

The Wandering Jew — Volume 07 eBook

The Wandering Jew — Volume 07 by Eugène Sue

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CHAPTER XL.

The east Indian in Paris.

Since three days, Mdlle. de Cardoville had left Dr. Baleinier's. The following scene took place in a little dwelling in the Rue Blanche, to which Djalma had been conducted in the name of his unknown protector. Fancy to yourself a pretty, circular apartment, hung with Indian drapery, with purple figures on a gray ground, just relieved by a few threads of gold. The ceiling, towards the centre, is concealed by similar hangings, tied together by a thick, silken cord; the two ends of this cord, unequal in length, terminated, instead of tassels, in two tiny Indian lamps of gold filigreed-work, marvellously finished. By one of those ingenious combinations, so common in barbarous countries, these lamps served also to burn perfumes. Plates of blue crystal, let in between the openings of the arabesque, and illumined by the interior light, shone with so limpid an azure, that the golden lamps seemed starred with transparent sapphires. Light clouds, of whitish vapor rose incessantly from these lamps, and spread all around their balmy odor.

Daylight was only admitted to this room (it was about two o'clock in the afternoon) through a little greenhouse, on the other side of a door of plate-glass, made to slide into the thickness of the wall, by means of a groove. A Chinese shade was arranged so as to hide or replace this glass at pleasure. Some dwarf palm tress, plantains, and other Indian productions, with thick leaves of a metallic green, arranged in clusters in this conservatory, formed, as it were, the background to two large variegated bushes of exotic flowers, which were separated by a narrow path, paved with yellow and blue Japanese tiles, running to the foot of the glass. The daylight, already much dimmed by the leaves through which it passed, took a hue of singular mildness as it mingled with the azure lustre of the perfumed lamps, and the crimson brightness of the fire in the tall chimney of oriental porphyry. In the obscurity of this apartment, impregnated with sweet odors and the aromatic vapor of Persian tobacco, a man with brown, hanging locks, dressed in a long robe of dark green, fastened round the waist by a parti-colored sash, was kneeling upon a magnificent Turkey carpet, filling the golden bowl of a hookah; the long, flexible tube of this pipe, after rolling its folds upon the carpet, like a scarlet serpent with silver scales, rested between the slender fingers of Djalma, who was reclining negligently on a divan. The young prince was bareheaded; his jet-black hair, parted on the middle of his forehead, streamed waving about his face and neck of antique beauty—their warm transparent colors resembling amber or topaz. Leaning his elbow on a cushion, he supported his chin with the palm of his right hand. The flowing sleeve of his robe, falling back from his arm, which was round as that of a woman, revealed



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mysterious signs formerly tattooed there in India by a Thug's needle. The son of Radja-sing held in his left hand the amber mouthpiece of his pipe. His robe of magnificent cashmere, with a border of a thousand hues, reaching to his knee, was fastened about his slim and well-formed figure by the large folds of an orange-colored shawl. This robe was half withdrawn from one of the elegant legs of this Asiatic Antinous, clad in a kind of very close fitting gaiter of crimson velvet, embroidered with silver, and terminating in a small white morocco slipper, with a scarlet heel. At once mild and manly, the countenance of Djalma was expressive of that melancholy and contemplative calmness habitual to the Indian and the Arab, who possess the happy privilege of uniting, by a rare combination, the meditative indolence of the dreamer with the fiery energy of the man of action—now delicate, nervous, impressionable as women—now determined, ferocious, and sanguinary as bandits.

And this semi-feminine comparison, applicable to the moral nature of the Arab and the Indian, so long as they are not carried away by the ardor of battle and the excitement of carnage, is almost equally applicable to their physical constitution; for if, like women of good blood, they have small extremities, slender limbs, fine and supple forms, this delicate and often charming exterior always covers muscles of steel, full of an elasticity, and vigor truly masculine. Djalma's oblong eyes, like black diamonds set in bluish mother-of-pearl, wandered mechanically from the exotic flowers to the ceiling; from time to time he raised the amber mouthpiece of the hookah to his lips; then, after a slow aspiration, half opening his rosy lips, strongly contrasted with the shining enamel of his teeth, he sent forth a little spiral line of smoke, freshly scented by the rose-water through which it had passed.

"Shall I put more tobacco in the hookah?" said the kneeling figure, turning towards Djalma, and revealing the marked and sinister features of Faringhea the Strangler.

The young prince remained dumb, either that, from an oriental contempt for certain races, he disdained to answer the half-caste, or that, absorbed in his reverie, he did not even hear him. The Strangler became again silent; crouching cross-legged upon the carpet, with his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin upon his hands, he kept his eyes fixed on Djalma, and seemed to await the reply or the orders of him whose sire had been surnamed the Father of the Generous. How had Faringhea, the sanguinary worshipper of Bowanee, the Divinity of Murder, been brought to seek or to accept such humble functions? How came this man, possessed of no vulgar talents, whose passionate eloquence and ferocious energy had recruited many assassins for the service of the Good Work, to resign himself to so base a condition? Why, too, had this man, who, profiting by the young prince's blindness with regard to himself, might

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have so easily sacrificed him as an offering to Bowanee—why had he spared the life of Radja-sing's son? Why, in fine, did he expose himself to such frequent encounters with Rodin, whom he had only known under the most unfavorable auspices? The sequel of this story will answer all these questions. We can only say at present, that, after a long interview with Rodin, two nights before, the Thug had quitted him with downcast eyes and cautious bearing.

After having remained silent for some time, Djalma, following with his eye the cloud of whitish smoke that he had just sent forth into space, addressed Faringhea, without looking at him, and said to him in the language, as hyperbolic as concise, of Orientals: "Time passes. The old man with the good heart does not come. But he will come. His word is his word."

"His word is his word, my lord," repeated Faringhea, in an affirmative tone. "When he came to fetch you, three days ago, from the house whither those wretches, in furtherance of their wicked designs, had conveyed you in a deep sleep—after throwing me, your watchful and devoted servant, into a similar state—he said to you: 'The unknown friend, who sent for you to Cardoville Castle, bids me come to you, prince. Have confidence, and follow me. A worthy abode is prepared for you.'—And again, he said to you, my lord: 'Consent not to leave the house, until my return. Your interest requires it. In three days you will see me again, and then be restored to perfect freedom.' You consented to those terms, my lord, and for three days you have not left the house."

"And I wait for the old man with impatience," said Djalma, "for this solitude is heavy with me. There must be so many things to admire in Paris. Above all."

Djalma did not finish the sentence, but relapsed into a reverie. After some moments' silence, the son of Radja-sing said suddenly to Faringhea, in the tone of an impatient yet indolent sultan: "Speak to me!"

"Of what shall I speak, my lord?"

"Of what you will," said Djalma, with careless contempt, as he fixed on the ceiling his eyes, half-veiled with languor. "One thought pursues me—I wish to be diverted from it. Speak to me."

Faringhea threw a piercing glance on the countenance of the young Indian, and saw that his cheeks were colored with a slight blush. "My lord," said the half-caste, "I can guess your thought."



Djalma shook his head, without looking at the Strangler. The latter resumed: "You are thinking of the women of Paris, my lord."

"Be silent, slave!" said Djalma, turning abruptly on the sofa, as if some painful wound had been touched to the quick. Faringhea obeyed.

After the lapse of some moments. Djalma broke forth again with impatience, throwing aside the tube of the hookah, and veiling both eyes with his hands: "Your words are better than silence. Cursed be my thoughts, and the spirit which calls up these phantoms!"



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“Why should you fly these thoughts, my lord? You are nineteen years of age, and hitherto all your youth has been spent in war and captivity. Up to this time, you have remained as chaste as Gabriel, that young Christian priest, who accompanied us on our voyage.”

Though Faringhea did not at all depart from his respectful deference for the prince, the latter felt that there was something of irony in the tone of the half-caste, as he pronounced the word “chaste.”

Djalma said to him with a mixture of pride and severity: “I do not wish to pass for a barbarian, as they call us, with these civilized people; therefore I glory in my chastity.”

“I do not understand, my lord.”

“I may perhaps love some woman, pure as was my mother when she married my father; and to ask for purity from a woman, a man must be chaste as she.”

At this, Faringhea could not refrain from a sardonic smile.

“Why do you laugh, slave?” said the young prince, imperiously.

“Among civilized people, as you call them, my lord, the man who married in the flower of his innocence would be mortally wounded with ridicule.”

“It is false, slave! He would only be ridiculous if he married one that was not pure as himself.”

“Then, my lord, he would not only be wounded—he would be killed outright, for he would be doubly and unmercifully laughed at.”

“It is false! it is false. Where did you learn all this?”

“I have seen Parisian women at the Isle of France, and at Pondicherry, my lord. Moreover, I learned a good deal during our voyage; I talked with a young officer, while you conversed with the young priest.”

“So, like the sultans of our harems, civilized men require of women the innocence they have themselves lost.”

“They require it the more, the less they have of it, my lord.”

“To require without any return, is to act as a master to his slave; by what right?”

“By the right of the strongest—as it is among us, my lord.”



“And what do the women do?”

“They prevent the men from being too ridiculous, when they marry, in the eyes of the world.”

“But they kill a woman that is false?” said Djalma, raising himself abruptly, and fixing upon Faringhea a savage look, that sparkled with lurid fire.

“They kill her, my lord, as with us—when they find her out.”

“Despots like ourselves! Why then do these civilized men not shut up their women, to force them to a fidelity which they do not practise?”

“Because their civilization is barbarous, and their barbarism civilized, my lord.”

“All this is sad enough, if true,” observed Djalma, with a pensive air, adding, with a species of enthusiasm, employing, as usual, the mystic and figurative language familiar to the people of his country; “yes, your talk afflicts me, slave—for two drops of dew blending in the cup of a flower are as hearts that mingle in a pure and virgin love; and two rays of light united in one inextinguishable flame, are as the burning and eternal joys of lovers joined in wedlock.”

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Djalma spoke of the pure enjoyments of the soul with inexpressible grace, yet it was when he painted less ideal happiness, that his eyes shone like stars; he shuddered slightly, his nostrils swelled, the pale gold of his complexion became vermilion, and the young prince sank into a deep reverie.

Faringhea, having remarked this emotion, thus spoke: "If, like the proud and brilliant king-bird of our woods, you prefer numerous and varied pleasures to solitary and monotonous amours—handsome, young, rich as you are, my lord, were you to seek out the seductive Parisians—voluptuous phantoms of your nights—charming tormentors of your dreams—were you to cast upon them looks bold as a challenge, supplicating as prayers, ardent as desires—do you not think that many a half-veiled eye would borrow fire from your glance? Then it would no longer be the monotonous delights of a single love, the heavy chain of our life—no, it would be the thousand pleasures of the harem—a harem peopled with free and proud beauties, whom happy love would make your slaves. So long constrained, there is no such thing as excess to you. Believe me, it would then be you, the ardent, the magnificent son of our country, that would become the love and pride of these women—the most seductive in the world, who would soon have for you no looks but those of languor and passion."

Djalma had listened to Faringhea with silent eagerness. The expression of his features had completely changed; it was no longer the melancholy and dreaming youth, invoking the sacred remembrance of his mother, and finding only in the dew of heaven, in the calyx of flowers, images sufficiently pure to paint the chastity of the love he dreamed of; it was no longer even the young man, blushing with a modest ardor at the thought of the permitted joys of a legitimate union. No! the incitements of Faringhea had kindled a subterranean fire; the inflamed countenance of Djalma, his eyes now sparkling and now veiled, his manly and sonorous respiration, announced the heat of his blood, the boiling up of the passions, only the more energetic, that they had been hitherto restrained.

So, springing suddenly from the divan, supple, vigorous, and light as a young tiger, Djalma clutched Faringhea by the throat exclaiming: "Thy words are burning poison!"

"My lord," said Faringhea, without opposing the least resistance, "your slave is your slave." This submission disarmed the prince.

"My life belongs to you," repeated the half-caste.

"I belong to you, slave!" cried Djalma, repulsing him. "Just now, I hung upon your lips, devouring your dangerous lies."

"Lies, my lord? Only appear before these women, and their looks will confirm my words."



“These women love me!—me, who have only lived in war and in the woods?”

“The thought that you, so young, have already waged bloody war on men and tigers, will make them adore, my lord.”



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“You lie!”

“I tell you, my lord, on seeing your hand, as delicate as theirs, but which has been so often bathed in hostile blood, they will wish to caress it; and they will kiss it again, when they think that, in our forests, with loaded rifle, and a poniard between your teeth, you smiled at the roaring of a lion or panther for whom you lay in wait.”

“But I am a savage—a barbarian.”

“And for that very reason you will have them at your feet. They will feel themselves both terrified and charmed by all the violence and fury, the rage of jealousy, the passion and the love, to which a man of your blood, your youth, your ardor must be subject. To-day mild and tender, to-morrow fierce and suspicious, another time ardent and passionate, such you will be—and such you ought to be, if you wish to win them. Yes; let a kiss of rage be heard between two kisses: let a dagger glitter in the midst of caresses, and they will fall before you, palpitating with pleasure, love, and fear—and you will be to them, not a man, but a god.”

“Dost think so?” cried Djalma, carried away in spite of himself by the Thug’s wild eloquence.

“You know, you feel, that I speak the truth,” cried the latter, extending his arm towards the young Indian.

“Why, yes!” exclaimed Djalma, his eyes sparkling, his nostrils swelling, as he moved about the apartment with savage bounds. “I know not if I possess my reason, or if I am intoxicated, but it seems to me that you speak truth. Yes, I feel that they will love me with madness and fury, because my love will be mad and furious they will tremble with pleasure and fear, because the very thought of it makes me tremble with delight and terror. Slave, it is true; there is something exciting and fearful in such a love!” As he spoke forth these words, Djalma was superb in his impetuous sensuality. It is a rare thing to see a young man arrive in his native purity, at the age in which are developed, in all their powerful energy, those admirable instincts of love, which God has implanted in the heart of his creatures, and which, repressed, disguised, or perverted, may unseat the reason, or generate mad excesses and frightful crimes—but which, directed towards a great and noble passion, may and must, by their very violence, elevate man, through devotion and tenderness, to the limits of the ideal.

“Oh! this woman—this woman, before whom I am to tremble—and who, in turn, must tremble before me—where is she?” cried Djalma, with redoubled excitement. “Shall I ever find her?”



“One is a good deal, my lord,” replied Faringhea, with his sardonic coolness; “he who looks for one woman, will rarely succeed in this country; he who seeks women, is only at a loss to choose.”



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As the half-caste made this impertinent answer to Djalma, a very elegant blue-and-white carriage stopped before the garden-gate of the house, which opened upon a deserted street. It was drawn by a pair of beautiful blood-horses, of a cream color, with black manes and tails. The scutcheons on the harness were of silver, as were also the buttons of the servants' livery, which was blue with white collars. On the blue hammercloth, also laced with white, as well as on the panels of the doors, were lozenge-shaped coats of arms, without crest or coronet, as usually borne by unmarried daughters of noble families. Two women were in this carriage—Mdlle. de Cardoville and Florine.

CHAPTER XLI.

Rising.

To explain the arrival of Mdlle. de Cardoville at the garden-door of the house occupied by Djalma, we must cast a retrospective glance at previous events. On leaving Doctor Baleinier's, Mdlle. de Cardoville had gone to take up her residence in the Rue d'Anjou. During the last few months of her stay with her aunt, Adrienne had secretly caused this handsome dwelling to be repaired and furnished, and its luxury and elegance were now increased by all the wonders of the lodge of Saint-Dizier House. The world found it very strange, that a lady of the age and condition of Mdlle. de Cardoville should take the resolution of living completely alone and free, and, in fact, of keeping house exactly like a bachelor, a young widow, or an emancipated minor. The world pretended not to know that Mdlle. de Cardoville possessed what is often wanting in men, whether of age or twice of age—a firm character, a lofty mind, a generous heart, strong and vigorous good sense.

Judging that she would require faithful assistance in the internal management of her house, Adrienne had written to the bailiff of Cardoville, and his wife, old family servants, to come immediately to Paris: M. Dupont thus filled the office of steward, and *Mme.* Dupont that of housekeeper. An old friend of Adrienne's father, the Count de Montbron, an accomplished old man, once very much in fashion, and still a connoisseur in all sorts of elegances, had advised Adrienne to act like a princess, and take an equerry; recommended for this office a man of good rearing and ripe age, who, himself an amateur in horses, had been ruined in England, at Newmarket, the Derby, and Tattersall's, and reduced, as sometimes happened to gentlemen in that country, to drive the stage coaches, thus finding an honest method of earning his bread, and at the same time gratifying his taste for horses. Such was M. de Bonneville, M. de Montbron's choice. Both from age and habits, this equerry could accompany Mdlle. de Cardoville on horseback, and better than any one else, superintend the stable. He accepted, therefore, the employment with gratitude, and, thanks to his skill and attention, the equipages of Mdlle. de Cardoville were not eclipsed



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in style by anything of the kind in Paris. Mdlle. de Cardoville had taken back her women, Hebe, Georgette, and Florine. The latter was at first to have re-entered the service of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, to continue her part of spy for the superior of St. Mary's Convent; but, in consequence of the new direction given by Rodin to the Rennepont affair, it was decided that Florine, if possible, should return to the service of Mdlle. de Cardoville. This confidential place, enabling this unfortunate creature to render important and mysterious services to the people who held her fate in their hands, forced her to infamous treachery. Unfortunately, all things favored this machination. We know that Florine, in her interview with Mother Bunch, a few days after Mdlle. de Cardoville was imprisoned at Dr. Baleinier's, had yielded to a twinge of remorse, and given to the sempstress advice likely to be of use to Adrienne's interests—sending word to Agricola not to deliver to Madame de Saint Dizier the papers found in the hiding-place of the pavilion, but only to entrust them to Mdlle. de Cardoville herself. The latter, afterwards informed of these details by Mother Bunch, felt a double degree of confidence and interest in Florine, took her back into her service with gratitude, and almost immediately charged her with a confidential mission—that of superintending the arrangements of the house hired for Djalma's habitation. As for Mother Bunch (yielding to the solicitations of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and finding she was no longer of use to Dagobert's wife, of whom we shall speak hereafter), she had consented to take up her abode in the hotel on the Rue d'Anjou, along with Adrienne, who with that rare sagacity of the heart peculiar to her, entrusted the young sempstress, who served her also as a secretary, with the department of alms-giving.

Mdlle. de Cardoville had at first thought of entertaining her merely as a friend, wishing to pay homage in her person to probity with labor, resignation in sorrow, and intelligence in poverty; but knowing the workgirl's natural dignity, she feared, with reason that, notwithstanding the delicate circumspection with which the hospitality would be offered, Mother Bunch might perceive in it alms in disguise. Adrienne preferred, therefore, whilst she treated her as a friend, to give her a confidential employment. In this manner the great delicacy of the needlewoman would be spared, since she could earn her livelihood by performing duties which would at the same time satisfy her praiseworthy instincts of charity. In fact, she could fulfil, better than any one, the sacred mission confided to her by Adrienne. Her cruel experience in misfortune, the goodness of her angelic soul, the elevation of her mind, her rare activity, her penetration with regard to the painful secrets of poverty, her perfect knowledge of the industrial classes, were sufficient security for the tact and intelligence with which the excellent creature would second the generous intentions of Mdlle. de Cardoville.



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Let us now speak of the divers events which, on that day, preceded the coming of Mdlle. de Cardoville to the garden-gate of the house in the Rue Blanche. About ten o'clock in the morning, the blinds of Adrienne's bedchamber, closely shut, admitted no ray of daylight to this apartment, which was only lighted by a spherical lamp of oriental alabaster, suspended from the ceiling by three long silver chains. This apartment, terminating in a dome, was in the form of a tent with eight sides. From the ceiling to the floor, it was hung with white silk, covered with long draperies of muslin, fastened in large puffs to the wall, by bands caught in at regular distances by plates of ivory. Two doors, also of ivory, admirably encrusted with mother-of-pearl, led, one to the bath-room, the other to the toilet-chamber, a sort of little temple dedicated to the worship of beauty, and furnished as it had been at the pavilion of Saint Dizier House. Two other compartments of the wall were occupied by windows, completely veiled with drapery. Opposite the bed, enclosing splendid fire-dogs of chased silver, was a chimney-piece of white marble, like crystallized snow, on which were sculptured two magnificent caryatides, and a frieze representing birds and flowers. Above this frieze, carved in openwork with extreme delicacy, was a marble basket, filled with red camellias. Their leaves of shining green their flowers of a delicate rosy hue, were the only colors that disturbed the harmonious whiteness of this virgin retreat. Finally, half surrounded by waves of white muslin, which poured down from the dome like a mass of light clouds, the bed was visible—very low, and resting on feet of carved ivory, which stood upon the ermine carpet that covered the floor. With the exception of a plinth, also in ivory, admirably inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the bed was entirely covered with white satin, wadded and quilted like an immense scent-bag. The cambric sheets, trimmed with lace, being a little disturbed on one side, discovered the corner of a white taffety mattress, and a light counterpane of watered stuff—for an equal temperature always reigned in this apartment, warm as a fine spring day.

From a singular scruple, arising from the same sentiment which had caused Adrienne to have inscribed on a masterpiece of goldsmith's work the name of the maker instead of that of the seller, she had wished all these articles, so costly and sumptuous, to be manufactured by workmen chosen amongst the most intelligent, honest, and industrious of their class, whom she had supplied with the necessary materials. In this manner she had been able to add to the price of the work the profit usually gained by the middle man, who speculates in such labor; this notable augmentation of wages had spread happiness and comfort through a hundred necessitous families, who, blessing the munificence of Adrienne, gave her, as she said, the right to enjoy her luxury as a good action. Nothing could be fresher or more charming

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than the interior of this bedchamber. Mdlle. de Cardoville had just awoke; she reposed in the middle of this flood of muslin, lace, cambric, and white silk, in a position full of sweet grace. Never during the night did she cover that beautiful golden hair (a certain recipe, said the Greeks, for preserving it for a long while in magnificence). Every evening, her women arranged her long silky curls in flat tresses, forming two broad bands, which, descending sufficiently low almost entirely to conceal the small ear, the rosy lobe of which was alone visible, were joined to the large plait behind the head.

