost well, I must think of my loyal duty to my king. The time of my absence is more than gone, and the army claims my services upon the frontier. I have arranged all matters for your future comfort, and Hyppolite will come to see you and sometimes bring to you letters from me. And Gabrielle—"

"Well, Gervais?"

"Think not that if I am away from you, I shall ever lose you from my thoughts. Going from hence, it is with the hope that some day I shall learn the way to really win your love. Now, I ask it not, for I have done little to entitle myself to it. I do not even ask that you will try to love me or that you will make any promise which will bind you to me. That old tie which king and guardians once made between us, I know must count for nothing. I would not wish to wear your love, if I could hold it only by such formal tenure. Rather let me look forward to some future day when you can say that your love has come for me, unfettered and unrestrained, and only because you have learned to see in me something that tells you I may be worth the winning. And so, farewell."

With that, he too, pressed his lips upon my forehead, just where the kiss of the sweet Sister had been placed and with as pure intent as hers ; and, in a moment more, I was left entirely alone. Only with my own bitterness of thought ; for now, to my other great sorrow was added the pain that I must let him go away without one kindly word of encouragement—knowing so well that I could never love him. Might it ever have happened, indeed, that in after years, confessing all the past to him, and telling him that all I could ever give would be the earnest friendship of my heart, he would have tried to content himself with such poor comfort and have still asked me to come to him ? Might it have ever been that I would then have yielded, feeling how greatly his strong love had need of some re-payment and atonement from me, and how, with even the poor remains of my long shattered affection, perhaps I might have made him happier than he would have been alone ? Such things have been and surely will be again. How it would have been with me, I cannot tell. It was not destined to be put to proof. For before the year was over, Gervais fell in gallant fight upon the frontier, with Hyppolite who had escaped from France, as his faithful squire, at his side.

And then I was left desolate and alone. Friend, relative and lover,—all whom I had cared for or who had cared for me, had passed away as though even their knowledge of me had been a blight. How, after

that, I looked for no other friendships, sought for no new affections,—the years slipping by in sadness and in gloom,—I need not tell. Nor is it worth while to narrate the successive steps whereby I slowly recovered my fortunes,—a little here and a little there,—until, with hired and unsympathetic aid, the requisite influences were brought to work, and, at the restoration of the Bourbon king, my ancestral estates at last were given back to me.

And what did it all then matter? What solace could there be in that? When at last I stood within my ancestral home and called it once more my own, the middle age of life had come to me. My restored fortune brought no joy to me, for I was all alone. There were now few who knew and none who loved me; and even had I felt any pleasure in my wealth, I had no one to sympathize with me. I stood and, for the first time in many years, gazed upon my portrait, yet hanging upon the wall. Still fresh, undimmed and beautiful, as upon the day it had left the atelier. I, the once fair original, alone had changed. Time had thinned my waving locks and sprinkled light snow upon them, and sorrow had wasted my cheek and dimmed my eye. Still, perhaps, might be traced a slight resemblance to the picture,—the likeness was not yet all gone, as now;—but, at the best, it was the poor counterfeit of mere form and feature. The light of hope and joy,—the beam of happiness,—the

elasticity of youthful spirit,—all that had once given me my heart had forever vanished.

When last I had stood before the portrait, Fluvian had been at my side and had spoken of his love. Might not his spirit be hovering near? Alas! If it were so, why would it not have put some happy consoling thought into my heart, instead of leaving me a prey to such bitter sadness and despondency? For here,—to look upon the vacant floor and think that once he had there stood, was now the only near association I could hope to cherish regarding him.

Long and vainly during the past years had I striven to bring him, in some way, nearer to me. The common grave of the guillotined had left me no outward memorial of him. I had gone into his garret room in the old *Maison des Capucins* pretending that I might want to rent it, and hoping there to find some token of him, were it only his loved name idly written upon the wall. But new tenancies had since intervened and the place had been freshly remodelled; and worse than all, no trace could ever be gained of what I would have given my estate to possess,—his portrait of *Marie Antoinette*. The little bench upon the slope of *Montmartre* where he had once carelessly carved his name, I sitting by, and looking on the while, had been displaced and carried away. The walls of the *Conciergerie*, where we had so gayly written our names together, had been made clean by invading

hands, and that dear memorial also made to vanish. I sought out the pleasant little nook upon the Courbevoie river-bank, but there, too, alas ! everything dear to me had been changed ; for Court-gardeners had been before me, and the great tree against which we had leaned had been cut away, the gnarled roots removed and an artificial slope erected. Once I repaired to the little village of Mortagne, thinking that I might there look upon the olden Chamant, and possibly recognize in him some traits or features of the son. But on the way I met a funeral cortege and learned that it was the father being carried to his grave. And for one final effort, I brought together Fluvian's artist-friends, and bade them, from their collected memories of him, revive for me his image. But either that they were unskilful, or that his features had already faded from their minds, or that they could not reproduce the soul which alone could give those features all their value to me,—whatever the fault might be, I cannot tell. I only know that the result of all their labor was bitter failure to depict one line that might resemble him.

Gone,—all gone,—no fond association of him left, except the mere fact that he had stood with me before that picture, and there had spoken of his love. With this alone must I now linger and pass down the dark valley to my death. What then ? Will Fluvian be waiting all the while, to join me in an eternity of love ?

There are happy moments when I think that it may be so, and then I feel that I could welcome death as a bosom friend. But there are moments otherwise, when I doubt it all, and cruel fancies weigh upon me. What if there be really no hereafter, but only an eternal sleep? Why then, indeed, I can never know my loss, but will be, myself, at rest. But,—on the other hand,—what if I spend my eternity in seeking Fluvian, and find him not? What if, seeing him again, I discover that he has forgotten me, or that, even in Heaven, some new affection has beguiled and dragged him from me? What if he awaits me faithfully, and I come before him, not as the beautiful young girl whom he had loved and longed for, but only as the bent and wrinkled woman I now am; and at the sight, his soul should turn away from me with aversion and disgust? What if, at our meeting—

THE END.



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