This head-dress, borrowed from Greek antiquity, set off to admiration the pure, fine features of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and made her look so much younger, that, instead of eighteen, one would hardly have given her fifteen years of age. Gathered thus closely about the temples, the hair lost its transparent and brilliant hues, and would have appeared almost brown, but for the golden tints which played here and there, amid the undulations of the tresses. Lulled in that morning torpor, the warm languor of which is so favorable to soft reveries, Adrienne leaned with her elbow on the pillow, and her head a little on one side, which displayed to advantage the ideal contour of her bared neck and shoulders; her smiling lips, moist and rosy, were, like her cheeks, cold as if they had just been bathed in ice-water; her snow-white lids half veiled the large, dark, soft eyes, which now gazed languidly upon vacancy, and now fixed themselves with pleasure upon the rosy flowers and green leaves in the basket of camellias. Who can paint the matchless serenity of Adrienne's awaking—when the fair and chaste soul roused itself in the fair and chaste body? It was the awakening of a heart as pure as the fresh and balmy breath of youth, that made her bosom rise and fall in its white, immaculate purity. What creed, what dogma, what formula, what religious symbol, oh! paternal and divine Creator! can ever give a more complete idea of Thy harmonious and ineffable power, than the image of a young maiden awaking in the bloom of her beauty, and in all the grace of that modesty with which Thou hast endowed her, seeking, in her dreamy innocence, for the secret of that celestial instinct of love, which Thou hast placed in the bosom of all Thy creatures—oh! Thou whose love is eternal, and goodness infinite!

The confused thoughts which, since her sleep, had appeared gently to agitate Adrienne, absorbed her more and more; her head resting on her bosom, her beautiful arm upon the couch, her features without becoming precisely sad, assumed an expression of touching melancholy. Her dearest desire was accomplished; she was about to live independent and alone. But this affectionate, delicate, expansive, and marvellously complete nature, felt that God had not given her such rare treasures, to bury them in a cold and selfish solitude. She felt how much that was great and



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beautiful might be inspired by love, both in herself, and in him that should be worthy of her. Confiding in her courage, and the nobleness of her character, proud of the example that she wished to give to other women, knowing that all eyes would be fixed enviously upon her, she felt, as it were, only too sure of herself; far from fearing that she should make a bad choice, she rather feared, that she should not find any from whom to choose, so pure and perfect was her taste. And, even had she met with her own ideal, she had views so singular and so just, so extraordinary and yet so sensible, with regard to the independence and dignity of woman, that, inexorably determined to make no concession upon this head, she asked herself if the man of her choice would ever accept the hitherto unheard-of conditions that she meant to impose. In recalling to her remembrance the possible suitors that she had met in the world, she remembered also the dark, but true picture, which Rodin had drawn with so much caustic bitterness. She remembered, too, not without a certain pride, the encouragement this man had given her, not by flattery, but by advising her to follow out and accomplish a great, generous, and beautiful design. The current or the caprice of fancy soon brought Adrienne to think of Djalma. Whilst she congratulated herself on having paid to her royal kinsman the duties of a kingly hospitality, the young lady was far from regarding the prince as the hero of her future.

And first she said to herself, not unreasonably, that this half-savage boy, with passions, if not untamable, yet untamed, transported on a sudden into the midst of a refined civilization, would be inevitably destined to fiery trials and violent transformations. Now Mdlle. de Cardoville, having nothing masculine or despotic in her character, had no wish to civilize the young savage. Therefore, notwithstanding the interest, or rather because of the interest, which she felt for the young Indian, she was firmly resolved, not to make herself known to him, till after the lapse of two or three months; and she determined also, that, even if Djalma should learn by chance that she was his relation, she would not receive his visit. She desired, if not to try him, at least to leave him free in all his acts, so that he might expend the first fire of his passions, good or bad. But not wishing to abandon him quite without defence to the perils of Parisian life, she requested the Count de Montbron, in confidence, to introduce Prince Djalma to the best company in Paris, and to enlighten him by the counsels of his long experience. M. de Montbron had received the request of Mdlle. de Cardoville with the greatest pleasure, taking delight, he said, in starting his royal tiger in drawing-rooms, and bringing him into contact with the flower of the fine ladies and gentlemen of Paris, offering at the same time to wager any amount in favor of his half-savage pupil.



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“As for myself, my dear Count,” said Adrienne to M. de Montbron, with her usual frankness, “my resolution is not to be shaken. You have told me the effect that will be produced in the fashionable world, by the first appearance of Prince Djalma, an Indian nineteen years of age, of surprising beauty, proud and wild as a young lion arriving from his forest; it is new, it is extraordinary, you added; and, therefore, all the coquetries of civilized life will pursue him with an eagerness which makes me tremble for him. Now, seriously, my dear count it will not suit me to appear as the rival of so many fine ladies, who are about to expose themselves intrepidly to the claws of the young tiger. I take great interest in him, because he is my cousin, because he is handsome, because he is brave, and above all because he does not wear that horrible European dress. No doubt these are rare qualities—but not sufficient to make me change my mind. Besides, the good old philosopher, my new friend, has given me advice about this Indian, which you, my dear Count, who are not a philosopher, will yet approve. It is, for some time, to receive visits at home, but not to visit other people—which will spare me the awkwardness of meeting my royal cousin, and allow me to make a careful choice, even amongst my usual society. As my house will be an excellent one, my position most unusual, and as I shall be suspected of all sorts of naughty secrets, I shall be in no want of inquisitive visitors, who will amuse me a good deal, I assure you.”

And as M. de Montbron asked, if the exile of the poor young Indian tiger was to last long, Adrienne answered: “As I shall see most of the persons, to whom you will introduce him, I shall be pleased to hear different opinions about him. If certain men speak well of him, and certain women ill, I shall have good hope of him. In a word, the opinion that I come to, in sifting the true from the false (you may leave that to my sagacity), will shorten or prolong the exile of my royal cousin.”

Such were the formal intentions of Mdlle. de Cardoville with regard to Djalma, even on the day she went with Florine to the house he occupied. In a word, she had positively resolved not to be known to him for some months to come.

After long reflecting that morning, on the chances that might yet offer themselves to satisfy the wants of her heart, Adrienne fell into a new, deep reverie. This charming creature, so full of life and youth, heaved a low sigh, raised her arms above her head, turned her profile towards the pillow, and remained for some moments as if powerless and vanquished. Motionless beneath the white tissues that wrapped her round, she looked like a fair, marble statue, visible beneath a light layer of snow. Suddenly, Adrienne raised herself up, drew her hand across her brow, and rang for her women. At the first silver tone of the bell, the two ivory doors opened. Georgette appeared on the threshold of the dressing-room, from

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which Frisky, a little black and-tan dog, with his golden collar, escaped with a joyful barking. Hebe appeared at the same time on the threshold of the bath-room. At the further end of this apartment, lighted from above, might be seen upon a green mat of Spanish leather, with golden ornaments, a crystal bath in the form of a long shell. The three only divisions in this masterpiece of glass work, were concealed by the elegant device of several large reeds in silver, which rose from the wide base of the bath, also of wrought silver, representing children and dolphins playing, among branches of natural coral, and azure shells. Nothing could be more pleasing than the effect of these purple reeds and ultramarine shells, upon a dull ground of silver; the balsamic vapor, which rose from the warm, limpid, and perfumed water, that filled the crystal shell, spread through the bath-room, and floated like a light cloud into the sleeping-chamber.

Seeing Hebe in her fresh and pretty costume, bringing her a long bathing gown, hanging upon a bare and dimpled arm, Adrienne said to her: "Where is Florine, my child?"

"Madame, she went downstairs two hours ago; she was wanted for something very pressing."

"Who wanted her?"

"The young person who serves Madame as secretary. She went out this morning very early; and, as soon as she returned, she sent for Florine, who has not come back since."

"This absence no doubt relates to some important affair of my angelic minister of succor," said Adrienne, smiling, and thinking of the hunchback. Then she made a sign to Hebe to approach her bed.

About two hours after rising, Adrienne, having had herself dressed, as usual, with rare elegance, dismissed her women, and sent for Mother Bunch, whom she treated with marked deference, always receiving her alone. The young sempstress entered hastily, with a pale, agitated countenance, and said, in a trembling voice: "Oh, madame! my presentiments were justified. You are betrayed."

"Of what presentiments do you speak, my dear child!" said Adrienne, with surprise.

"Who betrays me?"

"M. Rodin!" answered the workgirl.



CHAPTER XLII.

Doubts.

On hearing the accusation brought against Rodin, Mdlle. de Cardoville looked at the denunciator with new astonishment. Before continuing this scene, we may say that Mother Bunch was no longer clad in her poor, old clothes, but was dressed in black, with as much simplicity as taste. The sad color seemed to indicate her renunciation of all human vanity, the eternal mourning of her heart, and the austere duties imposed upon her by her devotion to misfortune. With her black gown, she wore a large falling collar, white and neat as her little gauze cap, with its gray ribbons, which, revealing her bands of fine brown hair, set off to advantage her pale and melancholy countenance, with its soft blue eyes. Her long, delicate hands, preserved from the cold by gloves, were no longer, as formerly, of a violet hue, but of an almost transparent whiteness.



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Her agitated features expressed a lively uneasiness. Extremely surprised, Mdlle. de Cardoville exclaimed: "What do you say?"

"M. Rodin betrays you, madame."

"M. Rodin? Impossible!"

"Oh, madame! my presentiments did not deceive me."

"Your presentiments?"

"The first time I saw M. Rodin, I was frightened in spite of myself. My heart sank within me, and I trembled—for you, madame."

"For me?" said Adrienne. "Why did you not tremble for yourself, my poor friend?"

"I do not know, madame; but such was my first impression. And this fear was so invincible, that, notwithstanding the kindness that M. Rodin showed my sister, he frightened me, none the less."

"That is strange. I can understand as well as any one the almost irresistible influence of sympathies or aversions; but, in this instance—However," resumed Adrienne, after a moment's reflection, "no matter for that; how have these suspicions been changed to certainty?"

"Yesterday, I went to take to my sister Cephyse, the assistance that M. Rodin had given me, in the name of a charitable person. I did not find Cephyse at the friend's who had taken care of her; I therefore begged the portress, to inform my sister that I would call again this morning. That is what I did; but you must excuse me, madame, some necessary details."

"Speak, speak, my dear."

"The young girl who had received my sister," said Mother Bunch, with embarrassment, casting down her eyes and blushing, "does not lead a very regular life. A person, with whom she has gone on several parties of pleasure, one M. Dumoulin, had informed her of the real name of M. Rodin, who has a kind of lodging in that house, and there goes by the name of Charlemagne."

"That is just what he told us at Dr. Baleinier's; and, the day before yesterday, when I again alluded to the circumstance, he explained to me the necessity in which he was, for certain reasons, to have a humble retreat in that remote quarter—and I could not but approve of his motives."

"Well, then! yesterday, M. Rodin received a visit from the Abbe d'Aigrigny."



“The Abbe d’Aigrigny!” exclaimed Mdlle. de Cardoville.

“Yes, madame; he remained for two hours shut up with M. Rodin.”

“My child, you must have been deceived.”

“I was told, madame, that the Abbe d’Aigrigny had called in the morning to see M. Rodin; not finding him at home, he had left with the portress his name written on a slip of paper, with the words, ‘I shall return in two hours.’ The girl of whom I spoke, madame, had seen this slip of paper. As all that concerns M. Rodin appears mysterious enough, she had the curiosity to wait for M. d’Aigrigny in the porter’s lodge, and, about two hours afterwards, he indeed returned, and saw M. Rodin.”

“No, no,” said Adrienne, shuddering; “it is impossible. There must be some mistake.”



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"I think not, madame; for, knowing how serious such a discovery would be, I begged the young girl to describe to me the appearance of M. d'Aigrigny."

"Well?"

"The Abbe d'Aigrigny, she told me, is about forty years of age. He is tall and upright, dresses plainly, but with care; has gray eyes, very large and piercing, thick eyebrows, chestnut-colored hair, a face closely shaved, and a very decided aspect."

"It is true," said Adrienne, hardly able to believe what she heard. "The description is exact."

"Wishing to have all possible details," resumed Mother Bunch, "I asked the portress if M. Rodin and the Abbe d'Aigrigny appeared to be at variance when they quitted the house? She replied no, but that the Abbe said to M. Rodin, as they parted at the door: 'I will write to you tomorrow, as agreed.'"

"Is it a dream? Good heaven!" said Adrienne, drawing her hands across her forehead in a sort of stupor. "I cannot doubt your word, my poor friend; and yet it is M. Rodin who himself sent you to that house, to give assistance to your sister: would he have wilfully laid open to you his secret interviews with the Abbe d'Aigrigny? It would have been bad policy in a traitor."

"That is true, and the same reflection occurred to me. And yet the meeting of these two men appeared so dangerous to you, madame, that I returned home full of terror."

Characters of extreme honesty are very hard to convince of the treachery of others: the more infamous the deception, the more they are inclined to doubt it. Adrienne was one of these characters, rectitude being a prime quality of her mind. Though deeply impressed by the communication, she remarked: "Come, my dear, do not let us frighten ourselves too soon, or be over-hasty in believing evil. Let us try to enlighten ourselves by reasoning, and first of all remember facts. M. Rodin opened for me the doors of Dr. Baleinier's asylum; in my presence, he brought, his charge against the Abbe d'Aigrigny; he forced the superior of the convent to restore Marshal Simon's daughters, he succeeded in discovering the retreat of Prince Djalma—he faithfully executed my intentions with regard to my young cousin; only yesterday, he gave me the most useful advice. All this is true—is it not?"

"Certainly, madame."

"Now suppose that M. Rodin, putting things in their worst light, had some after-thought—that he hopes to be liberally rewarded, for instance; hitherto, at least, he has shown complete disinterestedness."



“That also is true, madame,” said poor Mother Bunch, obliged, like Adrienne, to admit the evidence of fixed facts.

“Now let us look to the possibility of treachery. Unite with the Abbe d’Aigrigny to betray me! Betray me?—how? and for what purpose? What have I to fear? Is it not the Abbe d’Aigrigny, on the contrary, is it not Madame de Saint-Dizier, who have to render an account for the injuries they have done me?”



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“But, then, madame, how do you explain the meeting of these two men, who have so many motives for mutual aversion? May there not be some dark project still behind? Besides, madame, I am not the only one to think so.”

“How is that?”

“This morning, on my return, I was so much agitated, that Mdlle. Florine asked me the cause of my trouble. I know, madame, how much she is devoted to you.”

“Nobody could be more so; only recently, you yourself informed me of the signal service she rendered, during my confinement at Dr. Baleinier’s.”

“Well, madame, this morning, on my return, thinking it necessary to have you informed as soon as possible, I told all to Mdlle. Florine. Like me—even more, perhaps—she was terrified at the meeting of Rodin and M. d’Aigrigny.

“After a moment’s reflection, she said to me: ‘It is, I think, useless to disturb my mistress at present; it can be of no importance whether she is informed of this treachery two or three hours sooner or later; during that time I may be able to discover something more. I have an idea, which I think a good one. Make my excuses to my mistress; I shall soon be back.’ Then Florine sent for a hackney-coach, and went out.”

“Florine is an excellent girl,” said Mdlle. de Cardoville, with a smile, for further reflection had quite reassured her: “but, on this occasion, I think that her zeal and good heart have deceived her, as they have you, my poor friend. Do you know, that we are two madcaps, you and I, not to have thought of one thing, which would have put us quite at our ease?”

“How so, madame?”

“The Abbe d’Aigrigny fears M. Rodin; he may have sought him out, to entreat his forbearance. Do you not find this explanation both satisfactory and reasonable?”

“Perhaps so, madame,” said Mother Bunch, after a moment’s reflection; “yes, it is probable.” But after another silence, and as if yielding to a conviction superior to every possible argument, she exclaimed: “And yet, no; believe me, madame, you are deceived. I feel it. All appearances may be against what I affirm; yet, believe me, these presentiments are too strong not to be true. And have you not guessed the most secret instincts of my heart? Why should I not be able to guess the dangers with which you are menaced?”

“What do you say? what have I guessed?” replied Mdlle. de Cardoville, involuntarily impressed by the other’s tone of conviction and alarm.



“What have you guessed?” resumed the latter. “All the troublesome susceptibility of an unfortunate creature, to whom destiny has decreed a life apart. If I have hitherto been silent, it is not from ignorance of what I owe you. Who told you, madame, that the only way to make me accept your favors without blushing, was to give me some employment, that would enable me to soothe the misfortunes I had so long shared? Who told you, when you wished me to have a seat at



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your table, and to treat as your friend the poor needlewoman, in whose person you sought to honor, resignation and honest industry—who told you, when I answered with tears of gratitude and regret, that it was not false modesty, but a consciousness of my own ridiculous deformity, that made me refuse your offer? Who told you that, but for this, I should have accepted it proudly, in the name of all my low-born sisters? But you replied to me with the touching words: 'I understand your refusal, my friend; it is not occasioned by false modesty, but by a sentiment of dignity that I love and respect.' Who told you," continued the workgirl, with increasing animation, "that I should be so happy to find a little solitary retreat in this magnificent house, which dazzles me with its splendor? Who guided you in the choice of the apartment (still far too good) that you have provided for me? Who taught you, that, without envying the beauty of the charming creatures that surround you, and whom I love because they love you, I should always feel, by an involuntary comparison, embarrassed and ashamed before them? Who told you therefore to send them away, whenever you wished to speak with me? Yes! who has revealed to you all the painful and secret susceptibilities of a position like mine! Who has revealed them to you? God, no doubt! who in His infinite majesty creates worlds, and yet cares for the poor little insect hidden beneath the grass. And you think, that the gratitude of a heart you have understood so well, cannot rise in its turn to the knowledge of what may be hurtful to you? No, no, lady; some people have the instinct of self preservation; others have the still more precious instinct that enables them to preserve those they love. God has given me this instinct. I tell you that you are betrayed!" And with animated look, and cheeks slightly colored with emotion, the speaker laid such stress upon the last words, and accompanied them with such energetic gesture, that Mdlle. de Cardoville already shaken by the girl's warmth, began almost to share in her apprehensions. Then, although she had before learned to appreciate the superior intelligence of this poor child of the people, Mdlle. de Cardoville had never till now heard her friend express herself with so much eloquence—an eloquence, too, that was inspired by the noblest sentiments. This circumstance added to the impression made upon Adrienne. But at the moment she was about to answer, a knock was heard at the door of the room, and Florine entered.

On seeing the alarmed countenance of her waiting-maid, Mdlle. de Cardoville said hastily: "Well, Florine! what news? Whence come you, my child?"

"From Saint-Dizier House, madame."

"And why did you go there?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville, with surprise.

"This morning," said Florine, glancing at the workgirl, "madame, there, confided to me her suspicions and uneasiness. I shared in them. The visit of the Abbe d'Aigrigny to M. Rodin appeared to me very serious. I thought, if it should turn out that M. Rodin had

been during the last few days to Saint-Dizier House, there would be no longer any doubt of his treachery.”



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“True,” said Adrienne, more and more uneasy. “Well?”

“As I had been charged to superintend the removal from the lodge, I knew that several things had remained there. To obtain admittance, I had to apply to Mrs. Grivois. I had thus a pretext for returning to the hotel.”

“What next, Florine, what next?”

“I endeavored to get Mrs. Grivois to talk of M. Rodin; but it was in vain.”

“She suspected you,” said the workgirl. “It was to be anticipated.”

“I asked her,” continued Florine, “if they had seen M. Rodin at the hotel lately. She answered evasively. Then despairing of getting anything out of her,” continued Florine, “I left Mrs. Grivois, and that my visit might excite no suspicion, I went to the pavilion—when, as I turn down the avenue—whom do I see? why, M. Rodin himself, hastening towards the little garden-door, wishing no doubt to depart unnoticed by that way.”

“Madame, you hear,” cried Mother Bunch, clasping her hands with a supplicating air; “such evidence should convince you.”

“M. Rodin at the Princess de Saint-Dizier’s!” cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, whose glance, generally so mild, now suddenly flashed with vehement indignation. Then she added, in a tone of considerable emotion, “Continue, Florine.”

“At sight of M. Rodin, I stopped,” proceeded Florine, “and keeping a little on one side, I gained the pavilion without being seen. I looked out into the street, through the closed blinds, and perceived a hackney coach. It was waiting for M. Rodin, for, a minute after, he got into it, saying to the coachman, ‘No. 39, Rue Blanche’

“The prince’s!” exclaimed Mdlle. de Cardoville.

“Yes, madame.”

“Yes, M. Rodin was to see him to-day,” said Adrienne, reflecting.

“No doubt he betrays you, madame, and the prince also; the latter will be made his victim more easily than you.”

“Shame! shame!” cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, on a sudden, as she rose, all her features contracted with painful anger. “After such a piece of treachery, it is enough to make us doubt of everything—even of ourselves.”

“Oh, madame! is it not dreadful?” said Mother Bunch, shuddering.



“But, then, why did he rescue me and mine, and accuse the Abbe d’Aigrigny?” wondered Mdlle. de Cardoville. “Of a truth, it is enough to make one lose one’s reason. It is an abyss—but, oh! how frightful is doubt!”

“As I returned,” said Florine, casting a look of affectionate devotion on her mistress, “I thought of a way to make all clear; but there is not a minute to lose.”

“What do you mean?” said Adrienne, looking at Florine with surprise.

“M. Rodin will soon be alone with the prince,” said Florine.

“No doubt,” replied Adrienne.

“The prince always sits in a little room that opens upon a greenhouse. It is there that he will receive M. Rodin.”

“What then?” resumed Adrienne.



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“This greenhouse, which I had arranged according to your orders, has only one issue—by a door leading into a little lane. The gardener gets in that way every morning, so as not to have to pass through the apartments. Having finished his work, he does not return thither during the day.”

“What do you mean? what is your project?” said Adrienne, looking at Florine with growing surprise.

“The plants are so disposed, that, I think, if even the shade were not there, which screens the glass that separates the saloon from the greenhouse, one might get near enough to hear what was passing in the room, without being seen. When I was superintending the arrangements, I always entered by this greenhouse door. The gardener had one key, and I another. Luckily, I have not yet parted with mine. Within an hour, you may know how far to trust M. Rodin. If he betrays the prince, he betrays you also.”

“What say you?” cried Mdlle. de Cardoville.

“Set out instantly with me; we reach the side door; I enter alone, for precaution sake—if all is right, I return—”

“You would have me turn spy?” said Mdlle. de Cardoville, haughtily, interrupting Florine. “You cannot think it.

“I beg your pardon, madame,” said the girl, casting down her eyes, with confused and sorrowful air; “you had suspicions, and me seems ’tis the only way to confirm or destroy them.”

“Stoop to listen to a conversation—never!” replied Adrienne.

“Madame,” said Mother Bunch, suddenly, after some moments’ thought, “permit me to tell you that Mdlle. Florine is right. The plan proposed is a painful one, but it is the only way in which you can clear up, perhaps, for ever, your doubts as to M. Rodin. Notwithstanding the evidence of facts, in spite of the almost certainty of my presentiments, appearances may deceive us. I was the first who accused M. Rodin to you. I should not forgive myself all the rest of my life, did I accuse him wrongfully. Beyond doubt, it is painful, as you say, madame, to listen to a conversation—” Then, with a violent effort to console herself, she added, as she strove to repress her tears, “Yet, as your safety is at stake, madame—for, if this be treachery, the future prospect is dreadful—I will go in your place—to—”

“Not a word more, I entreat you,” cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, interrupting. “Let you, my poor friend, do for me what I thought degrading to do myself? Never!”



Then, turning to Florine, she added, "Tell M. de Bonneville to have the carriage got ready on the instant."

"You consent, then!" cried Florine, clasping her hands, and not seeking to conceal her joy; and her eyes also became full of tears.



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“Yes, I consent,” answered Adrienne, with emotion. “If it is to be war—war to the knife, that they would wage with me—I must be prepared for it; and, come to think of it, it would only be weakness and folly not to put myself on my guard. No doubt this step costs me much, and is very repugnant to me, but it is the only way to put an end to suspicions that would be a continual torment to me, and perhaps to prevent still greater evils. Yes! for many important reasons, this interview of M. Rodin with Prince Djalma may be doubly decisive to me—as to the confidence, or the inexorable hate, that I must henceforth feel for M. Rodin. So, Florine, quick!—my cloak and bonnet, and the carriage. You will go with me. As for you, my dear, pray wait for me here,” she added, turning to the work girl.

Half an hour after this conversation, Adrienne’s carriage stopped, as we have before seen, at the little garden-gate of the house in the Rue Blanche. Florine entered the greenhouse and soon returned to her mistress. “The shade is down, madame. M. Rodin has just entered the prince’s room.” Mdlle. de Cardoville was, therefore, present, though invisible, at the following scene, which took place between Rodin and Djalma.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The letter.

Some minutes before the entrance of Mdlle. de Cardoville into the greenhouse, Rodin had been introduced by Faringhea into the presence of the prince, who, still under the influence of the burning excitement into which he had been plunged by the words of the half-caste, did not appear to perceive the Jesuit. The latter, surprised at the animated expression of Djalma’s countenance, and his almost frantic air, made a sign of interrogation to Faringhea, who answered him privately in the following symbolical manner:—After laying his forefinger on his head and heart, he pointed to the fire burning in the chimney, signifying by his pantomimic action that the head and heart of Djalma were both in flames. No doubt Rodin understood him, for an imperceptible smile of satisfaction played upon his wan lips; then he said aloud to Faringhea, “I wish to be alone with the prince. Let down the shade and see that we are not interrupted.” The half-caste bowed, and touched a spring near the sheet of plate-glass, which slid into the wall as the blind descended; then, again bowing, Faringhea left the room. It was shortly after that Mdlle. de Cardoville and Florine entered the greenhouse, which was now only separated from the room in which was Djalma, by the transparent thickness of a shade of white silk, embroidered with large colored birds. The noise of the door, which Faringhea closed as he went out, seemed to recall the young Indian to himself; his features, though still animated, recovered their habitual expression of mildness and gentleness; he started, drew his hand across his brow, looked around him, as if waking up from a deep reverie, and then, advancing towards Rodin, with an air as respectful as confused, he said to him, using the expression commonly applied to old men in his country, “Pardon me, father.” Still following the customs of his nation, so full of

deference towards age, he took Rodin's hand to raise it to his lips, but the Jesuit drew back a step, and refused his homage.



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“For what do you ask pardon, my dear prince?” said he to Djalma.

“When you entered, I was in a dream; I did not come to meet you. Once more, pardon me, father!”

“Once more, I forgive you with all my heart, my dear prince. But let us have some talk. Pray resume your place on the couch, and your pipe, too, if you like it.”

But Djalma, instead of adopting the suggestion, and throwing himself on the divan, according to his custom, insisted on seating himself in a chair, notwithstanding all the persuasions of “the Old Man with the Good Heart,” as he always called the Jesuit.

“Really, your politeness troubles me, my dear prince,” said Rodin; “you are here at home in India; at least, we wish you to think so.”

“Many things remind me of my country,” said Djalma, in a mild grave tone. “Your goodness reminds me of my father, and of him who was a father to me,” added the Indian, as he thought of Marshal Simon, whose arrival in Paris had been purposely concealed from him.

After a moment’s silence, he resumed in a tone full of affectionate warmth, as he stretched out his hand to Rodin, “You are come, and I am happy!”

“I understand your joy, my dear prince, for I come to take you out of prison—to open your cage for you. I had begged you to submit to a brief seclusion, entirely for your own interest.”

“Can I go out to-morrow?”

“To-day, my dear prince, if you please.”

The young Indian reflected for a moment, and then resumed, “I must have friends, since I am here in a palace that does not belong to me.”

“Certainly you have friends—excellent friends,” answered Rodin. At these words, Djalma’s countenance seemed to acquire fresh beauty. The most noble sentiments were expressed in his fine features; his large black eyes became slightly humid, and, after another interval of silence, he rose and said to Rodin with emotion: “Come!”

“Whither, dear prince?” said the other, much surprised.

“To thank my friends. I have waited three days. It is long.”

“Permit me dear prince—I have much to tell you on this subject—please to be seated.”



Djalma resumed his seat with docility. Rodin continued: "It is true that you have friends; or rather, you have a friend. Friends are rare."

"What are you?"

"Well, then, you have two friends, my dear prince—myself, whom you know, and one other, whom you do not know, and who desires to remain unknown to you."

"Why?"

"Why?" answered Rodin, after a moment's embarrassment. "Because the happiness he feels in giving you these proofs of his friendship and even his own tranquillity, depend upon preserving this mystery."

"Why should there be concealment when we do good?"

"Sometimes, to conceal the good we do, my dear prince."

"I profit by this friendship; why should he conceal himself from one?" These repeated questions of the young Indian appeared to puzzle Rodin, who, however, replied: "I have told you, my dear prince, that your secret friend would perhaps have his tranquillity compromised, if he were known."



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“If he were known—as my friend?”

“Exactly so, dear prince.”

The countenance of Djalma immediately assumed an appearance of sorrowful dignity; he raised his head proudly, and said in a stern and haughty voice: “Since this friend hides himself from me, he must either be ashamed of me, or there is reason for me to be ashamed of him. I only accept hospitality from those who are worthy of me, and who think me worthy of them. I leave this house.” So saying, Djalma rose with such an air of determination, that Rodin exclaimed: “Listen to me, my dear prince. Allow me to tell you, that your petulance and touchiness are almost incredible. Though we have endeavored to remind you of your beautiful country, we are here in Europe, in France, in the centre of Paris. This consideration may perhaps a little modify your views. Listen to me, I conjure you.”

Notwithstanding his complete ignorance of certain social conventionalisms, Djalma had too much good sense and uprightness, not to appreciate reason, when it appeared reasonable. The words of Rodin calmed him. With that ingenuous modesty, with which natures full of strength and generosity are almost always endowed, he answered mildly: “You are right, father. I am no longer in my own country. Here the customs are different. I will reflect upon it.”

Notwithstanding his craft and suppleness, Rodin sometimes found himself perplexed by the wild and unforeseen ideas of the young Indian. Thus he saw, to his great surprise, that Djalma now remained pensive for some minutes, after which he resumed in a calm but firm tone: “I have obeyed you, father: I have reflected.”

“Well, my dear prince?”

“In no country in the world, under no pretext, should a man of honor conceal his friendship for another man of honor.”

“But suppose there should be danger in avowing this friendship?” said Rodin, very uneasy at the turn the conversation was taking. Djalma eyed the Jesuit with contemptuous astonishment, and made no reply.

“I understand your silence, my dear prince: a brave man ought to defy danger. True; but if it should be you that the danger threatens, in case this friendship were discovered, would not your man of honor be excusable, even praiseworthy, to persist in remaining unknown?”

“I accept nothing from a friend, who thinks me capable of denying him from cowardice.”

“Dear prince—listen to me.”



“Adieu, father.”

“Yet reflect!”

“I have said it,” replied Djalma, in an abrupt and almost sovereign tone, as he walked towards the door.

“But suppose a woman were concerned,” cried Rodin, driven to extremity, and hastening after the young Indian, for he really feared that Djalma might rush from the house, and thus overthrow all his projects.

At the last words of Rodin the Indian stopped abruptly. “A woman!” said he, with a start, and turning red. “A woman is concerned?”



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“Why, yes! suppose it were a woman,” resumed Rodin, “would you not then understand her reserve, and the secrecy with which she is obliged to surround the marks of affection she wishes to give you?”

“A woman!” repeated Djalma, in a trembling voice, clasping his hands in adoration; and his beautiful countenance was expressive of the deepest emotion. “A woman!” said he again. “A Parisian?”

“Yes, my dear prince, as you force me to this indiscretion, I will confess to you that your friend is a real Parisian—a noble matron, endowed with the highest virtues—whose age alone merits all your respect.”

“She is very old, then?” cried poor Djalma, whose charming dream was thus abruptly dispelled.

“She may be a few years older than I am,” answered Rodin, with an ironical smile, expecting to see the young man express a sort of comical disappointment or angry regret.

But it was not so. To the passionate enthusiasm of love, which had for a moment lighted up the prince’s features, there now succeeded a respectful and touching expression. He looked at Rodin with emotion, and said to him in a broken voice: “This woman, is then, a mother to me?”

It is impossible to describe with what a pious, melancholy, and tender charm the Indian uttered the word mother.

“You have it, my dear prince; this respectable lady wishes to be a mother to you. But I may not reveal to you the cause of the affection she feels for you. Only, believe me—this affection is sincere, and the cause honorable. If I do not tell you her secret, it is that, with us, the secrets of women, young or old, are equally sacred.”

“That is right, and I will respect it. Without seeing her, I will love her—as I love God, without seeing Him.”

“And now, my dear prince, let me tell you what are the intentions of your maternal friend. This house will remain at your disposal, as long as you like it; French servants, a carriage, and horses, will be at your orders; the charges of your housekeeping will be paid for you. Then, as the son of a king should live royalty, I have left in the next room a casket containing five hundred Louis; every month a similar sum will be provided: if it should not be found sufficient for your little amusements, you will tell me, and it shall be augmented.”

At a movement of Djalma, Rodin hastened to add: “I must tell you at once, my dear prince, that your delicacy may be quite at ease. First of all, you may accept anything



from a mother; next, as in about three months you will come into possession of an immense inheritance, it will be easy for you, if you feel the obligation a burden—and the sum cannot exceed, at the most, four or five thousand Louis—to repay these advances. Spare nothing, then, but satisfy all your fancies. You are expected to appear in the great world of Paris, in a style becoming the son of a king who was called the Father of the Generous. So once again I conjure you not to be restrained by a false delicacy; if this sum should not be sufficient—”



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“I will ask for more. My mother is right; the son of a monarch ought to live royally.”

Such was the answer of the Indian, made with perfect simplicity, and without any appearance of astonishment at these magnificent offers. This was natural. Djalma would have done for others what they were doing for him, for the traditions of the prodigal magnificence and splendid hospitality of Indian princes are well known. Djalma had been as moved as grateful, on hearing that a woman loved him with maternal affection. As for the luxury with which she nought to surround him, he accepted it without astonishment and without scruple. This resignation, again, somewhat disconcerted Rodin, who had prepared many excellent arguments to persuade the Indian to accept his offers.

“Well, then, it’s all agreed, my dear prince,” resumed the Jesuit. “Now, as you must see the world, it’s just as well to enter by the best door, as we say. One of the friends of your maternal protectress, the Count de Montbron, an old nobleman of the greatest experience, and belonging to the first society, will introduce you in some of the best houses in Paris.”

“Will you not introduce me, father?”

“Alas! my dear prince, look at me. Tell me, if you think I am fitted for such an office. No, no; I live alone and retired from the world. And then,” added Rodin, after a short silence, fixing a penetrating, attentive, and curious look upon the prince, as if he would have subjected him to a sort of experiment by what follows; “and then, you see, M. de Montbron will be better able than I should, in the world you are about to enter, to enlighten you as to the snares that will be laid for you. For if you have friends, you have also enemies—cowardly enemies, as you know, who have abused your confidence in an infamous manner, and have made sport of you. And as, unfortunately, their power is equal to their wickedness, it would perhaps be more prudent in you to try to avoid them—to fly, instead of resisting them openly.”

At the remembrance of his enemies, at the thought of flying from them, Djalma trembled in every limb; his features became of a lurid paleness; his eyes wide open, so that the pupil was encircled with white, sparkled with lurid fire; never had scorn, hatred, and the desire of vengeance, expressed themselves so terribly on a human face. His upper lip, blood red, was curled convulsively, exposing a row of small, white, and close set teeth, and giving to his countenance lately so charming, an air of such animal ferocity, that Rodin started from his seat, and exclaimed: “What is the matter, prince? You frighten me.”

Djalma did not answer. Half leaning forward, with his hands clinched in rage, he seemed to cling to one of the arms of the chair, for fear of yielding to a burst of terrific fury. At this moment, the amber mouthpiece of his pipe rolled, by chance, under one of his feet; the violent tension, which contracted all the muscles of the young Indian, was



so powerful, and notwithstanding his youth and his light figure, he was endowed with such vigor, that with one abrupt stamp he powdered to dust the piece of amber, in spite of its extreme hardness.



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“In the name of heaven, what is the matter, prince?” cried Rodin.

“Thus would I crush my cowardly enemies!” exclaimed Djalma, with menacing and excited look. Then, as if these words had brought his rage to a climax, he bounded from his seat, and, with haggard eyes, strode about the room for some seconds in all directions, as if he sought for some weapon, and uttered from time to time a hoarse cry, which he endeavored to stifle by thrusting his clinched fist against his mouth, whilst his jaws moved convulsively. It was the impotent rage of a wild beast, thirsting for blood. Yet, in all this, the young Indian preserved a great and savage beauty; it was evident that these instincts of sanguinary ardor and blind intrepidity, now excited to this pitch by horror of treachery and cowardice, when applied to war, or to those gigantic Indian hunts, which are even more bloody than a battle, must make of Djalma what he really was a hero.

Rodin admired, with deep and ominous joy, the fiery impetuosity of passion in the young Indian, for, under various conceivable circumstances, the effect must be terrible. Suddenly, to the Jesuit’s great surprise, the tempest was appeased. Djalma’s fury was calmed thus instantaneously, because reflection showed him how vain it was: ashamed of his childish violence, he cast down his eyes. His countenance remained pale and gloomy; and, with a cold tranquillity, far more formidable than the violence to which he had yielded, he said to Rodin: “Father, you will this day lead me to meet my enemies.”

“In what end, my dear prince? What would you do?”

“Kill the cowards!”

“Kill them! you must not think of it.”

“Faringhea will aid me.”

“Remember, you are not on the banks of the Ganges, and here one does not kill an enemy like a hunted tiger.”

“One fights with a loyal enemy, but one kills a traitor like an accursed dog,” replied Djalma, with as much conviction as tranquillity.

“Ah, prince, whose father was the Father of the Generous,” said Rodin, in a grave voice; “what pleasure can you find in striking down creatures as cowardly as they are wicked?”

“To destroy what is dangerous, is a duty.”

“So prince, you seek for revenge.”

“I do not revenge myself on a serpent,” said the Indian, with haughty bitterness; “I crush it.”



“But, my dear prince, here we cannot get rid of our enemies in that manner. If we have cause of complaint—”

“Women and children complain,” said Djalma, interrupting Rodin: “men strike.”

“Still on the banks of the Ganges, my dear prince. Here society takes your cause into its own hands, examines, judges, and if there be good reason, punishes.”

“In my own quarrel, I am both judge and executioner.”

“Pray listen to me; you have escaped the odious snares of your enemies, have you not?—Well! suppose it were thanks to the devotion of the venerable woman who has for you the tenderness of a mother, and that she were to ask you to forgive them—she, who saved you from their hands—what would you do then?”



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The Indian hung his head, and was silent. Profiting by his hesitation, Rodin continued: "I might say to you that I know your enemies, but that in the dread of seeing you commit some terrible imprudence, I would conceal their names from you forever. But no! I swear to you, that if the respectable person, who loves you as her son, should find it either right or useful that I should tell you their names, I will do so—until she has pronounced, I must be silent."

Djalma looked at Rodin with a dark and wrathful air. At this moment, Faringhea entered, and said to Rodin: "A man with a letter, not finding you at home, has been sent on here. Am I to receive it? He says it comes from the Abbe d'Aigrigny."

"Certainly," answered Rodin. "That is," he added, "with the prince's permission."

Djalma nodded in reply; Faringhea went out.

"You will excuse what I have done, dear prince. I expected this morning a very important letter. As it was late in coming to hand, I ordered it to be sent on."

A few minutes after, Faringhea returned with the letter, which he delivered to Rodin—and the half-caste again withdrew.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Adrienne and Djalma.

When Faringhea had quitted the room, Rodin took the letter from Abbe d'Aigrigny with one hand, and with the other appeared to be looking for something, first in the side pocket of his great-coat, then in the pocket behind, then in that of his trousers; and, not finding what he sought, he laid the letter on his knee, and felt himself all over with both hands, with an air of regret and uneasiness. The divers movements of this pantomime, performed in the most natural manner, were crowned by the exclamations.

"Oh! dear me! how vexatious!"

"What is the matter?" asked Djalma, starting from the gloomy silence in which he had been plunged for some minutes.

"Alas! my dear prince!" replied Rodin, "the most vulgar and puerile accident may sometimes cause the greatest inconvenience. I have forgotten or lost my spectacles. Now, in this twilight, with the very poor eyesight that years of labor have left me, it will be absolutely impossible for me to read this most important letter—and an immediate answer is expected—most simple and categorical—a yes or a no. Times presses; it is really most annoying. If," added Rodin, laying great stress on his words, without looking



at Djalma, but so as the prince might remark it; “if only some one would render me the service to read it for me; but there is no one—no—one!”

“Father,” said Djalma, obligingly, “shall I read it for you. When I have finished it, I shall forget what I have read.”

“You?” cried Rodin, as if the proposition of the Indian had appeared to him extravagant and dangerous; “it is impossible, prince, for you to read this letter.”

“Then excuse my having offered,” said Djalma mildly.



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“And yet,” resumed Rodin, after a moment’s reflection, and as if speaking to himself, “why not?”

And he added, addressing Djalma: “Would you really be so obliging, my dear prince? I should not have ventured to ask you this service.”

So saying, Rodin delivered the letter to Djalma, who read aloud as follows: “Your visit this morning to Saint-Dizier House can only be considered, from what I hear, as a new act of aggression on your part.

“Here is the last proposition I have to make. It may be as fruitless as the step I took yesterday, when I called upon you in the Rue Clovis.

“After that long and painful explanation, I told you that I would write to you. I keep my promise, and here is my ultimatum.

“First of all, a piece of advice. Beware! If you are determined to maintain so unequal a struggle, you will be exposed even to the hatred of those whom you so foolishly seek to protect. There are a thousand ways to ruin you with them, by enlightening them as to your protects. It will be proved to them, that you have shared in the plat, which you now pretend to reveal, not from generosity, but from cupidity.” Though Djalma had the delicacy to feel that the least question on the subject of this letter would be a serious indiscretion, he could not forbear turning his head suddenly towards the Jesuit, as he read the last passage.

“Oh, yes! it relates to me. Such as you see me, my dear prince,” added he, glancing at his shabby clothes, “I am accused of cupidity.”

“And who are these people that you protect?”

“Those I protect?” said Rodin feigning some hesitation, as if he had been embarrassed to find an answer; “who are those I protect? Hem—hem—I will tell you. They are poor devils without resources; good people without a penny, having only a just cause on their side, in a lawsuit in which they are engaged. They are threatened with destruction by powerful parties—very powerful parties; but, happily, these latter are known to me, and I am able to unmask them. What else could have been? Being myself poor and weak, I range myself naturally on the side of the poor and weak. But continue, I beg of you.”

Djalma resumed: “You have therefore every-thing to fear if you persist in your hostility, and nothing to gain by taking the side of those whom you call your friends. They might more justly be termed your dupes, for your disinterestedness would be inexplicable, were it sincere. It must therefore conceal some after-thought of cupidity.

“Well! in that view of the case, we can offer you ample compensation—with this difference, that your hopes are now entirely founded on the probable gratitude of your



friends, a very doubtful chance at the best, whereas our offers will be realized on the instant. To speak clearly, this is what we ask, what we exact of you. This very night, before twelve, you must have left Paris, and engage not to return for six months.” Djalma could not repress a movement of surprise, and looked at Rodin.

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“Quite natural,” said the latter; “the cause of my poor friends would be judged by that time, and I should be unable to watch over them. You see how it is, my dear prince,” added Rodin, with bitter indignation. “But please continue, and excuse me for having interrupted you; though, indeed, such impudence disgusts me.”

Djalma continued: “That we may be certain of your removal from Paris for six months, you will go to the house of one of our friends in Germany. You will there be received with generous hospitality, but forcibly detained until the expiration of the term.”

“Yes, yes! a voluntary prison,” said Rodin.

“On these conditions, you will receive a pension of one thousand francs a month, to begin from your departure from Paris, ten thousand francs down, and twenty thousand at the end of the six months—the whole to be completely secured to you. Finally, at the end of the six months, we will place you in a position both honorable and independent.”

Djalma having stopped short, with involuntary indignation, Rodin said to him: “Let me beg you to continue, my dear prince. Read to the end, and it will give you some idea of what passes in the midst of our civilization.”

Djalma resumed: “You know well enough the course of affairs, and what we are, to feel that in providing for your absence, we only wish to get rid of an enemy, not very dangerous, but rather troublesome. Do not be blinded by your first success. The results of your denunciation will be stifled, because they are calumnious. The judge who received your evidence will soon repent his odious partiality. You may make what use you please of this letter. We know what we write, to whom we write, and how we write. You will receive this letter at three o’clock; if by four o’clock we have not your full and complete acceptance, written with your own hand at the bottom of this letter, war must commence between us—and not from to-morrow, but on the instant.”

Having finished reading the letter, Djalma looked at Rodin, who said to him: “Permit me to summon Faringhea.”

He rang the bell, and the half-caste appeared. Rodin took the letter from the hands of Djalma, tore it into halves, rubbed it between his palms, so as to make a sort of a ball, and said to the half-caste, as he returned it to him: “Give this palter to the person who waits for it, and tell him that is my only answer to his shameless and insolent letter; you understand me—this shameless and insolent letter.”

“I understand.” said the half-caste; and he went out.

“This will perhaps be a dangerous war for you, father, said the Indian, with interest.

“Yes, dear prince, it may be dangerous, but I am not like you; I have no wish to kill my enemies, because they are cowardly and wicked. I fight them under the shield of the



law. Imitate me in this.” Then, seeing that the countenance of Djalma darkened, he added: “I am wrong. I will advise you no more on this subject. Only, let us defer the decision to the judgment of your noble and motherly protectress. I shall see her to-morrow; if she consents, I will tell you the names of your enemies. If not—not.”



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“And this woman, this second mother,” said Djalma, “is her character such, that I can rely on her judgment?”

“She!” cried Rodin, clasping his hands, and speaking with increased excitement. “Why, she is the most noble, the most generous, the most valiant being upon earth!—why, if you were really her son, and she loved you with all the strength of maternal affection, and a case arose in which you had to choose between an act of baseness and death, she would say to you: ‘Die!’ though she might herself die with you.”

“Oh, noble woman! so was my mother!” cried Djalma, with enthusiasm.

“Yes,” resumed Rodin, with growing energy, as he approached the window concealed by the shade, towards which he threw an oblique and anxious glance, “if you would imagine your protectress, think only of courage, uprightness, and loyalty personified. Oh! she has the chivalrous frankness of the brave man, joined with the high-souled dignity of the woman, who not only never in her life told a falsehood, never concealed a single thought, but who would rather die than give way to the least of those sentiments of craft and dissimulation, which are almost forced upon ordinary women by the situation in which they are placed.”

It is difficult to express the admiration which shone upon the countenance of Djalma, as he listened to this description. His eyes sparkled, his cheeks glowed, his heart palpitated with enthusiasm.

“That is well, noble heart!” said Rodin to him, drawing still nearer to the blind; “I love to see your soul sparkle through your eyes, on hearing me speak thus of your unknown protectress. Oh! but she is worthy of the pious adoration which noble hearts and great characters inspire!”

“Oh! I believe you,” cried Djalma, with enthusiasm; “my heart is full of admiration and also of astonishment, for my mother is no more, and yet such a woman exists!”

“Yes, she exists. For the consolation of the afflicted, for the glory of her sex, she exists. For the honor of truth, and the shame of falsehood, she exists. No lie, no disguise, has ever tainted her loyalty, brilliant and heroic as the sword of a knight. It is but a few days ago that this noble woman spoke to me these admirable words, which, in all my life, I shall not forget: ‘Sir,’ she said, ‘if ever I suspect any one that I love or esteem—’”

Rodin did not finish. The shade, so violently shaken that the spring broke, was drawn up abruptly, and, to the great astonishment of Djalma, Mdlle. de Cardoville appeared before him. Adrienne’s cloak had fallen from her shoulders, and in the violence of the movement with which she had approached the blind, her bonnet, the strings of which were untied, had also fallen. Having left home suddenly, with only just time to throw a mantle over the picturesque and charming costume which she often chose to wear

when alone, she appeared so radiant with beauty to Djalma's dazzled eyes, in the centre of those leaves and flowers, that the Indian believed himself under the influence of a dream.



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With clasped hands, eyes wide open, the body slightly bent forward, as if in the act of prayer, he stood petrified with admiration, Mdlle. de Cardoville, much agitated, and her countenance glowing with emotion, remained on the threshold of the greenhouse, without entering the room. All this had passed in less time than it takes to describe it. Hardly had the blind been raised, than Rodin, feigning surprise, exclaimed: "You here, madame?"

"Oh, sir!" said Adrienne, in an agitated voice, "I come to terminate the phrase which you have commenced. I told you, that when a suspicion crossed my mind, I uttered it aloud to the person by whom it was inspired. Well! I confess it: I have failed in this honesty. I came here as a spy upon you, when your answer to the Abbe d'Aigrigny was giving me a new pledge of your devotion and sincerity. I doubted your uprightness at the moment when you were bearing testimony to my frankness. For the first time in my life, I stooped to deceit; this weakness merits punishment, and I submit to it—demands reparation, and I make it—calls for apologies, and I tender them to you." Then turning towards Djalma, she added: "Now, prince, I am no longer mistress of my secret. I am your relation, Mdlle. de Cardoville; and I hope you will accept from a sister the hospitality that you did not refuse from a mother."

Djalma made no reply. Plunged in ecstatic contemplation of this sudden apparition, which surpassed his wildest and most dazzling visions, he felt a sort of intoxication, which, paralyzing the power of thought, concentrated all his faculties in the one sense of sight; and just as we sometimes seek in vain to satisfy unquenchable thirst, the burning look of the Indian sought, as it were, with devouring avidity, to take in all the rare perfections of the young lady. Verily, never had two more divine types of beauty met face to face. Adrienne and Djalma were the very ideal of a handsome youth and maiden. There seemed to be something providential in the meeting of these two natures, so young and so vivacious, so generous and so full of passion, so heroic and so proud, who, before coming into contact, had, singularly enough, each learned the moral worth of the other; for if, at the words of Rodin, Djalma had felt arise in his heart an admiration, as lively as it was sudden, for the valiant and generous qualities of that unknown benefactress, whom he now discovered in Mdlle. de Cardoville, the latter had, in her turn, been moved, affected, almost terrified, by the interview she had just overheard, in which Djalma had displayed the nobleness of his soul, the delicate goodness of his heart, and the terrible transports of his temper. Then she had not been able to repress a movement of astonishment, almost admiration, at sight of the surprising beauty of the prince; and soon after, a strange, painful sentiment, a sort of electric shock, seemed to penetrate all her being, as her eyes encountered Djalma's.



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Cruelly agitated, and suffering deeply from this agitation, she tried to dissemble the impression she had received, by addressing Rodin, to apologize for having suspected him. But the obstinate silence of the Indian redoubled the lady's painful embarrassment. Again raising her eyes towards the prince, to invite him to respond to her fraternal offer, she met his ardent gaze wildly fixed upon her, and she looked once more with a mixture of fear, sadness, and wounded pride; then she congratulated herself on having foreseen the inexorable necessity of keeping Djalma at a distance from her, such apprehension did this ardent and impetuous nature already inspire. Wishing to put an end to her present painful situation, she said to Rodin, in a low and trembling voice, "Pray, sir, speak to the prince; repeat to him my offers. I cannot remain longer." So saying, Adrienne turned, as if to rejoin Florine. But, at the first step, Djalma sprang towards her with the bound of a tiger, about to be deprived of his prey. Terrified by the expression of wild excitement which inflamed the Indian's countenance, the young lady drew back with a loud scream.

At this, Djalma remembered himself, and all that had passed. Pale with regret and shame, trembling, dismayed, his eyes streaming with tears, and all his features marked with an expression of the most touching despair, he fell at Adrienne's feet, and lifting his clasped hands towards her, said in a soft, supplicating, timid voice: "Oh, remain! remain! do not leave me. I have waited for you so long!" To this prayer, uttered with the timid simplicity of a child, and a resignation which contrasted strangely with the savage violence that had so frightened Adrienne, she replied, as she made a sign to Florine to prepare for their departure: "Prince, it is impossible for me to remain longer here."

"But you will return?" said Djalma, striving to restrain his tears. "I shall see you again?"

"Oh, no! never—never!" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a failing voice. Then, profiting by the stupor into which her answer had thrown Djalma, Adrienne disappeared rapidly behind the plants in the greenhouse.

Florine was hastening to rejoin her mistress, when, just at the moment she passed before Rodin, he said to her in a low, quick voice: "To-morrow we must finish with the hunchback." Florine trembled in every limb, and, without answering Rodin, disappeared, like her mistress, behind the plants. Broken, overpowered, Djalma remained upon his knees, with his head resting on his breast. His countenance expressed neither rage nor excitement, but a painful stupor; he wept silently. Seeing Rodin approach him, he rose, but with so tremulous a step, that he could hardly reach the divan, on which he sank down, hiding his face in his hands.

Then Rodin, advancing, said to him in a mild and insinuating tone: "Alas! I feared what has happened. I did not wish you to see your benefactress; and if I told you she was old, do you know why, dear prince?"



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Djalma, without answering, let his hands fall upon his knees, and turned towards Rodin a countenance still bathed in tears.

“I knew that Mdlle. de Cardoville was charming, and at your age it is so easy to fall in love,” continued Rodin; “I wished to spare you that misfortune, my dear prince, for your beautiful protectress passionately loves a handsome young man of this town.”

Upon these words, Djalma suddenly pressed both hands to his heart, as if he felt a piercing stab, uttered a cry of savage grief, threw back his head, and fell fainting upon the divan.

Rodin looked at him coldly for some seconds, and then said as he went away, brushing his old hat with his elbow,

“Come! it works—it works!”

CHAPTER XLV.

The consultation.

It is night. It has just struck nine. It is the evening of that day on which Mdlle. de Cardoville first found herself in the presence of Djalma. Florine, pale, agitated, trembling, with a candle in her hand, had just entered a bedroom, plainly but comfortably furnished. This room was one of the apartments occupied by Mother Bunch, in Adrienne’s house. They were situated on the ground-floor, and had two entrances. One opened on the garden, and the other on the court-yard. From this side came the persons who applied to the workgirl for succor; an ante-chamber in which they waited, a parlor in which they were received, constituted Mother Bunch’s apartments, along with the bedroom, which Florine had just entered, looking about her with an anxious and alarmed air, scarcely touching the carpet with the tips of her satin shoes, holding her breath, and listening at the least noise.

Placing the candle upon the chimney-piece, she took a rapid survey of the chamber, and approached the mahogany desk, surmounted by a well-filled bookcase. The key had been left in the drawers of this piece of furniture, and they were all three examined by Florine. They contained different petitions from persons in distress, and various, notes in the girl’s handwriting. This was not what Florine wanted. Three cardboard boxes were placed in pigeon-holes beneath the bookcase. These also were vainly explored, and Florine, with a gesture of vexation, looked and listened anxiously; then, seeing a chest of drawers, she made therein a fresh and useless search. Near the foot of the bed was a little door, leading to a dressing-room. Florine entered it, and looked—at first without success—into a large wardrobe, in which were suspended several black dresses, recently made for Mother Bunch, by order of Mdlle. de Cardoville.



Perceiving, at the bottom of this wardrobe, half hidden beneath a cloak, a very shabby little trunk, Florine opened it hastily, and found there, carefully folded up, the poor old garments in which the work-girl had been clad when she first entered this opulent mansion.

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Florine started—an involuntary emotion contracted her features; but considering that she had not liberty to indulge her feelings, but only to obey Rodin's implacable orders, she hastily closed both trunk and wardrobe, and leaving the dressing-room, returned into the bed-chamber. After having again examined the writing-stand, a sudden idea occurred to her. Not content with once more searching the cardboard boxes, she drew out one of them from the pigeon-hole, hoping to find what she sought behind the box: her first attempt failed, but the second was more successful. She found behind the middle box a copy-book of considerable thickness. She started in surprise, for she had expected something else; yet she took the manuscript, opened it, and rapidly turned over the leaves. After having perused several pages, she manifested her satisfaction, and seemed as if about to put the book in her pocket; but after a moment's reflection, she replaced it where she had found it, arranged everything in order, took her candle, and quitted the apartment without being discovered—of which, indeed, she had felt pretty sure, knowing that Mother Bunch would be occupied with Mdlle. de Cardoville for some hours.

The day after Florine's researches, Mother Bunch, alone in her bed chamber, was seated in an arm-chair, close to a good fire. A thick carpet covered the floor; through the window-curtains could be seen the lawn of a large garden; the deep silence was only interrupted by the regular ticking of a clock, and the crackling of the wood. Her hands resting on the arms of the chair, she gave way to a feeling of happiness, such as she had never so completely enjoyed since she took up her residence at the hotel. For her, accustomed so long to cruel privations, there was a kind of inexpressible charm in the calm silence of this retreat—in the cheerful aspect of the garden, and above all, in the consciousness that she was indebted for this comfortable position, to the resignation and energy she had displayed, in the thick of the many severe trials which now ended so happily. An old woman, with a mild and friendly countenance, who had been, by express desire of Adrienne, attached to the hunchback's service, entered the room and said to her: "Mademoiselle, a young man wishes to speak to you on pressing business. He gives his name as Agricola Baudoin."

At this name, Mother Bunch uttered an exclamation of surprise and joy, blushed slightly, rose and ran to the door which led to the parlor in which was Agricola.

"Good-morning, dear sister," said the smith, cordially embracing the young girl, whose cheeks burned crimson beneath those fraternal kisses.

"Ah, me!" cried the sempstress on a sudden, as she looked anxiously at Agricola; "what is that black band on your forehead? You have been wounded!"

"A mere nothing," said the smith, "really nothing. Do not think of it. I will tell you all about that presently. But first, I have things of importance to communicate."



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“Come into my room, then; we shall be alone,” Mother Bunch, as she went before Agricola.

Notwithstanding the expression of uneasiness which was visible on the countenance of Agricola, he could not forbear smiling with pleasure as he entered the room and looked around him.

“Excellent, my poor sister! this is how I would always have you lodged. I recognize here the hand of Mdlle. de Cardoville. What a heart! what a noble mind!—Dost know, she wrote to me the day before yesterday, to thank me for what I had done for her, and sent me a gold pin (very plain), which she said I need not hesitate to accept, as it had no other value but that of having been worn by her mother! You can’t tell how much I was affected by the delicacy of this gift!”

“Nothing must astonish you from a heart like hers,” answered the hunchback. “But the wound—the wound?”

“Presently, my good sister; I have so many things to tell you. Let us begin by what is most pressing, for I want you to give me some good advice in a very serious case. You know how much confidence I have in your excellent heart and judgment. And then, I have to ask of you a service—oh! a great service,” added the smith, in an earnest, and almost solemn tone, which astonished his hearer. “Let us begin with what is not personal to myself.”

“Speak quickly.”

“Since my mother went with Gabriel to the little country curacy he has obtained, and since my father lodges with Marshal Simon and the young ladies, I have resided, you know, with my mates, at M. Hardy’s factory, in the common dwelling-house. Now, this morning but first, I must tell you that M. Hardy, who has lately returned from a journey, is again absent for a few days on business. This morning, then, at the hour of breakfast, I remained at work a little after the last stroke of the bell; I was leaving the workshop to go to our eating-room, when I saw entering the courtyard, a lady who had just got out of a hackney-coach. I remarked that she was fair, though her veil was half down; she had a mild and pretty countenance, and her dress was that of a fashionable lady. Struck with her paleness, and her anxious, frightened air, I asked her if she wanted anything. ‘Sir,’ said she to me, in a trembling voice, and as if with a great effort, ‘do you belong to this factory?’—‘Yes, madame.’—‘M. Hardy is then in clanger?’ she exclaimed.—‘M. Hardy, madame? He has not yet returned home.’—‘What!’ she went on, ‘M. Hardy did not come hither yesterday evening? Was he not dangerously wounded by some of the machinery?’ As she said these words, the poor young lady’s lips trembled, and I saw large tears standing in her eyes. ‘Thank God, madame! all this is entirely false,’ said I, ‘for M. Hardy has not returned, and indeed is only expected by to-morrow or the day



after.'—'You are quite sure that he has not returned! quite sure that he is not hurt?' resumed the pretty young lady, drying her eyes.—'Quite sure,



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madame; if M. Hardy were in danger, I should not be so quiet in talking to you about him.'—'Oh! thank God! thank God!' cried the young lady. Then she expressed to me her gratitude, with so happy, so feeling an air, that I was quite touched by it. But suddenly, as if then only she felt ashamed of the step she had taken, she let down her veil, left me precipitately, went out of the court-yard, and got once more into the hackney-coach that had brought her. I said to myself: 'This is a lady who takes great interest in M. Hardy, and has been alarmed by a false report.'

"She loves him, doubtless," said Mother Bunch, much moved, "and, in her anxiety, she perhaps committed an act of imprudence, in coming to inquire after him."

"It is only too true. I saw her get into the coach with interests, for her emotion had infected me. The coach started—and what did I see a few seconds after? A cab, which the young lady could not have perceived, for it had been hidden by an angle of the wall; and, as it turned round the corner, I distinguished perfectly a man seated by the driver's side, and making signs to him to take the same road as the hackney-coach."

"The poor young lady was followed," said Mother Bunch, anxiously.

"No doubt of it; so I instantly hastened after the coach, reached it, and through the blinds that were let down, I said to the young lady, whilst I kept running by the side of the coach door: 'Take care, madame; you are followed by a cab.'

"Well, Agricola! and what did she answer?"

"I heard her exclaim, 'Great Heaven!' with an accent of despair. The coach continued its course. The cab soon came up with me; I saw, by the side of the driver, a great, fat, ruddy man, who, having watched me running after the coach, no doubt suspected something, for he looked at me somewhat uneasily."

"And when does M. Hardy return?" asked the hunchback.

"To-morrow, or the day after. Now, my good sister, advise me. It is evident that this young lady loves M. Hardy. She is probably married, for she looked so embarrassed when she spoke to me, and she uttered a cry of terror on learning that she was followed. What shall I do? I wished to ask advice of Father Simon, but he is so very strict in such matters—and then a love affair, at his age!—while you are so delicate and sensible, my good sister, that you will understand it all."

The girl started, and smiled bitterly; Agricola did not perceive it, and thus continued: "So I said to myself, 'There is only Mother Bunch, who can give me good advice.' Suppose M. Hardy returns to-morrow, shall I tell him what has passed or not?"



“Wait a moment,” cried the other, suddenly interrupting Agricola, and appearing to recollect something; “when I went to St. Mary’s Convent, to ask for work of the superior, she proposed that I should be employed by the day, in a house in which I was to watch or, in other words, to act as a spy—”



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“What a wretch!”

“And do you know,” said the girl, “with whom I was to begin this odious trade? Why, with a Madame de-Fremont, or de Bremont, I do not remember which, a very religious woman, whose daughter, a young married lady, received visits a great deal too frequent (according to the superior) from a certain manufacturer.”

“What do you say?” cried Agricola. “This manufacturer must be—”

“M. Hardy. I had too many reasons to remember that name, when it was pronounced by the superior. Since that day, so many other events have taken place, that I had almost forgotten the circumstance. But it is probable that this young lady is the one of whom I heard speak at the convent.”

“And what interest had the superior of the convent to set a spy upon her?” asked the smith.

“I do not know; but it is clear that the same interest still exists, since the young lady was followed, and perhaps, at this hour, is discovered and dishonored. Oh! it is dreadful!” Then, seeing Agricola start suddenly, Mother Bunch added: “What, then, is the matter?”

“Yes—why not?” said the smith, speaking to himself; “why may not all this be the work of the same hand? The superior of a convent may have a private understanding with an abbe—but, then, for what end?”

“Explain yourself, Agricola,” said the girl. “And then,—where did you get your wound? Tell me that, I conjure you.”

“It is of my wound that I am just going to speak; for in truth, the more I think of it, the more this adventure of the young lady seems to connect itself with other facts.”

“How so?”

“You must know that, for the last few days, singular things are passing in the neighborhood of our factory. First, as we are in Lent, an abbe from Paris (a tall, fine-looking man, they say) has come to preach in the little village of Villiers, which is only a quarter of a league from our works. The abbe has found occasion to slander and attack M. Hardy in his sermons.”

“How is that?”

“M. Hardy has printed certain rules with regard to our work, and the rights and benefits he grants us. These rules are followed by various maxims as noble as they are simple; with precepts of brotherly love such as all the world can understand, extracted from different philosophies and different religions. But because M. Hardy has chosen what is



best in all religions, the abbe concludes that M. Hardy has no religion at all, and he has therefore not only attacked him for this in the pulpit, but has denounced our factory as a centre of perdition and damnable corruption, because, on Sundays, instead of going to listen to his sermons, or to drink at a tavern, our comrades, with their wives and children, pass their time in cultivating their little gardens, in reading, singing in chorus, or dancing together in the common dwelling house. The abbe has even gone so far as to say, that the neighborhood of such an assemblage of atheists, as he calls us, might draw down the anger of Heaven upon the country—that the hovering of Cholera was much talked of, and that very possibly, thanks to our impious presence, the plague might fall upon all our neighborhood.”



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“But to tell such things to ignorant people,” exclaimed Mother Bunch, “is likely to excite them to fatal actions.”

“That is just what the abbe wants.”

“What do you tell me?”

“The people of the environs, still more excited, no doubt by other agitators, show themselves hostile to the workmen of our factory. Their hatred, or at least their envy, has been turned to account. Seeing us live all together, well lodged, well warmed, and comfortably clad, active, gay, and laborious, their jealousy has been embittered by the sermons, and by the secret manoeuvres of some depraved characters, who are known to be bad workmen, in the employment of M. Tripeaud, our opposition. All this excitement is beginning to bear fruit; there have been already two or three fights between us and our neighbors. It was in one of these skirmishes that I received a blow with a stone on my head.”

“Is it not serious, Agricola?—are you quite sure?” said Mother Bunch, anxiously.

“It is nothing at all, I tell you. But the enemies of M. Hardy have not confined themselves to preaching. They have brought into play something far more dangerous.”

“What is that?”

“I, and nearly all my comrades, did our part in the three Revolutionary days of July; but we are not eager at present, for good reasons, to take up arms again. That is not everybody’s opinion; well, we do not blame others, but we have our own ideas; and Father Simon, who is as brave as his son, and as good a patriot as any one, approves and directs us. Now, for some days past, we find all about the factory, in the garden, in the courts, printed papers to this effect: ‘You are selfish cowards; because chance has given you a good master, you remain indifferent to the misfortunes of your brothers, and to the means of freeing them; material comforts have enervated your hearts.’”

“Dear me, Agricola! what frightful perseverance in wickedness!”

“Yes! and unfortunately these devices have their effect on some of our younger mates. As the appeal was, after all, to proud and generous sentiments, it has had some influence. Already, seeds of division have shown themselves in our workshops, where, before, all were united as brothers. A secret agitation now reigns there. Cold suspicion takes the place, with some, of our accustomed cordiality. Now, if I tell you that I am nearly sure these printed papers, thrown over the walls of our factory, to raise these little sparks of discord amongst us, have been scattered about by the emissaries of this same preaching abbe—would it not seem from all this, taken in conjunction with what



happened this morning to the young lady, that M. Hardy has of late numerous enemies?"

"Like you, I think it very fearful, Agricola," said the girl; "and it is so serious, that M. Hardy alone can take a proper decision on the subject. As for what happened this morning to the young lady, it appears to me, that, immediately on M. Hardy's return, you should ask for an interview with him, and, however delicate such a communication may be, tell him all that passed."



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“There is the difficulty. Shall I not seem as if wishing to pry into his secrets?”

“If the young lady had not been followed, I should have shared your scruples. But she was watched, and is evidently in danger. It is therefore, in my opinion, your duty to warn M. Hardy. Suppose (which is not improbable) that the lady is married; would it not be better, for a thousand reasons, that M. Hardy should know all?”

“You are right, my good sister; I will follow your advice. M. Hardy shall know everything. But now that we have spoken of others, I have to speak of myself—yes, of myself—for it concerns a matter, on which may depend the happiness of my whole life,” added the smith, in a tone of seriousness, which struck his hearer. “You know,” proceeded Agricola, after a moment’s silence, “that, from my childhood, I have never concealed anything from you—that I have told you everything—absolutely everything?”

“I know it, Agricola, I know it,” said the hunchback, stretching out her white and slender hand to the smith, who grasped it cordially, and thus continued: “When I say everything, I am not quite exact—for I have always concealed from you my little love-affairs—because, though we may tell almost anything to a sister, there are subjects of which we ought not to speak to a good and virtuous girl, such as you are.”

“I thank you, Agricola. I had remarked this reserve on your part,” observed the other, casting down her eyes, and heroically repressing the grief she felt; “I thank you.”

“But for the very reason, that I made it a duty never to speak to you of such love affairs, I said to myself, if ever it should happen that I have a serious passion—such a love as makes one think of marriage—oh! then, just as we tell our sister even before our father and mother, my good sister shall be the first to be informed of it.”

“You are very kind, Agricola.”

“Well then! the serious passion has come at last. I am over head and ears in love, and I think of marriage.”

At these words of Agricola, poor Mother Bunch felt herself for an instant paralyzed. It seemed as if all her blood was suddenly frozen in her veins. For some seconds, she thought she was going to die. Her heart ceased to beat; she felt it, not breaking, but melting away to nothing. Then, the first blasting emotion over, like those martyrs who found, in the very excitement of pain, the terrible power to smile in the midst of tortures, the unfortunate girl found, in the fear of betraying the secret of her fatal and ridiculous love, almost incredible energy. She raised her head, looked at the smith calmly, almost serenely, and said to him in a firm voice: “Ah! so, you truly love?”

“That is to say, my good sister, that, for the last four days, I scarcely live at all—or live only upon this passion.”

“It is only since four days that you have been in love?”

“Not more—but time has nothing to do with it.”



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“And is she very pretty?”

“Dark hair—the figure of a nymph—fair as a lily—blue eyes, as large as that—and as mild, as good as your own.”

“You flatter me, Agricola.”

“No, no, it is Angela that I flatter—for that’s her name. What a pretty one! Is it not, my good Mother Bunch?”

“A charming name,” said the poor girl, contrasting bitterly that graceful appellation with her own nickname, which the thoughtless Agricola applied to her without thinking of it. Then she resumed, with fearful calmness: “Angela? yes, it is a charming name!”

“Well, then! imagine to yourself, that this name is not only suited to her face, but to her heart. In a word, I believe her heart to be almost equal to yours.”

“She has my eyes—she has my heart,” said Mother Bunch, smiling. “It is singular, how like we are.”

Agricola did not perceive the irony of despair contained in these words. He resumed, with a tenderness as sincere as it was inexorable: “Do you think, my good girl, that I could ever have fallen seriously in love with any one, who had not in character, heart, and mind, much of you?”

“Come, brother,” said the girl, smiling—yes, the unfortunate creature had the strength to smile; “come, brother, you are in a gallant vein to day. Where did you make the acquaintance of this beautiful young person?”

“She is only the sister of one of my mates. Her mother is the head laundress in our common dwelling, and as she was in want of assistance, and we always take in preference the relations of members of the association, Mrs. Bertin (that’s the mother’s name) sent for her daughter from Lille, where she had been stopping with one of her aunts, and, for the last five days, she has been in the laundry. The first evening I saw her, I passed three hours, after work was over, in talking with her, and her mother and brother; and the next day, I felt that my heart was gone; the day after that, the feeling was only stronger—and now I am quite mad about her, and resolved on marriage—according as you shall decide. Do not be surprised at this; everything depends upon you. I shall only ask my father and mother’s leave, after I have yours.”

“I do not understand you, Agricola.”

“You know the utter confidence I have in the incredible instinct of your heart. Many times, you have said to me: ‘Agricola, love this person, love that person, have confidence in that other’—and never yet were you deceived. Well! you must now render



me the same service. You will ask permission of Mdlle. de Cardoville to absent yourself; I will take you to the factory: I have spoken of you to Mrs. Benin and her daughter, as of a beloved sister; and, according to your impression at sight of Angela, I will declare myself or not. This may be childishness, or superstition, on my part; but I am so made.”

“Be it so,” answered Mother Bunch, with heroic courage; “I will see Mdlle. Angela; I will tell you what I think of her—and that, mind you, sincerely.”



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"I know it. When will you come?"

"I must ask Mdlle. de Cardoville what day she can spare sue. I will let you know."

"Thanks, my good sister!" said Agricola warmly; then he added, with a smile: "Bring your best judgment with you—your full dress judgment."

"Do not make a jest of it, brother," said Mother Bunch, in a mild, sad voice; "it is a serious matter, for it concerns the happiness of your whole life."

At this moment, a modest knock was heard at the door. "Come in," said Mother Bunch. Florine appeared.

"My mistress begs that you will come to her, if you are not engaged," said Florine to Mother Bunch.

The latter rose, and, addressing the smith, said to him: "Please wait a moment, Agricola. I will ask Mdlle. de Cardoville what day I can dispose of, and I will come and tell you." So saying, the girl went out, leaving Agricola with Florine.

"I should have much wished to pay my respects to Mdlle. de Cardoville," said Agricola; "but I feared to intrude."

"My lady is not quite well, sir," said Florine, "and receives no one to day. I am sure, that as soon as she is better, she will be quite pleased to see you."

Here Mother Bunch returned, and said to Agricola: "If you can come for me to-morrow, about three o'clock, so as not to lose the whole day, we will go to the factory, and you can bring me back in the evening."

"Then, at three o'clock to-morrow, my good sister."

"At three to-morrow, Agricola."

The evening of that same day, when all was quiet in the hotel, Mother Bunch, who had remained till ten o'clock with Mdlle. de Cardoville, re entered her bedchamber, locked the door after her, and finding herself at length free and unrestrained, threw herself on her knees before a chair, and burst into tears. She wept long—very long. When her tears at length ceased to flow, she dried her eyes, approached the writing-desk, drew out one of the boxes from the pigeonhole, and, taking from this hiding-place the manuscript which Florine had so rapidly glanced over the evening before, she wrote in it during a portion of the night.



CHAPTER XLVI.

Mother Bunch's diary.

We have said that the hunchback wrote during a portion of the night, in the book discovered the previous evening by Florine, who had not ventured to take it away, until she had informed the persons who employed her of its contents, and until she had received their final orders on the subject. Let us explain the existence of this manuscript, before opening it to the reader. The day on which Mother Bunch first became aware of her love for Agricola, the first word of this manuscript had been written. Endowed with an essentially trusting character, yet always feeling herself restrained by the dread of ridicule—a dread which, in its painful exaggeration, was the workgirl's only weakness—to whom could the unfortunate creature have confided the secret of that fatal passion, if not to paper—that mute confidant of timid and suffering souls, that patient friend, silent and cold, who, if it makes no reply to heart rending complaints, at least always listens, and never forgets?



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When her heart was overflowing with emotion, sometimes mild and sad, sometimes harsh and bitter, the poor workgirl, finding a melancholy charm in these dumb and solitary outpourings of the soul, now clothed in the form of simple and touching poetry, and now in unaffected prose, had accustomed herself by degrees not to confine her confidences to what immediately related to Agricola, for though he might be mixed up with all her thoughts, for reflections, which the sight of beauty, of happy love, of maternity, of wealth, of misfortune, called up within her, were so impressed with the influence of her unfortunate personal position, that she would not even have dared to communicate them to him. Such, then, was this journal of a poor daughter of the people, weak, deformed, and miserable, but endowed with an angelic soul, and a fine intellect, improved by reading, meditation, and solitude; pages quite unknown, which yet contained many deep and striking views, both as regard men and things, taken from the peculiar standpoint in which fate had placed this unfortunate creature. The following lines, here and there abruptly interrupted or stained with tears, according to the current of her various emotions, on hearing of Agricola's deep love for Angela, formed the last pages of this journal:

"Friday, March 3d, 1832.

"I spent the night without any painful dreams. This morning, I rose with no sorrowful presentiment. I was calm and tranquil when Agricola came. He did not appear to me agitated. He was simple and affectionate as he always is. He spoke to me of events relating to M. Hardy, and then, without transition, without hesitation, he said to me: 'The last four days I have been desperately in love. The sentiment is so serious, that I think of marriage. I have come to consult you about it.' That was how this overwhelming revelation was made to me—naturally and cordially—I on one side of the hearth, and Agricola on the other, as if we had talked of indifferent things. And yet no more is needed to break one's heart. Some one enters, embraces you like a brother, sits down, talks—and then—Oh! Merciful heaven! my head wanders.

"I feel calmer now. Courage, my poor heart, courage!—Should a day of misfortune again overwhelm me, I will read these lines written under the impression of the most cruel grief I can ever feel, and I will say to myself: 'What is the present woe compared to that past?' My grief is indeed cruel! it is illegitimate, ridiculous, shameful: I should not dare to confess it, even to the most indulgent of mothers. Alas! there are some fearful sorrows, which yet rightly make men shrug their shoulders in pity or contempt. Alas! these are forbidden misfortunes. Agricola has asked me to go to-morrow, to see this young girl to whom he is so passionately attached, and whom he will marry, if the instinct of my heart should approve the marriage. This thought is the most painful of all those which have tortured me since he so pitilessly announced this love. Pitilessly? No, Agricola—no, my brother—forgive me this unjust cry of pain! Is it that you know, can even suspect, that I love you better than you love, better than you can ever love, this charming creature?



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“Dark-haired—the figure of a nymph—fair as a lily—with blue eyes—as large as that—and almost as mild as your own.”

“That is the portrait he drew of her. Poor Agricola! how would he have suffered, had he known that every one of his words was tearing my heart. Never did I so strongly feel the deep commiseration and tender pity, inspired by a good, affectionate being, who, in the sincerity of his ignorance, gives you your death-wound with a smile. We do not blame him—no—we pity him to the full extent of the grief that he would feel on learning the pain he had caused me. It is strange! but never did Agricola appear to me more handsome than this morning. His manly countenance was slightly agitated, as he spoke of the uneasiness of that pretty young lady. As I listened to him describing the agony of a woman who runs the risk of ruin for the man she loves, I felt my heart beat violently, my hands were burning, a soft languor floated over me—Ridiculous folly! As if I had any right to feel thus!

“I remember that, while he spoke, I cast a rapid glance at the glass. I felt proud that I was so well dressed; he had not even remarked it; but no matter—it seemed to me that my cap became me, that my hair shone finely, my gaze beamed mild—I found Agricola so handsome, that I almost began to think myself less ugly—no doubt, to excuse myself in my own eyes for daring to love him. After all, what happened to-day would have happened one day or another! Yes, that is consoling—like the thoughts that death is nothing, because it must come at last—to those who are in love with life! I have been always preserved from suicide—the last resource of the unfortunate, who prefer trusting in God to remaining amongst his creatures—by the sense of duty. One must not only think of self. And I reflected also ‘God is good—always good—since the most wretched beings find opportunities for love and devotion.’ How is it that I, so weak and poor, have always found means to be helpful and useful to some one?

“This very day I felt tempted to make an end with life—Agricola and his mother had no longer need of me.—Yes, but the unfortunate creatures whom Mdlle. de Cardoville has commissioned me to watch over?—but my benefactress herself, though she has affectionately reproached me with the tenacity of my suspicions in regard to that man? I am more than ever alarmed for her—I feel that she is more than ever in danger—more than ever—I have faith in the value of my presence near her. Hence, I must live. Live—to go to-morrow to see this girl, whom Agricola passionately loves? Good heaven! why have I always known grief, and never hate? There must be a bitter pleasure in hating. So many people hate!—Perhaps I may hate this girl—Angela, as he called her, when he said, with so much simplicity: ‘A charming name, is it not, Mother Bunch?’ Compare this name, which recalls an idea so full of grace, with the ironical symbol of my witch’s



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deformity! Poor Agricola! poor brother! goodness is sometimes as blind as malice, I see. Should I hate this young girl?—Why? Did she deprive me of the beauty which charms Agricola? Can I find fault with her for being beautiful? When I was not yet accustomed to the consequences of my ugliness, I asked myself, with bitter curiosity, why the Creator had endowed his creatures so unequally. The habit of pain has allowed me to reflect calmly, and I have finished by persuading myself, that to beauty and ugliness are attached the two most noble emotions of the soul—admiration and compassion. Those who are like me admire beautiful persons—such as Angela, such as Agricola—and these in their turn feel a couching pity for such as I am. Sometimes, in spite of one's self, one has very foolish hopes. Because Agricola, from a feeling of propriety had never spoken to me of his love affairs, I sometimes persuaded myself that he had none—that he loved me, and that the fear of ridicule alone was with him, as with me, an obstacle in the way of confessing it. Yes, I have even made verses on that subject—and those, I think, not the worst I have written.

“Mine is a singular position! If I love, I am ridiculous; if any love me, he is still more ridiculous. How did I come so to forget that, as to have suffered and to suffer what I do?—But blessed be that suffering, since it has not engendered hate—no; for I will not hate this girl—I will Perform a sister's part to the last; I will follow the guidance of my heart; I have the instinct of preserving others—my heart will lead and enlighten me. My only fear is, that I shall burst into tears when I see her, and not be able to conquer my emotion. Oh, then! what a revelation to Agricola—a discovery of the mad love he has inspired!—Oh, never! the day in which he knew that would be the last of my life. There would then be within me something stronger than duty—the longing to escape from shame—that incurable shame, that burns me like a hot iron. No, no; I will be calm. Besides, did I not just now, when with him bear courageously a terrible trial? I will be calm. My personal feelings must not darken the second sight, so clear for those I love. Oh! painful—painful task! for the fear of yielding involuntarily to evil sentiments must not render me too indulgent toward this girl. I might compromise Agricola's happiness, since my decision is to guide his choice. Poor creature that I am. How I deceive myself! Agricola asks my advice, because he thinks that I shall have not the melancholy courage to oppose his passion; or else he would say to me: 'No matter—I love; and I brave the future!'

“But then, if my advice, if the instincts of my heart, are not to guide him—if his resolution is taken beforehand—of what use will be to morrow's painful mission? Of what use? To obey him. Did he not say—'Come!' In thinking of my devotion for him, how many times, in the secret depths of my heart, I have asked myself if the thought had ever occurred to him to love me otherwise than as a sister; if it had ever struck him, what a devoted wife he would have in me! And why should it have occurred to him? As long as he wished, as long as he may still wish, I have been, and I shall be, as devoted to him, as if I were his wife, sister, or mother. Why should he desire what he already possesses?



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“Married to him—oh, God!—the dream is mad as ineffable. Are not such thoughts of celestial sweetness—which include all sentiments from sisterly to maternal love— forbidden to me, on pain of ridicule as distressing as if I wore dresses and ornaments, that my ugliness and deformity would render absurd? I wonder, if I were now plunged into the most cruel distress, whether I should suffer as much as I do, on hearing of Agricola’s intended marriage? Would hunger, cold, or misery diminish this dreadful dolor?—or is it the dread pain that would make me forget hunger, cold, and misery?”

“No, no; this irony is bitter. It is not well in me to speak thus. Why such deep grief? In what way have the affection, the esteem, the respect of Agricola, changed towards me? I complain—but how would it be, kind heaven! if, as, alas! too often happens, I were beautiful, loving, devoted, and he had chosen another, less beautiful, less loving, less devoted?—Should I not be a thousand times more unhappy? for then I might, I would have to blame him—whilst now I can find no fault with him, for never having thought of a union which was impossible, because ridiculous. And had he wished it, could I ever have had the selfishness to consent to it? I began to write the first pages of this diary as I began these last, with my heart steeped in bitterness—and as I went on, committing to paper what I could have intrusted to no one, my soul grew calm, till resignation came—Resignation, my chosen saint, who, smiling through her tears, suffers and loves, but hopes—never!”

These words were the last in the journal. It was clear, from the blots of abundant tears, that the unfortunate creature had often paused to weep.

In truth, worn out by so many emotions, Mother Bunch late in the night, had replaced the book behind the cardboard box, not that she thought it safer there than elsewhere (she had no suspicion of the slightest need for such precaution), but because it was more out of the way there than in any of the drawers, which she frequently opened in presence of other people. Determined to perform her courageous promise, and worthily accomplish her task to the end, she waited the next day for Agricola, and firm in her heroic resolution, went with the smith to M. Hardy’s factory. Florine, informed of her departure, but detained a portion of the day in attendance on Mlle. de Cardoville preferred waiting for night to perform the new orders she had asked and received, since she had communicated by letter the contents of Mother Bunch’s journal. Certain not to be surprised, she entered the workgirls’ chamber, as soon as the night was come.



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Knowing the place where she should find the manuscript, she went straight to the desk, took out the box, and then, drawing from her pocket a sealed letter, prepared to leave it in the place of the manuscript, which she was to carry away with her. So doing, she trembled so much, that she was obliged to support herself an instant by the table. Every good sentiment was not extinct in Florine's heart; she obeyed passively the orders she received, but she felt painfully how horrible and infamous was her conduct. If only herself had been concerned, she would no doubt have had the courage to risk all, rather than submit to this odious despotism; but unfortunately, it was not so, and her ruin would have caused the mortal despair of another person whom she loved better than life itself. She resigned herself, therefore, not without cruel anguish, to abominable treachery.

Though she hardly ever knew for what end she acted, and this was particularly the case with regard to the abstraction of the journal, she foresaw vaguely, that the substitution of this sealed letter for the manuscript would have fatal consequences for Mother Bunch, for she remembered Rodin's declaration, that "it was time to finish with the young sempstress."

What did he mean by those words? How would the letter that she was charged to put in the place of the diary, contribute to bring about this result? she did not know—but she understood that the clear-sighted devotion of the hunchback justly alarmed the enemies of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and that she (Florine) herself daily risked having her perfidy detected by the young needlewoman. This last fear put an end to the hesitations of Florine; she placed the letter behind the box, and, hiding the manuscript under her apron, cautiously withdrew from the chamber.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The diary continued.

Returned into her own room, some hours after she had concealed there the manuscript abstracted from Mother Bunch's apartment, Florine yielded to her curiosity, and determined to look through it. She soon felt a growing interest, an involuntary emotion, as she read more of these private thoughts of the young sempstress. Among many pieces of verse, which all breathed a passionate love for Agricola—a love so deep, simple, and sincere, that Florine was touched by it, and forgot the author's deformity—among many pieces of verse, we say, were divers other fragments, thoughts, and narratives, relating to a variety of facts. We shall quote some of them, in order to explain the profound impression that their perusal made upon Florine.

Fragments from the Diary.



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“This is my birthday. Until this evening, I had cherished a foolish hope. Yesterday, I went down to Mrs. Baudoin’s, to dress a little wound she had on her leg. When I entered the room, Agricola was there. No doubt he was talking of me to his mother, for they stopped when I came in, and exchanged a meaning smile. In passing by the drawers, I saw a pasteboard box, with a pincushion-lid, and I felt myself blushing with joy, as I thought this little present was destined for me, but I pretended not to see it. While I was on my knees before his mother, Agricola went out. I remarked that he took the little box with him. Never has Mrs. Baudoin been more tender and motherly than she was that morning. It appeared to me that she went to bed earlier than usual. ‘It is to send me away sooner,’ said I to myself, ‘that I may enjoy the surprise Agricola has prepared for me.’ How my heart beat, as I ran fast, very fast, up to my closet! I stopped a moment before opening the door, that my happiness might last the longer. At last I entered the room, my eyes swimming with tears of joy. I looked upon my table, my chair, my bed—there was nothing. The little box was not to be found. My heart sank within me. Then I said to myself: ‘It will be to-morrow—this is only the eve of my birthday.’ The day is gone. Evening is come. Nothing. The pretty box was not for me. It had a pincushion-cover. It was only suited for a woman. To whom has Agricola given it?”

“I suffer a good deal just now. It was a childish idea that I connected with Agricola’s wishing me many happy returns of the day. I am ashamed to confess it; but it might have proved to me, that he has not forgotten I have another name besides that of Mother Bunch, which they always apply to me. My susceptibility on this head is unfortunately so stubborn, that I cannot help feeling a momentary pang of mingled shame and sorrow, every time that I am called by that fairy-tale name, and yet I have had no other from infancy. It is for that very reason that I should have been so happy if Agricola had taken this opportunity to call me for once by my own humble name—Magdalen. Happily, he will never know these wishes and regrets!”

Deeper and deeper touched by this page of simple grief, Florine turned over several leaves, and continued:

“I have just been to the funeral of poor little Victorine Herbin, our neighbor. Her father, a journeyman upholsterer, is gone to work by the month, far from Paris. She died at nineteen, without a relation near her. Her agony was not long. The good woman who attended her to the last, told us that she only pronounced these words: ‘At last, oh at last!’ and that with an air of satisfaction, added the nurse. Dear child! she had become so pitiful. At fifteen, she was a rosebud—so pretty, so fresh-looking, with her light hair as soft as silk; but she wasted away by degrees—her trade of renovating mattresses killed her. She was slowly poisoned by the emanations from the wool.[26] They were all the worse, that she worked almost entirely for the poor, who have cheap stuff to lie upon.



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“She had the courage of a lion, and an angel’s resignation, She always said to me, in her low, faint voice, broken by a dry and frequent cough: ‘I have not long to live, breathing, as I do, lime and vitriol all day long. I spit blood, and have spasms that make me faint.’

“‘Why not change your trade?’ have I said to her.

“‘Where will I find the time to make another apprenticeship?’ she would answer; ‘and it is now too late. I feel that I am done for. It is not my fault,’ added the good creature, ‘for I did not choose my employment. My father would have it so; luckily he can do without me. And then, you see, when one is dead, one cares for nothing, and has no fear of “slop wages.”’

“Victorine uttered that sad, common phrase very sincerely, and with a sort of satisfaction. Therefore she died repeating: ‘At last!’

“It is painful to think that the labor by which the poor man earns his daily bread, often becomes a long suicide! I said this the other day to Agricola; he answered me that there were many other fatal employments; those who prepare aquafortis, white lead, or minium, for instance, are sure to take incurable maladies of which they die.

“‘Do you know,’ added Agricola, ‘what they say when they start for those fatal works?’—Why, ‘We are going to the slaughter-house.’

“That made me tremble with its terrible truth.

“‘And all this takes place in our day,’ said I to him, with an aching heart; ‘and it is well-known. And, out of so many of the rich and powerful, no one thinks of the mortality which decimates his brothers, thus forced to eat homicidal bread!’

“‘What can you expect, my poor sister,’ answered Agricola. ‘When men are to be incorporated, that they may get killed in war, all pains are taken with them. But when they are to be organized, so as to live in peace, no one cares about it, except M. Hardy, my master. People say, ‘Pooh! hunger, misery, and suffering of the laboring classes—what is that to us? that is not politics.’ ‘They are wrong,’ added Agricola; ‘*it is more than politics.*’

“As Victorine had not left anything to pay for the church service, there was only the presentation of the body under the porch; for there is not even a plain mass for the poor. Besides, as they could not give eighteen francs to the curate, no priest accompanied the pauper’s coffin to the common grave. If funerals, thus abridged and cut short, are sufficient in a religious point of view, why invent other and longer forms? Is it from cupidity?—If, on the other hand, they are not sufficient, why make the poor man the only victim of this insufficiency? But why trouble ourselves about the pomp, the



incense, the chants, of which they are either too sparing or too liberal? Of what use? and for what purpose? They are vain, terrestrial things, for which the soul reckons nothing, when, radiant, it ascends towards its



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Creator. Yesterday, Agricola made me read an article in a newspaper, in which violent blame and bitter irony are by turns employed, to attack what they call the baneful tendencies of some of the lower orders, to improve themselves, to write, to read the poets, and sometimes to make verses. Material enjoyments are forbidden us by poverty. Is it humane to reproach us for seeking the enjoyments of the mind? What harm can it do any one if every evening, after a day's toil, remote from all pleasure, I amuse myself, unknown to all, in making a few verses, or in writing in this journal the good or bad impressions I have received? Is Agricola the worse workman, because, on returning home to his mother, he employs Sunday in composing some of those popular songs, which glorify the fruitful labors of the artisan, and say to all, Hope and brotherhood! Does he not make a more worthy use of his time than if he spent it in a tavern? Ah! those who blame us for these innocent and noble diversions, which relieve our painful toils and sufferings, deceive themselves when they think, that, in proportion as the intellect is raised and refined, it is more difficult to bear with privations and misery, and that so the irritation increases against the luckier few.

“Admitting even this to be the case—and it is not so—is it not better to have an intelligent, enlightened enemy, to whose heart and reason you may address yourself, than a stupid, ferocious, implacable foe? But no; enmities disappear as the mind becomes enlightened, and the horizon of compassion extends itself. We thus learn to understand moral afflictions. We discover that the rich also have to suffer intense pains, and that brotherhood in misfortune is already a link of sympathy. Alas! they also have to mourn bitterly for idolized children, beloved mistresses, reverend mothers; with them, also, especially amongst the women, there are, in the height of luxury and grandeur, many broken hearts, many suffering souls, many tears shed in secret. Let them not be alarmed. By becoming their equals in intelligence, the people will learn to pity the rich, if good and unhappy—and to pity them still more if rejoicing in wickedness.

“What happiness! what a joyful day! I am giddy with delight. Oh, truly, man is good, humane, charitable. Oh, yes! the Creator has implanted within him every generous instinct—and, unless he be a monstrous exception, he never does evil willingly. Here is what I saw just now. I will not wait for the evening to write it down, for my heart would, as it were, have time to cool. I had gone to carry home some work that was wanted in a hurry. I was passing the Place du Temple. A few steps from me I saw a child, about twelve years old at most, with bare head, and feet, in spite of the severe weather, dressed in a shabby, ragged smock frock and trousers, leading by the bridle a large cart-horse, with his harness still on. From time to time the horse stopped short, and refused to advance.



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The child, who had no whip, tugged in vain at the bridle. The horse remained motionless. Then the poor little fellow cried out: 'O dear, O dear!' and began to weep bitterly, looking round him as if to implore the assistance of the passers-by. His dear little face was impressed with so heart piercing a sorrow, that, without reflecting, I made an attempt at which I can now only smile, I must have presented so grotesque a figure. I am horribly afraid of horses, and I am still more afraid of exposing myself to public gaze. Nevertheless, I took courage, and, having an umbrella in my hand, I approached the horse, and with the impetuosity of an ant that strives to move a large stone with a little piece of straw, I struck with all my strength on the croup of the rebellious animal. 'Oh, thanks, my good lady!' exclaimed the child, drying his eyes: 'hit him again, if you please. Perhaps he will get up.'

"I began again, heroically; but, alas! either from obstinacy or laziness, the horse bent his knees, and stretched himself out upon the ground; then, getting entangled with his harness, he tore it, and broke his great wooden collar. I had drawn back quickly, for fear of receiving a kick. Upon this new disaster, the child could only throw himself on his knees in the middle of the street, clasping his hands and sobbing, and exclaiming in a voice of despair: 'Help! help!'

"The call was heard; several of the passers-by gathered round, and a more efficacious correction than mine was administered to the restive horse, who rose in a vile state, and without harness.

"'My master will beat me,' cried the poor child, as his tears redoubled; 'I am already two hours after time, for the horse would not go, and now he has broken his harness. My master will beat me, and turn me away. Oh dear! what will become of me! I have no father nor mother.'

"At these words, uttered with a heart-rending accent, a worthy old clothes-dealer of the Temple, who was amongst the spectators, exclaimed, with a kindly air: 'No father nor mother! Do not grieve so, my poor little fellow; the Temple can supply everything. We will mend the harness, and, if my gossips are like me, you shall not go away bareheaded or barefooted in such weather as this.'

"This proposition was greeted with acclamation; they led away both horse and child; some were occupied in mending the harness, then one supplied a cap, another a pair of stockings, another some shoes, and another a good jacket; in a quarter of an hour the child was warmly clad, the harness repaired, and a tall lad of eighteen, brandishing a whip, which he cracked close to the horse's ears, by way of warning, said to the little boy, who, gazing first at his new clothes, and then at the good woman, believed himself the hero of a fairy-tale. 'Where does your governor live, little 'un?'

“On the Quai du Canal-Saint-Martin, sir,’ answered he, in a voice trembling with joy.



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“‘Very good,’ said the young man, ‘I will help you take home the horse, who will go well enough with me, and I will tell the master that the delay was no fault of your’n. A balky horse ought not to be trusted to a child of your age.’

“At the moment of setting out, the poor little fellow said timidly to the good dame, as he took off his cap to her: ‘Will you let me kiss you, ma’am?’

“His eyes were full of tears of gratitude. There was heart in that child. This scene of popular charity gave me delightful emotions. As long as I could, I followed with my eyes the tall young man and the child, who now could hardly keep up with the pace of the horse, rendered suddenly docile by fear of the whip.

“Yes! I repeat it with pride; man is naturally good and helpful. Nothing could have been more spontaneous than this movement of pity and tenderness in the crowd, when the poor little fellow exclaimed: ‘What will become of me? I have no father or mother!’

“‘Unfortunate child!’ said I to myself. ‘No father nor mother. In the hands of a brutal master, who hardly covers him with a few rags, and ill treats him into the bargain. Sleeping, no doubt in the corner of a stable. Poor little, fellow! and yet so mild and good, in spite of misery and misfortune. I saw it—he was even more grateful than pleased at the service done him. But perhaps this good natural disposition, abandoned without support or counsel, or help, and exasperated by bad treatment, may become changed and embittered—and then will come the age of the passions—the bad temptations—’

“Oh! in the deserted poor, virtue is doubly saintly and respectable!

“This morning, after having (as usual) gently reproached me for not going to mass, Agricola’s mother said to me these words, so touching in her simple and believing mouth, ‘Luckily, I pray for you and myself too, my poor girl; the good God will hear me, and you will only go, I hope, to Purgatory.’

“Good mother; angelic soul! she spoke those words in so grave and mild a tone, with so strong a faith in the happy result of her pious intercession, that I felt my eyes become moist, and I threw myself on her neck, as sincerely grateful as if I had believed in Purgatory. This day has been a lucky one for me. I hope I have found work, which luck I shall owe to a young person full of heart and goodness, she is to take me to-morrow to St. Mary’s Convent, where she thinks she can find me employment.”

Florine, already much moved by the reading, started at this passage in which Mother Bunch alluded to her, ere she continued as follows:

“Never shall I forget with what touching interest, what delicate benevolence, this handsome young girl received me, so poor, and so unfortunate. It does not astonish



me, for she is attached to the person of Mdlle. de Cardoville. She must be worthy to reside with Agricola's benefactress. It will always be dear and pleasant to me to remember her name. It is graceful and pretty as her face; it is Florine. I am nothing, I have nothing—but if the fervent prayers of a grateful heart might be heard, Mdlle. Florine would be happy, very happy. Alas! I am reduced to say prayers for her—only prayers—for I can do nothing but remember and love her!"

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These lines, expressing so simply the sincere gratitude of the hunchback, gave the last blow to Florine's hesitations. She could no longer resist the generous temptation she felt. As she read these last fragments of the journal, her affection and respect for Mother Bunch made new progress. More than ever she felt how infamous it was in her to expose to sarcasms and contempt the most secret thoughts of this unfortunate creature. Happily, good is often as contagious as evil. Electrified by all that was warm, noble, and magnanimous in the pages she had just read, Florine bathed her failing virtue in that pure and vivifying source, and, yielding, at last to one of those good impulses which sometimes carried her away, she left the room with the manuscript in her hand, determined, if Mother Bunch had not yet returned, to replace it—resolved to tell Rodin that, this second time, her search for the journal had been vain, the sempstress having no doubt discovered the first attempt.

[26] In the *Ruche Populaire*, a working man's organ, are the following particulars:

“Carding Mattresses.—The dust which flies out of the wool makes carding destructive to health in any case, but trade adulterations enhance the danger. In sticking sheep, the skin gets blood-spotted; it has to be bleached to make it salable. Lime is the main whitener, and some of it clings to the wool after the process. The dresser (female, most often) breathes in the fine dust, and, by lung and other complaints, is far from seldom deplorably situated; the majority sicken of it and give up the trade, while those who keep to it, at the very least, suffer with a catarrh or asthma that torments them until death.

“As for horsehair, the very best is not pure. You can judge what the inferior quality is, from the workgirls calling it vitriol hair, because it is the refuse or clippings from goats and swine, washed in vitriol, boiled in dyes, *etc.*, to burn and disguise such foreign bodies as straw, thorns, splinters, and even bits of skin, not worth picking out. The dust rising when a mass of this is beaten, makes as many ravages as the lime-wool.”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The discovery.

A little while before Florine made up her mind to atone for her shameful breach of confidence, Mother Bunch had returned from the factory, after accomplishing to the end her painful task. After a long interview with Angela, struck, like Agricola, with the ingenuous grace, sense, and goodness, with which the young girl was endowed, Mother Bunch had the courageous frankness to advise the smith to enter into this marriage. The following scene took place whilst Florine, still occupied in reading the journal, had not yet taken the praiseworthy resolution of replacing it. It was ten o'clock at night. The workgirl, returned to Cardoville House, had just entered her chamber. Worn out by so many emotions, she had

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thrown herself into a chair. The deepest silence reigned in the house. It was now and then interrupted by the souging of a high wind, which raged without and shook the trees in the garden. A single candle lighted the room, which was papered with dark green. That peculiar tint, and the hunchback's black dress, increased her apparent paleness. Seated in an arm-chair by the side of the fire, with her head resting upon her bosom, her hands crossed upon her knees, the work-girl's countenance was melancholy and resigned; on it was visible the austere satisfaction which is felt by the consciousness of a duty well performed.

Like all those who, brought up in the merciless school of misfortune, no longer exaggerate the sentiment of sorrow, too familiar and assiduous a guest to be treated as a stranger, Mother Bunch was incapable of long yielding to idle regrets and vain despair, with regard to what was already past. Beyond doubt, the blow had been sudden, dreadful; doubtless it must leave a long and painful remembrance in the sufferer's soul; but it was soon to pass, as it were, into that chronic state of pain-durance, which had become almost an integral part of her life. And then this noble creature, so indulgent to fate, found still some consolations in the intensity of her bitter pain. She had been deeply touched by the marks of affection shown her by Angela, Agricola's intended: and she had felt a species of pride of the heart, in perceiving with what blind confidence, with what ineffable joy, the smith accepted the favorable presentiments which seemed to consecrate his happiness. Mother Bunch also said to herself: "At least, henceforth I shall not be agitated by hopes, or rather by suppositions as ridiculous as they were senseless. Agricola's marriage puts a term to all the miserable reveries of my poor head."

Finally, she found a real and deep consolation in the certainty that she had been able to go through this terrible trial, and conceal from Agricola the love she felt for him. We know how formidable to this unfortunate being were those ideas of ridicule and shame, which she believed would attach to the discovery of her mad passion. After having remained for some time absorbed in thought, Mother Bunch rose, and advanced slowly towards the desk.

"My only recompense," said she, as she prepared the materials for writing, "will be to entrust the mute witness of my pains with this new grief. I shall at least have kept the promise that I made to myself. Believing, from the bottom of my soul, that this girl is able to make Agricola happy, I told him so with the utmost sincerity. One day, a long time hence, when I shall read over these pages, I shall perhaps find in that a compensation for all that I now suffer."

So saying, she drew the box from the pigeon-hole. Not finding her manuscript, she uttered a cry of surprise; but, what was her alarm, when she perceived a letter to her address in the place of the journal! She became deadly pale; her knees trembled; she

almost fainted away. But her increasing terror gave her a fictitious energy, and she had the strength to break the seal. A bank-note for five hundred francs fell from the letter on the table, and Mother Bunch read as follows:



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“Mademoiselle,—There is something so original and amusing in reading in your memoirs the story of your love for Agricola, that it is impossible to resist the pleasure of acquainting him with the extent of it, of which he is doubtless ignorant, but to which he cannot fail to show himself sensible. Advantage will be taken to forward it to a multitude of other persons, who might, perhaps, otherwise be unfortunately deprived of the amusing contents of your diary. Should copies and extracts not be sufficient, we will have it printed, as one cannot too much diffuse such things. Some will weep—others will laugh—what appears superb to one set of people, will seem ridiculous to another, such is life—but your journal will surely make a great sensation. As you are capable of wishing to avoid your triumph, and as you were only covered with rags when you were received, out of charity into this house, where you wish to figure as the great lady, which does not suit your shape for more reasons than one, we enclose in the present five hundred francs to pay for your day-book, and prevent your being without resources, in case you should be modest enough to shrink from the congratulations which await you, certain to overwhelm you by to-morrow, for, at this hour, your journal is already in circulation.

“One of your brethren,

“A real mother Bunch.”

The vulgar, mocking, and insolent tone of this letter, which was purposely written in the character of a jealous lackey, dissatisfied with the admission of the unfortunate creature into the house, had been calculated with infernal skill and was sure to produce the effect intended.

“Oh, good heaven!” were the only words the unfortunate girl could pronounce, in her stupor and alarm.

Now, if we remember in what passionate terms she had expressed her love for her adopted brother, if we recall many passages of this manuscript, in which she revealed the painful wounds often inflicted on her by Agricola without knowing it, and if we consider how great was her terror of ridicule, we shall understand her mad despair on reading this infamous letter. Mother Bunch did not think for a moment of all the noble words and touching narratives contained in her journal. The one horrible idea which weighed down the troubled spirit of the unfortunate creature, was, that on the morrow Agricola, Mdlle. de Cardoville, and an insolent and mocking crowd, would be informed of this ridiculous love, which would, she imagined, crush her with shame and confusion. This new blow was so stunning, that the recipient staggered a moment beneath the unexpected shock. For some minutes, she remained completely inert and helpless; then, upon reflection, she suddenly felt conscious of a terrible necessity.



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This hospitable mansion, where she had found a sure refuge after so many misfortunes, must be left for ever. The trembling timidity and sensitive delicacy of the poor creature did not permit her to remain a minute more in this dwelling, where the most secret recesses of her soul had been laid open, profaned, and exposed no doubt to sarcasm and contempt. She did not think of demanding justice and revenge from Mdlle. de Cardoville. To cause a ferment of trouble and irritation in this house, at the moment of quitting it, would have appeared to her ingratitude towards her benefactress. She did not seek to discover the author or the motive of this odious robbery and insulting letter. Why should she, resolved, as she was, to fly from the humiliations with which she was threatened? She had a vague notion (as indeed was intended), that this infamy might be the work of some of the servants, jealous of the affectionate deference shown her by Mdlle. de Cardoville—and this thought filled her with despair. Those pages—so painfully confidential, which she would not have ventured to impart to the most tender and indulgent mother, because, written as it were with her heart's blood, they painted with too cruel a fidelity the thousand secret wounds of her soul—those pages were to serve, perhaps served even now, for the jest and laughing-stock of the lackeys of the mansion.

The money which accompanied this letter, and the insulting way in which it was offered, rather tended to confirm her suspicions. It was intended that the fear of misery should not be the obstacle of her leaving the house. The workgirl's resolution was soon taken, with that calm and firm resignation which was familiar to her. She rose, with somewhat bright and haggard eyes, but without a tear in them. Since the day before, she had wept too much. With a trembling, icy hand, she wrote these words on a paper, which she left by the side of the bank-note: "May Mdlle. de Cardoville be blessed for all that she has done for me, and forgive me for having left her house, where I can remain no longer."

Having written this, Mother Bunch threw into the fire the infamous letter, which seemed to burn her hands. Then, taking a last look at her chamber, furnished so comfortably, she shuddered involuntarily as she thought of the misery that awaited her—a misery more frightful than that of which she had already been the victim, for Agricola's mother had departed with Gabriel, and the unfortunate girl could no longer, as formerly, be consoled in her distress by the almost maternal affection of Dagobert's wife. To live alone—quite alone—with the thought that her fatal passion for Agricola was laughed at by everybody, perhaps even by himself—such were the future prospects of the hunchback. This future terrified her—a dark desire crossed her mind—she shuddered, and an expression of bitter joy contracted her features. Resolved to go, she made some steps towards the door, when, in passing before the fireplace, she saw her own image in the glass, pale as death, and clothed in black; then it struck her that she wore a dress which did not belong to her, and she remembered a passage in the letter, which alluded to the rags she had on before she entered that house. "True!" said she, with a heart breaking smile, as she looked at her black garments; "they would call me a thief."



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And, taking her candle, she entered the little dressing room, and put on again the poor, old clothes, which she had preserved as a sort of pious remembrance of her misfortunes. Only at this instant did her tears flow abundantly. She wept—not in sorrow at resuming the garb of misery, but in gratitude; for all the comforts around her, to which she was about to bid an eternal adieu, recalled to her mind at every step the delicacy and goodness of Mdlle. de Cardoville: therefore, yielding to an almost involuntary impulse, after she had put on her poor, old clothes, she fell on her knees in the middle of the room, and, addressing herself in thought to Mdlle. de Cardoville, she exclaimed, in a voice broken by convulsive sobs: “Adieu! oh, for ever, adieu!—You, that deigned to call me friend—and sister!”

Suddenly, she rose in alarm; she heard steps in the corridor, which led from the garden to one of the doors of her apartment, the other door opening into the parlor. It was Florine, who (alas! too late) was bringing back the manuscript. Alarmed at this noise of footsteps, and believing herself already the laughing-stock of the house. Mother Bunch rushed from the room, hastened across the parlor, gained the court-yard, and knocked at the window of the porter’s lodge. The house-door opened, and immediately closed upon her. And so the workgirl left Cardoville House.

Adrienne was thus deprived of a devoted, faithful, and vigilant guardian. Rodin was delivered from an active and sagacious antagonist, whom he had always, with good reason, feared. Having, as we have seen, guessed Mother Bunch’s love for Agricola, and knowing her to be a poet, the Jesuit supposed, logically enough that she must have written secretly some verses inspired by this fatal and concealed passion. Hence the order given to Florine, to try and discover some written evidence of this love; hence this letter, so horribly effective in its coarse ribaldry, of which, it must be observed, Florine did not know the contents, having received it after communicating a summary of the contents of the manuscript, which, the first time, she had only glanced through without taking it away. We have said, that Florine, yielding too late to a generous repentance, had reached Mother Bunch’s apartment, just as the latter quitted the house in consternation.

Perceiving a light in the dressing-room, the waiting-maid hastened thither. She saw upon a chair the black dress that Mother Bunch had just taken off, and, a few steps further, the shabby little trunk, open and empty, in which she had hitherto preserved her poor garments. Florine’s heart sank within her; she ran to the secretary; the disorder of the card-board boxes, the note for five hundred francs left by the side of the two lines written to Mdlle. de Cardoville, all proved that her obedience to Rodin’s orders had borne fatal fruit, and that Mother Bunch had quitted the house for ever. Finding the uselessness of her tardy resolution, Florine resigned herself with a sigh to the necessity of delivering the manuscript to Rodin. Then, forced by the fatality of her miserable position to console herself for evil by evil, she considered that the hunchback’s departure would at least make her treachery less dangerous.



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Two days after these events, Adrienne received the following note from Rodin, in answer to a letter she had written him, to inform him of the work-girl's inexplicable departure:

“My dear young lady;—Obliged to set out this morning for the factory of the excellent M. Hardy, whither I am called by an affair of importance, it is impossible for me to pay you my humble respects. You ask me what I think of the disappearance of this poor girl? I really do not know. The future will, I doubt not, explain all to her advantage. Only, remember what I told you at Dr. Baleinier’s, with regard to a certain society and its secret emissaries, with whom it has the art of surrounding those it wishes to keep a watch on. I accuse no one; but let us only recall facts. This poor girl accused me; and I am, as you know, the most faithful of your servants. She possessed nothing; and yet five hundred francs were found in her secretary. You loaded her with favors; and she leaves your house without even explaining the cause of this extraordinary flight. I draw no conclusion, my dear young lady; I am always unwilling to condemn without evidence; but reflect upon all this, and be on your guard, for you have perhaps escaped a great danger. Be more circumspect and suspicious than ever; such at least is the respectful advice of your most obedient, humble servant,

“Rodin.”

CHAPTER XLIX.

The Trysting-place of the wolves.

It was a Sunday morning the very day on which Mdlle. de Cardoville had received Rodin’s letter with regard to Mother Bunch’s disappearance. Two men were talking to together, seated at a table in one of the public houses in the little village of Villiers, situated at no great distance from Hardy’s factory. The village was for the most part inhabited by quarrymen and stonecutters, employed in working the neighboring quarries. Nothing can be ruder and more laborious, and at the same time less adequately paid, than the work of this class of people. Therefore, as Agricola had told Mother Bunch, they drew painful comparisons between their condition, almost always miserable, and the comfort and comparative ease enjoyed by M. Hardy’s workmen, thanks to his generous and intelligent management, and to the principles of association and community which he had put in practice amongst them. Misery and ignorance are always the cause of great evils. Misery is easily excited to anger, and ignorance soon yields to perfidious counsels. For a long time, the happiness of M. Hardy’s workmen had been naturally envied, but not with a jealousy amounting to hatred. As soon, however, as the secret enemies of the manufacturer, uniting with his rival Baron Tripeaud, had an interest in changing this peaceful state of things—it changed accordingly.



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With diabolical skill and perseverance they succeeded in kindling the most evil passions. By means of chosen emissaries, they applied to those quarrymen and stonecutters of the neighborhood, whose bad conduct had aggravated their misery. Notorious for their turbulence, audacity, and energy, these men might exercise a dangerous influence on the majority of their companions, who were peaceful, laborious, and honest, but easily intimidated by violence. These turbulent leaders, previously embittered by misfortune, were soon impressed with an exaggerated idea of the happiness of M. Hardy's workmen, and excited to a jealous hatred of them. They went still further; the incendiary sermons of an abbe, a member of the Jesuits, who had come expressly from Paris to preach during Lent against M. Hardy, acted powerfully on the minds of the women, who filled the church, whilst their husbands were haunting the taverns. Profiting by the growing fear, which the approach of the Cholera then inspired, the preacher struck with terror these weak and credulous imaginations by pointing to M. Hardy's factory as a centre of corruption and damnation, capable of drawing down the vengeance of Heaven, and bringing the fatal scourge upon the country. Thus the men, already inflamed with envy, were still more excited by the incessant urgency of their wives, who, maddened by the abbe's sermons, poured their curses on that band of atheists, who might bring down so many misfortunes upon them and their children. Some bad characters, belonging to the factory of Baron Tripeaud, and paid by him (for it was a great interest the honorable manufacturer had in the ruin of M. Hardy), came to augment the general irritation, and to complete it by raising one of those alarming union-questions, which in our day have unfortunately caused so much bloodshed. Many of M. Hardy's workmen, before they entered his employ, had belonged to a society or union, called the Devourers; while many of the stonecutters in the neighboring quarries belonged to a society called the Wolves. Now, for a long time, an implacable rivalry had existed between the Wolves and Devourers, and brought about many sanguinary struggles, which are the more to be deplored, as, in some respects, the idea of these unions is excellent, being founded on the fruitful and mighty principle of association. But unfortunately, instead of embracing all trades in one fraternal communion, these unions break up the working-class into distinct and hostile societies, whose rivalry often leads to bloody collisions.[27] For the last week, the Wolves, excited by so many different importunities, burned to discover an occasion or a pretext to come to blows with the Devourers; but the latter, not frequenting the public-houses, and hardly leaving the factory during the week, had hitherto rendered such a meeting impossible, and the Wolves had been forced to wait for the Sunday with ferocious impatience.



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Moreover, a great number of the quarrymen and stonecutters, being peaceable and hard-working people, had refused, though Wolves themselves to join this hostile manifestation against the Devourers of M. Hardy's factory; the leaders had been obliged to recruit their forces from the vagabonds and idlers of the barriers, whom the attraction of tumult and disorder had easily enlisted under the flag of the warlike Wolves. Such then was the dull fermentation, which agitated the little village of Villiers, whilst the two men of whom we have spoken were at table in the public-house.

These men had asked for a private room, that they might be alone. One of them was still young, and pretty well dressed. But the disorder in his clothes, his loose cravat, his shirt spotted with wine, his dishevelled hair, his look of fatigue, his marble complexion, his bloodshot eyes, announced that a night of debauch had preceded this morning; whilst his abrupt and heavy gesture, his hoarse voice, his look, sometimes brilliant, and sometimes stupid, proved that to the last fumes of the intoxication of the night before, were joined the first attacks of a new state of drunkenness. The companion of this man said to him, as he touched his glass with his own: "Your health, my boy!"

"Yours!" answered the young man; "though you look to me like the devil."

"I!—the devil?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"How did you come to know me?"

"Do you repent that you ever knew me?"

"Who told you that I was a prisoner at Sainte-Pelagie?"

"Didn't I take you out of prison?"

"Why did you take me out?"

"Because I have a good heart."

"You are very fond of me, perhaps—just as the butcher likes the ox that he drives to the slaughter-house."

"Are you mad?"

"A man does not pay a hundred thousand francs for another without a motive."

"I have a motive."



“What is it? what do you want to do with me?”

“A jolly companion that will spend his money like a man, and pass every night like the last. Good wine, good cheer, pretty girls, and gay songs. Is that such a bad trade?”

After he had remained a moment without answering, the young man replied with a gloomy air: “Why, on the eve of my leaving prison, did you attach this condition to my freedom, that I should write to my mistress to tell her that I would never see her again! Why did you exact this letter from me?”

“A sigh! what, are you still thinking of her?”

“Always.”

“You are wrong. Your mistress is far from Paris by this time. I saw her get into the stage-coach, before I came to take you out of Sainte Pelagie.”

“Yes, I was stifled in that prison. To get out, I would have given my soul to the devil. You thought so, and therefore you came to me; only, instead of my soul, you took Cephyse from me. Poor Bacchanal-Queen! And why did you do it? Thousand thunders! Will you tell me!”



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“A man as much attached to his mistress as you are is no longer a man. He wants energy, when the occasion requires.”

“What occasion?”

“Let us drink!”

“You make me drink too much brandy.”

“Bah! look at me!”

“That’s what frightens me. It seems something devilish. A bottle of brandy does not even make you wink. You must have a stomach of iron and a head of marble.”

“I have long travelled in Russia. There we drink to roast ourselves.”

“And here to only warm. So—let’s drink—but wine.”

“Nonsense! wine is fit for children. Brandy for men like us!”

“Well, then, brandy; but it burns, and sets the head on fire, and then we see all the flames of hell!”

“That’s how I like to see you, hang it!”

“But when you told me that I was too much attached to my mistress, and that I should want energy when the occasion required, of what occasion did you speak?”

“Let us drink!”

“Stop a moment, comrade. I am no more of a fool than others. Your half words have taught me something.

“Well, what?”

“You know that I have been a workman, that I have many companions, and that, being a good fellow, I am much liked amongst them. You want me for a catspaw, to catch other chestnuts?”

“What then?”

“You must be some getter-up of riots—some speculator in revolts.”

“What next?”

“You are travelling for some anonymous society, that trades in musket shots.”



“Are you a coward?”

“I burned powder in July, I can tell you—make no mistakes!”

“You would not mind burning some again?”

“Just as well that sort of fireworks as any other. Only I find revolutions more agreeable than useful; all that I got from the barricades of the three days was burnt breeches and a lost jacket. All the cause won by me, with its ‘Forward! March!’ says.”

“You know many of Hardy’s workmen?”

“Oh! that’s why you have brought me down here?”

“Yes—you will meet with many of the workmen from the factory.”

“Men from Hardy’s take part in a row? No, no; they are too well off for that. You have been sold.”

“You will see presently.”

“I tell you they are well off. What have they to complain of?”

“What of their brethren—those who have not so good a master, and die of hunger and misery, and call on them for assistance? Do you think they will remain deaf to such a summons? Hardy is only an exception. Let the people but give a good pull all together, and the exception will become the rule, and all the world be happy.”

“What you say there is true, but it would be a devil of a pull that would make an honest man out of my old master, Baron Tripeaud, who made me what I am—an out-and-out rip.”

“Hardy’s workmen are coming; you are their comrade, and have no interest in deceiving them. They will believe you. Join with me in persuading them—”



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“To what?”

“To leave this factory, in which they grow effeminate and selfish, and forget their brothers.”

“But if they leave the factory, how are they to live?”

“We will provide for that—on the great day.”

“And what’s to be done till then?”

“What you have done last night—drink, laugh, sing, and, by way of work, exercise themselves privately in the use of arms.”

“Who will bring these workmen here?”

“Some one has already spoken to them. They have had printed papers, reproaching them with indifference to their brothers. Come, will you support me?”

“I’ll support you—the more readily as I cannot very well support myself. I only cared for Cephyse in the world; I know that I am on a bad road; you are pushing me on further; let the ball roll!—Whether we go to the devil one way or the other is not of much consequence. Let’s drink.”

“Drink to our next night’s fun; the last was only apprenticeship.”

“Of what then are you made? I looked at you, and never saw you either blush or smile, or change countenance. You are like a man of iron.”

“I am not a lad of fifteen. It would take something more to make me laugh. I shall laugh to-night.”

“I don’t know if it’s the brandy; but, devil take me, if you don’t frighten me when you say you shall laugh tonight!”

So saying, the young man rose, staggering; he began to be once more intoxicated.

There was a knock at the door. “Come in!” The host made his appearance.

“What’s the matter?”

“There’s a young man below, who calls himself Olivier. He asks for M. Morok.”

“That’s right. Let him come up.” The host went out.



“It is one of our men, but he is alone,” said Morok, whose savage countenance expressed disappointment. “It astonishes me, for I expected a good number. Do you know him?”

“Olivier? Yes—a fair chap, I think.”

“We shall see him directly. Here he is.” A young man, with an open, bold, intelligent countenance, at this moment entered the room.

“What! old Sleepinbuff!” he exclaimed, at sight of Morok’s companion.

“Myself. I have not seen you for an age, Olivier.”

“Simple enough, my boy. We do not work at the same place.”

“But you are alone!” cried Morok; and pointing to Sleepinbuff, he added: “You may speak before him—he is one of us. But why are you alone?”

“I come alone, but in the name of my comrades.”

“Oh!” said Morok, with a sigh of satisfaction, “they consent.”

“They refuse—just as I do!”

“What, the devil! they refuse? Have they no more courage than women?” cried Morok, grinding his teeth with rage.

“Hark ye,” answered Olivier, coolly. “We have received your letters, and seen your agent. We have had proof that he is really connected with great societies, many members of which are known to us.”



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“Well! why do you hesitate?”

“First of all, nothing proves that these societies are ready to make a movement.”

“I tell you they are.”

“He—tells you—they are,” said Sleepinbuff, stammering “and I (hic!) affirm it. Forward! March!”

“That’s not enough,” replied Olivier. “Besides, we have reflected upon it. For a week the factory was divided. Even yesterday the discussion was too warm to be pleasant. But this morning Father Simon called to him; we explained ourselves fully before him, and he brought us all to one mind. We mean to wait, and if any disturbance breaks out, we shall see.”

“Is that your final word?”

“It is our last word.”

“Silence!” cried Sleepinbuff, suddenly, as he listened, balancing himself on his tottering legs. “It is like the noise of a crowd not far off.” A dull sound was indeed audible, which became every moment more and more distinct, and at length grew formidable.

“What is that?” said Olivier, in surprise.

“Now,” replied Morok, smiling with a sinister air, “I remember the host told me there was a great ferment in the village against the factory. If you and your other comrades had separated from Hardy’s other workmen, as I hoped, these people who are beginning to howl would have been for you, instead of against you.”

“This was a trap, then, to set one half of M. Hardy’s workmen against the other!” cried Olivier; “you hoped that we should make common cause with these people against the factory, and that—”

The young man had not time to finish. A terrible outburst of shouts, howls, and hisses shook the tavern. At the same instant the door was abruptly opened, and the host, pale and trembling, hurried into the chamber, exclaiming: “Gentlemen! do any of you work at M. Hardy’s factory?”

“I do,” said Olivier.

“Then you are lost. Here are the Wolves in a body, saying there are Devourers here from M. Hardy’s, and offering them battle—unless the Devourers will give up the factory, and range themselves on their side.”



“It was a trap, there can be no doubt of it!” cried Olivier, looking at Morok and Sleepinbuff, with a threatening air; “if my mates had come, we were all to be let in.”

“I lay a trap, Olivier?” stammered Jacques Rennepont. “Never!”

“Battle to the Devourers! or let them join the Wolves!” cried the angry crowd with one voice, as they appeared to invade the house.

“Come!” exclaimed the host. Without giving Olivier time to answer, he seized him by the arm, and opening a window which led to a roof at no very great height from the ground, he said to him: “Make your escape by this window, let yourself slide down, and gain the fields; it is time.”

As the young workman hesitated, the host added, with a look of terror:

“Alone, against a couple of hundred, what can you do? A minute more, and you are lost. Do you not hear them? They have entered the yard; they are coming up.”



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Indeed, at this moment, the groans, the hisses, and cheers redoubled in violence; the wooden staircase which led to the first story shook beneath the quick steps of many persons, and the shout arose, loud and piercing: "Battle to the Devourers!"

"Fly, Olivier!" cried Sleepinbuff, almost sobered by the danger.

Hardly had he pronounced the words when the door of the large room, which communicated with the small one in which they were, was burst open with a frightful crash.

"Here they are!" cried the host, clasping his hands in alarm. Then, running to Olivier, he pushed him, as it were, out of the window; for, with one foot on the sill, the workman still hesitated.

The window once closed, the publican returned towards Morok the instant the latter entered the large room, into which the leaders of the Wolves had just forced an entry, whilst their companions were vociferating in the yard and on the staircase. Eight or ten of these madmen, urged by others to take part in these scenes of disorder, had rushed first into the room, with countenances inflamed by wine and anger; most of them were armed with long sticks. A blaster, of Herculean strength and stature, with an old red handkerchief about his head, its ragged ends streaming over his shoulders, miserably dressed in a half-worn goat-skin, brandished an iron drilling-rod, and appeared to direct the movements. With bloodshot eyes, threatening and ferocious countenance, he advanced towards the small room, as if to drive back Morok, and exclaimed, in a voice of thunder:

"Where are the Devourers?—the Wolves will eat 'em up!"

The host hastened to open the door of the small room, saying: "There is no one here, my friends—no one. Look for yourselves."

"It is true," said the quarryman, surprised, after peeping into the room; "where are they, then? We were told there were a dozen of them here. They should have marched with us against the factory, or there'd 'a been a battle, and the Wolves would have tried their teeth!"

"If they have not come," said another, "they will come. Let's wait."

"Yes, yes; we will wait for them."

"We will look close at each other."

"If the Wolves want to see the Devourers," said Morok, "why not go and howl round the factory of the miscreant atheists? At the first howl of the Wolves they will come out, and give you battle."



“They will give you—battle,” repeated Sleepinbuff, mechanically.

“Unless the Wolves are afraid of the Devourers,” added Morok.

“Since you talk of fear, you shall go with us, and see who’s afraid!” cried the formidable blaster, and in a thundering voice, he advanced towards Morok.

A number of voices joined in with, “Who says the Wolves are afraid of the Devourers?”

“It would be the first time!”

“Battle! battle! and make an end of it!”

“We are tired of all this. Why should we be so miserable, and they so well off?”



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“They have said that quarrymen are brutes, only fit to torn wheels in a shaft, like dogs to turn spits,” cried an emissary of Baron Tripeaud’s.

“And that the Devourers would make themselves caps with wolf-skin,” added another.

“Neither they nor their wives ever go to mass. They are pagans and dogs!” cried an emissary of the preaching abbe.

“The men might keep their Sunday as they pleased; but their wives not to go to mass!—it is abominable.

“And, therefore, the curate has said that their factory, because of its abominations, might bring down the cholera to the country.”

“True? he said that in his sermon.”

“Our wives heard it.”

“Yes, yes; down with the Devourers, who want to bring the cholera on the country!”

“Hooray, for a fight!” cried the crowd in chorus.

“To the factory, my brave Wolves!” cried Morok, with the voice of a Stentor; “on to the factory!”

“Yes! to the factory! to the factory!” repeated the crowd, with furious stamping; for, little by little, all who could force their way into the room, or up the stairs, had there collected together.

These furious cries recalling Jacques for a moment to his senses, he whispered to Morok: “It is slaughter you would provoke? I wash my hands of it.”

“We shall have time to let them know at the factory. We can give these fellows the slip on the road,” answered Morok. Then he cried aloud, addressing the host, who was terrified at this disorder: “Brandy!—let us drink to the health of the brave Wolves! I will stand treat.” He threw some money to the host, who disappeared, and soon returned with several bottles of brandy, and some glasses.

“What! glasses?” cried Morok. “Do jolly companions, like we are, drink out of glasses?” So saying, he forced out one of the corks, raised the neck of the bottle to his lips, and, having drunk a deep draught, passed it to the gigantic quarryman.

“That’s the thing!” said the latter. “Here’s in honor of the treat!—None but a sneak will refuse, for this stuff will sharpen the Wolves’ teeth!”



“Here’s to your health, mates!” said Morok, distributing the bottles.

“There will be blood at the end of all this,” muttered Sleepinbuff, who, in spite of his intoxication, perceived all the danger of these fatal incitements. Indeed, a large portion of the crowd was already quitting the yard of the public-house, and advancing rapidly towards M. Hardy’s factory.

Those of the workmen and inhabitants of the village, who had not chosen to take any part in this movement of hostility (they were the majority), did not make their appearance, as this threatening troop passed along the principal street; but a good number of women, excited to fanaticism by the sermons of the abbe, encouraged the warlike assemblage with their cries. At the head of the troop advanced the gigantic blaster,



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brandishing his formidable bar, followed by a motley mass, armed with sticks and stones. Their heads still warmed by their recent libations of brandy, they had now attained a frightful state of frenzy. Their countenances were ferocious, inflamed, terrible. This unchaining of the worst passions seemed to forbode the most deplorable consequences. Holding each other arm-in-arm, and walking four or five together, the Wolves gave vent to their excitement in war-songs, which closed with the following verse:

“Forward! full of assurance! Let us try our vigorous arms! They have wearied out our prudence; Let us show we’ve no alarms. Sprung from a monarch glorious,[28] To-day we’ll not grow pale, Whether we win the fight, or fail, Whether we die, or are victorious! Children of Solomon, mighty king, All your efforts together bring, Till in triumph we shall sing!”

Morok and Jacques had disappeared whilst the tumultuous troop were leaving the tavern to hasten to the factory.

[27] Let it be noted, to the working-man’s credit, that such outrageous scenes become more and more rare as he is enlightened to the full consciousness of his worth. Such better tendencies are to be attributed to the just influence of an excellent tract on trades’ union written by M. Agricole Perdignier, and published in 1841, Paris. This author, a joiner, founded at his own expense an establishment in the Faubourg St. Antoine, where some forty or fifty of his trade lodged, and were given, after the day’s work, a course of geometry, *etc.*, applied to wood carving. We went to one of the lectures, and found as much clearness in the professor as attention and intelligence in the audience. At ten, after reading selections, all the lodgers retire, forced by their scanty wages to sleep, perhaps, four in a room. M. Perdignier informed us that study and instruction were such powerful ameliorators, that, during six years, he had only one of his lodgers to expel. “In a few days,” he remarked, “the bad eggs find out, this is no place for them to addle sound ones!” We are happy to hear, reader, public homage to a learned and upright man, devoted to his fellow-workmen.

[28] The Wolves (among others) ascribe the institution of their company to King Solomon. See the curious work by M. Agricole Perdignier, from which the war-song is extracted.

CHAPTER L.

THE COMMON DWELLING-HOUSE



Whilst the Wolves, as we have just seen, prepared a savage attack on the Devourers, the factory of M. Hardy had that morning a festal air, perfectly in accordance with the serenity of the sky; for the wind was from the north, and pretty sharp for a fine day in March. The clock had just struck nine in the Common Dwelling-house of the workmen, separated from the workshops by a broad path planted with trees. The rising sun bathed in light this imposing mass of buildings, situated a league from Paris, in a gay



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and salubrious locality, from which were visible the woody and picturesque hills, that on this side overlook the great city. Nothing could be plainer, and yet more cheerful than the aspect of the Common Dwelling-house of the workmen. Its slanting roof of red tiles projected over white walls, divided here and there by broad rows of bricks, which contrasted agreeably with the green color of the blinds on the first and second stories.

These buildings, open to the south and east, were surrounded by a large garden of about ten acres, partly planted with trees, and partly laid out in fruit and kitchen-garden. Before continuing this description, which perhaps will appear a little like a fairy-tale, let us begin by saying, that the wonders, of which we are about to present the sketch, must not to be considered Utopian dreams; nothing, on the contrary, could be of a more positive character, and we are able to assert, and even to prove (what in our time is of great weight and interest), that these wonders were the result of an excellent speculation, and represented an investment as lucrative as it was secure. To undertake a vast, noble, and most useful enterprise; to bestow on a considerable number of human creatures an ideal prosperity, compared with the frightful, almost homicidal doom, to which they are generally condemned; to instruct them, and elevate them in their own esteem; to make them prefer to the coarse pleasures of the tavern, or rather to the fatal oblivion which they find there, as an escape from the consciousness of their deplorable destiny, the pleasures, of the intellect and the enjoyments of art; in a word, to make men moral by making them happy, and finally, thanks to this generous example, so easy of imitation, to take a place amongst the benefactors of humanity—and yet, at the same time to do, as it were, without knowing it, an excellent stroke of business—may appear fabulous. And yet this was the secret of the wonders of which we speak.

Let us enter the interior of the factory. Ignorant of Mother Bunch's cruel disappearance, Agricola gave himself up to the most happy, thoughts as he recalled Angela's image, and, having finished dressing with unusual care, went in search of his betrothed.

Let us say two words on the subject of the lodging, which the smith occupied in the Common Dwelling-house, at the incredibly low rate of seventy-five francs per annum like the other bachelors on the establishment. This lodging, situated on the second story, was comprised of a capital chamber and bedroom, with a southern aspect, and looking on the garden; the pine floor was perfectly white and clean; the iron bedstead was supplied with a good mattress and warm coverings; a gas burner and a warm-air pipe were also introduced into the rooms, to furnish light and heat as required; the walls were hung with pretty fancy papering, and had curtains to match; a chest of drawers, a walnut table, a few chairs, a small library, comprised Agricola's

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furniture. Finally, in the large and light closet, was a place for his clothes, a dressing table, and large zinc basin, with an ample supply of water. If we compare this agreeable, salubrious, comfortable lodging, with the dark, icy, dilapidated garret, for which the worthy fellow paid ninety francs at his mother's, and to get to which he had more than a league and a half to go every evening, we shall understand the sacrifice he made to his affection for that excellent woman.

Agricola, after casting a last glance of tolerable satisfaction at his looking-glass, while he combed his moustache and imperial, quitted his chamber, to go and join Angela in the women's workroom. The corridor, along which he had to pass, was broad, well-lighted from above, floored with pine, and extremely clean. Notwithstanding some seeds of discord which had been lately sown by M. Hardy's enemies amongst his workmen, until now so fraternally united, joyous songs were heard in almost all the apartments which skirted the corridor, and, as Agricola passed before several open doors, he exchanged a cordial good-morrow with many of his comrades. The smith hastily descended the stairs, crossed the court yard, in which was a grass-plot planted with trees, with a fountain in the centre, and gained the other wing of the building. There was the workroom, in which a portion of the wives and daughters of the associated artisans, who happened not to be employed in the factory, occupied themselves in making up the linen. This labor, joined to the enormous saving effected by the purchase of the materials wholesale, reduced to an incredible extent the price of each article. After passing through this workroom, a vast apartment looking on the garden, well-aired in summer,[29] and well-warmed in winter, Agricola knocked at the door of the rooms occupied by Angela's mother.

If we say a few words with regard to this lodging, situated on the first story, with an eastern aspect, and also looking on the garden, it is that we may tape it as a specimen of the habitation of a family in this association, supplied at the incredibly small price of one hundred and twenty-five francs per annum.

A small entrance, opening on the corridor, led to a large room, on each side of which was a smaller chamber, destined for the family, when the boys and girls were too big to continue to sleep in the two dormitories, arranged after the fashion of a large school, and reserved for the children of both sexes. Every night the superintendence of these dormitories was entrusted to a father and mother of a family, belonging to the association. The lodging of which we speak, being, like all the others, disencumbered of the paraphernalia of a kitchen—for the cooking was done in common, and on a large scale, in another part of the building—was kept extremely clean. A pretty large piece of carpet, a comfortable arm-chair, some pretty-looking china on a stand of well polished wood, some prints hung against the walls, a clock of



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gilt bronze, a bed, a chest of drawers, and a mahogany secretary, announced that the inhabitants of this apartment enjoyed not only the necessaries, but some of the luxuries of life. Angela, who, from this time, might be called Agricola's betrothed, justified in every point the flattering portrait which the smith had drawn of her in his interview with poor Mother Bunch. The charming girl, seventeen years of age at most, dressed with as much simplicity as neatness, was seated by the side of her mother. When Agricola entered, she blushed slightly at seeing him.

"Mademoiselle," said Agricola, "I have come to keep my promise, if your mother has no objection."

"Certainly, M. Agricola," answered the mother of the young girl cordially. "She would not go over the Common Dwelling-house with her father, her brother, or me, because she wished to have that pleasure with you today. It is quite right that you, who can talk so well, should do the honors of the house to the new-comer. She has been waiting for you an hour, and with such impatience!"

"Pray excuse me, mademoiselle," said Agricola, gayly; "in thinking of the pleasure of seeing you, I forgot the hour. That is my only excuse."

"Oh, mother!" said the young girl, in a tone of mild reproach, and becoming red as a cherry, "why did you say that?"

"Is it true, yes or no? I do not blame you for it; on the contrary. Go with M. Agricola, child, and he will tell you, better than I can, what all the workmen of the factory owe to M, Hardy."

"M. Agricola," said Angela, tying the ribbons of her pretty cap, "what a pity that your good little adopted sister is not with us."

"Mother Bunch?—yes, you are right, mademoiselle; but that is only a pleasure put off, and the visit she paid us yesterday will not be the last."

Having embraced her mother, the girl took Agricola's arm, and they went out together.

"Dear me, M. Agricola," said Angela; "if you knew how much I was surprised on entering this fine house, after being accustomed to see so much misery amongst the poor workmen in our country, and in which I too have had my share, whilst here everybody seems happy and contented. It is really like fairy-land; I think I am in a dream, and when I ask my mother the explanation of these wonders, she tells me, 'M. Agricola will explain it all to you.'"



“Do you know why I am so happy to undertake that delightful task, mademoiselle?” said Agricola, with an accent at once grave and tender. “Nothing could be more in season.”

“Why so, M. Agricola?”

“Because, to show you this house, to make you acquainted with all the resources of our association, is to be able to say to you: ‘Here, the workman, sure of the present, sure of the future, is not, like so many of his poor brothers, obliged to renounce the sweetest want of the heart—the desire of choosing a companion for life—in the fear of uniting misery to misery.’”



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Angela cast down her eyes, and blushed.

“Here the workman may safely yield to the hope of knowing the sweet joys of a family, sure of not having his heart torn hereafter by the sight of the horrible privations of those who are dear to him; here, thanks to order and industry, and the wise employment of the strength of all, men, women, and children live happy and contented. In a ward, to explain all this to you, mademoiselle,” added Agricola, smiling with a still more tender air, “is to prove, that here we can do nothing more reasonable than love, nothing wiser than marry.”

“M. Agricola,” answered Angela, in a slightly agitated voice, and blushing still more as she spoke, “suppose we were to begin our walk.”

“Directly, mademoiselle,” replied the smith, pleased at the trouble he had excited in that ingenuous soul. “But, come; we are near the dormitory of the little girls. The chirping birds have long left their nests. Let us go there.”

“Willingly, M. Agricola.”

The young smith and Angela soon entered a spacious dormitory, resembling that of a first-rate boarding school. The little iron bedsteads were arranged in symmetrical order; at each end were the beds of the two mothers of families, who took the superintendence by turns.

“Dear me! how well it is arranged, M. Agricola, and how neat and clean! Who is it that takes such good care of it?”

“The children themselves; we have no servants here. There is an extraordinary emulation between these urchins—as to who shall make her bed most neatly, and it amuses them quite as much as making a bed for their dolls. Little girls, you know, delight in playing at keeping house. Well, here they play at it in good earnest, and the house is admirably kept in consequence.”

“Oh! I understand. They turn to account their natural taste for all such kinds of amusement.”

“That is the whole secret. You will see them everywhere usefully occupied, and delighted at the importance of the employments given them.”

“Oh, M. Agricola!” said Angela, timidly, “only compare these fine dormitories, so warm and healthy, with the horrible icy garrets, where children are heaped pell-mell on a wretched straw-mattress, shivering with cold, as in the case with almost all the workmen’s families in our country!”

“And in Paris, mademoiselle, it is even worse.”



“Oh! how kind, generous, and rich must M. Hardy be, to spend so much money in doing good!”

“I am going to astonish you, mademoiselle!” said Agricola, with a smile; “to astonish you so much, that perhaps you will not believe me.”

“Why so, M. Agricola?”

“There is not certainly in the world a man with a better and more generous heart than M. Hardy; he does good for its own sake and without thinking of his personal interest. And yet, Mdlle. Angela, were he the most selfish and avaricious of men, he would still find it greatly to his advantage to put us in a position to be as comfortable as we are.”



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“Is it possible, M. Agricola? You tell me so, and I believe it; but if good can so easily be done, if there is even an advantage in doing it, why is it not more commonly attempted?”

“Ah! mademoiselle, it requires three gifts very rarely met with in the same person—knowledge, power and will.”

“Alas! yes. Those who have the knowledge, have not the power.”

“And those who have the power, have neither the knowledge nor the will.”

“But how does M. Hardy find any advantage in the good he does for you?”

“I will explain that presently, mademoiselle.”

“Oh, what a nice, sweet smell of fruit!” said Angela, suddenly.

“Our common fruit-store is close at hand. I wager we shall find there some of the little birds from the dormitory—not occupied in picking and stealing, but hard at work.”

Opening a door, Agricola led Angela into a large room, furnished with shelves, on which the winter fruits were arranged in order. A number of children, from seven to eight years old, neatly and warmly clad, and glowing with health, exerted themselves cheerfully, under the superintendence of a woman, in separating and sorting the spoiled fruit.

“You see,” said Agricola, “wherever it is possible, we make use of the children. These occupations are amusements for them, answering to the need of movement and activity natural to their age; and, in this way, we can employ the grown girls and the women to much better advantage.”

“True, M. Agricola; how well it is all arranged.”

“And if you saw what services the urchins in the kitchen render! Directed by one or two women, they do the work of eight or ten servants.”

“In fact,” said Angela, smiling, “at their age, we like so much to play at cooking dinner. They must be delighted.”

“And, in the same way, under pretext of playing at gardening, they weed the ground, gather the fruit and vegetables, water the flowers, roll the paths, and so on. In a word, this army of infant-workers, who generally remain till ten or twelve years of age without being of any service, are here very useful. Except three hours of school, which is quite sufficient for them, from the age of six or seven their recreations are turned to good account, and the dear little creatures, by the saving of full-grown arms which they effect, actually gain more than they cost; and then, mademoiselle, do you not think there is something in the presence of childhood thus mixed up with every labor—something



mild, pure, almost sacred, which has its influence on our words and actions, and imposes a salutary reserve? The coarsest man will respect the presence of children.”

“The more one reflects, the more one sees that everything here is really designed for the happiness of all!” said Angela, in admiration.

“It has not been done without trouble. It was necessary to conquer prejudices, and break through customs. But see, Mdlle. Angela! here we are at the kitchen,” added the smith, smiling; “is it not as imposing as that of a barrack or a public school?”

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Indeed, the culinary department of the Common Dwelling-house was immense. All its utensils were bright and clean; and thanks to the marvellous and economical inventions of modern science (which are always beyond the reach of the poorer classes, to whom they are most necessary, because they can only be practised on a large scale), not only the fire on the hearth, and in the stoves, was fed with half the quantity of fuel that would have been consumed by each family individually, but the excess of the caloric sufficed, with the aid of well-constructed tubes, to spread a mild and equal warmth through all parts of the house. And here also children, under the direction of two women, rendered numerous services. Nothing could be more comic than the serious manner in which they performed their culinary functions; it was the same with the assistance they gave in the bakehouse, where, at an extraordinary saving in the price (for they bought flour wholesale), they made an excellent household bread, composed of pure wheat and rye, so preferable to that whiter bread, which too often owes its apparent qualities to some deleterious substance.

“Good-day, Dame Bertrand,” said Agricola, gayly, to a worthy matron, who was gravely contemplating the slow evolution of several spits, worthy of Gamache’s Wedding so heavily were they laden with pieces of beef, mutton, and veal, which began to assume a fine golden brown color of the most attractive kind; good-day, Dame Bertrand. According to the rule, I do not pass the threshold of the kitchen. I only wish it to be admired by this young lady, who is a new-comer amongst us.”

“Admire, my lad, pray admire—and above all take notice, how good these brats are, and how well they work!” So saying, the matron pointed with the long ladle, which served her as a sceptre, to some fifteen children of both sexes, seated round a table, and deeply absorbed in the exercise of their functions, which consisted in peeling potatoes and picking herbs.

“We are, I see, to have a downright Belshazzar’s feast, Dame Bertrand?” said Agricola, laughing.

“Faith, a feast like we have always, my lad. Here is our bill of fare for to-day. A good vegetable soup, roast beef with potatoes, salad, fruit, cheese; and for extras, it being Sunday, some currant tarts made by Mother Denis at the bakehouse, where the oven is heating now.”

“What you tell me, Dame Bertrand, gives me a furious appetite,” said Agricola, gayly. “One soon knows when it is your turn in the kitchen,” added he, with a flattering air.

“Get along, do!” said the female Soyer on service, merrily.

“What astonishes me, so much, M. Agricola,” said Angela, as they continued their walk, “is the comparison of the insufficient, unwholesome food of the workmen in our country, with that which is provided here.”

“And yet we do not spend more than twenty-five sous a day, for much better food than we should get for three francs in Paris.”



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“But really it is hard to believe, M. Agricola. How is it possible?”

“It is thanks to the magic wand of M. Hardy. I will explain it all presently.”

“Oh! how impatient I am to see M. Hardy!”

“You will soon see him—perhaps to-day; for he is expected every moment. But here is the refectory, which you do not yet know, as your family, like many others, prefer dining at home. See what a fine room, looking out on the garden, just opposite the fountain!”

It was indeed a vast hall, built in the form of a gallery, with ten windows opening on the garden. Tables, covered with shining oil-cloth, were ranged along the walls, so that, in winter, this apartment served in the evening, after work, as a place of meeting for those who preferred to pass an hour together, instead of remaining alone or with their families. Then, in this large hall, well warmed and brilliantly lighted with gas, some read, some played cards, some talked, and some occupied themselves with easy work.

“That is not all,” said Agricola to the young girl; “I am sure you will like this apartment still better when I tell you, that on Thursdays and Sundays we make a ball-room of it, and on Tuesdays and Saturdays a concert-room.”

“Really!”

“Yes,” continued the smith, proudly, “we have amongst us musicians, quite capable of tempting us to dance. Moreover, twice a week, nearly all of us sing in chorus—men, women, and children. Unfortunately, this week, some disputes that have arisen in the factory have prevented our concerts.”

“So many voices! that must be superb.”

“It is very fine, I assure you. M. Hardy has always encouraged this amusement amongst us, which has, he says—and he is right—so powerful an effect on the mind and the manners. One winter, he sent for two pupils of the celebrated Wilhelm, and, since then, our school has made great progress. I assure you, Mdlle. Angela, that, without flattering ourselves, there is something truly exciting in the sound of two hundred voices, singing in chorus some hymn to Labor or Freedom. You shall hear it, and you will, I think, acknowledge that there is something great and elevating in the heart of man, in this fraternal harmony of voices, blending in one grave, sonorous, imposing sound.”

“Oh! I believe it. But what happiness to inhabit here. It is a life of joy; for labor, mixed with recreation, becomes itself a pleasure.”

“Alas! here, as everywhere, there are tears and sorrows,” replied Agricola, sadly. “Do you see that isolated building, in a very exposed situation?”

“Yes; what is it?”

“That is our hospital for the sick. Happily, thanks to our healthy mode of life, it is not often full; an annual subscription enables us to have a good doctor. Moreover, a mutual benefit society is arranged in such a manner amongst us, that any one of us, in case of illness, receives two thirds of what he would have gained in health.”



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“How well it is all managed! And there, M. Agricola, on the other side of the grass-plot?”

“That is the wash-house, with water laid on, cold and hot; and under yonder shed is the drying-place: further on, you see the stables, and the lofts and granaries for the provender of the factory horses.”

“But M. Agricola, will you tell me the secret of all these wonders?”

“In ten minutes you shall understand it all, mademoiselle.”

Unfortunately, Angela’s curiosity was for a while disappointed. The girl was now standing with Agricola close to the iron gate, which shut in the garden from the broad avenue that separated the factory from the Common Dwelling-house. Suddenly, the wind brought from the distance the sound of trumpets and military music; then was heard the gallop of two horses, approaching rapidly, and soon after a general officer made his appearance, mounted on a fine black charger, with a long flowing tail and crimson housings; he wore cavalry boots and white breeches, after the fashion of the empire; his uniform glittered with gold embroidery, the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor was passed over his right epaulet, with its four silver stars, and his hat had a broad gold border, and was crowned with a white plume, the distinctive sign reserved for the marshals of France. No warrior could have had a more martial and chivalrous air, or have sat more proudly on his war-horse. At the moment Marshal Simon (for it was he) arrived opposite the place where Angela and Agricola were standing, he drew up his horse suddenly, sprang lightly to the ground, and threw the golden reins to a servant in livery, who followed also on horseback.

“Where shall I wait for your grace?” asked the groom.

“At the end of the avenue,” said the marshal.

And, uncovering his head respectfully, he advanced hastily with his hat in his hand, to meet a person whom Angela and Agricola had not previously perceived. This person soon appeared at a turn of the avenue; he was an old man, with an energetic, intelligent countenance. He wore a very neat blouse, and a cloth cap over his long, white hair. With his hands in his pocket, he was quietly smoking an old meerschaum pipe.

“Good-morning, father,” said the marshal, respectfully, as he affectionately embraced the old workman, who, having tenderly returned the pressure, said to him: “Put on your hat, my boy. But how gay we are!” added he, with a smile.

“I have just been to a review, father, close by; and I took the opportunity to call on you as soon as possible.”

“But shall I then not see my granddaughters to-day, as I do every Sunday?”



“They are coming in a carriage, father, and Dagobert accompanies them.”

“But what is the matter? you appear full of thought.”

“Indeed, father,” said the marshal, with a somewhat agitated air, “I have serious things to talk about.”



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“Come in, then,” said the old man, with some anxiety. The marshal and his father disappeared at the turn of the avenue.

Angela had been struck with amazement at seeing this brilliant General, who was entitled “your grace,” salute an old workman in a blouse as his father; and, looking at Agricola with a confused air she said to him: “What, M. Agricola! this old workman—”

“Is the father of Marshal Duke de Ligny—the friend—yes, I may say the friend,” added Agricola, with emotion, “of my father, who for twenty years served under him in war.”

“To be placed so high, and yet to be so respectful and tender to his father!” said Angela. “The marshal must have a very noble heart; but why does he let his father remain a workman?”

“Because Father Simon will not quit his trade and the factory for anything in the world. He was born a workman, and he will die a workman, though he is the father of a duke and marshal of France.”

[29] See Adolphe Bobierre “On Air and Health,” Paris, 1844.

CHAPTER LI

The secret.

When the very natural astonishment which the arrival of Marshal Simon had caused in Angela had passed away, Agricola said to her with a smile: “I do not wish to take advantage of this circumstance, Mdlle. Angela, to spare you the account of the secret, by which all the wonders of our Common Dwelling-house are brought to pass.”

“Oh! I should not have let you forget your promise, M. Agricola,” answered Angela, “what you have already told me interests me too much for that.”

“Listen, then. M. Hardy, like a true magician, has pronounced three cabalistic words: *Association—community—fraternity*. We have understood the sense of these words, and the wonders you have seen have sprung from them, to our great advantage; and also, I repeat, to the great advantage of M. Hardy.”

“It is that which appears so extraordinary, M. Agricola.”

“Suppose, mademoiselle, that M. Hardy, instead of being what he is, had only been a cold-hearted speculator, looking merely to the profit, and saying to himself: ‘To make the most of my factory, what is needed? Good work—great economy in the raw material—full employment of the workman’s time; in a word, cheapness of manufacture, in order to produce cheaply—excellence of the thing produced, in order to sell dear.’”



“Truly, M. Agricola, no manufacturer could desire more.”

“Well, mademoiselle, these conditions might have been fulfilled, as they have been, but how? Had M. Hardy only been a speculator, he might have said: ‘At a distance from my factory, my workmen might have trouble to get there: rising earlier, they will sleep less; it is a bad economy to take from the sleep so necessary to those who toil. When they get feeble, the work suffers for it; then the inclemency of the seasons makes it worse; the workman arrives wet, trembling with cold, enervated before he begins to work—and then, what work!’”



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"It is unfortunately but too true, M. Agricola. At Lille, when I reached the factory, wet through with a cold rain, I used sometimes to shiver all day long at my work."

"Therefore, Mdlle. Angela, the speculator might say: 'To lodge my workmen close to the door of my factory would obviate this inconvenience. Let us make the calculation. In Paris the married workman pays about two hundred and fifty francs a-year,[30] for one or two wretched rooms and a closet, dark, small, unhealthy, in a narrow, miserable street; there he lives pell-mell with his family. What ruined constitutions are the consequence! and what sort of work can you expect from a feverish and diseased creature? As for the single men, they pay for a smaller, and quite as unwholesome lodging, about one hundred and fifty francs a-year. Now, let us make the addition. I employ one hundred and forty-six married workmen, who pay together, for their wretched holes, thirty-six thousand five hundred francs; I employ also one hundred and fifteen bachelors, who pay at the rate of seventeen thousand two hundred and eighty francs; the total will amount to about fifty thousand francs per annum, the interest on a million.'"

"Dear me, M. Agricola! what a sum to be produced by uniting all these little rents together!"

"You see, mademoiselle, that fifty thousand francs a-year is a millionaire's rent. Now, what says our speculator: To induce our workmen to leave Paris, I will offer them, enormous advantages. I will reduce their rent one-half, and, instead of small, unwholesome rooms, they shall have large, airy apartments, well-warmed and lighted, at a trifling charge. Thus, one hundred and forty-six families, paying me only one hundred and twenty-five francs a-year, and one hundred and fifteen bachelors, seventy-five francs, I shall have a total of twenty-six to twenty-seven thousand francs. Now, a building large enough to hold all these people would cost me at most five hundred thousand francs.[31] I shall then have invested my money at five per cent at the least, and with perfect security, since the wages is a guarantee for the payment of the rent."

"Ah, M. Agricola! I begin to understand how it may sometimes be advantageous to do good, even in a pecuniary sense."

"And I am almost certain, mademoiselle, that, in the long run, affairs conducted with uprightness and honesty turn out well. But to return to our speculator. 'Here,' will he say, 'are my workmen, living close to my factory, well lodged, well warmed, and arriving always fresh at their work. That is not all; the English workman who eats good beef, and drinks good beer, does twice as much, in the same time, as the French workman, [32] reduced to a detestable kind of food, rather weakening than the reverse, thanks to the poisonous adulteration of the articles he consumes. My workmen will then labor much better, if they eat much better. How shall I manage it without loss? Now I think

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of it, what is the food in barracks, schools, even prisons? Is it not the union of individual resources which procures an amount of comfort impossible to realize without such an association? Now, if my two hundred and sixty workmen, instead of cooking two hundred and sixty detestable dinners, were to unite to prepare one good dinner for all of them, which might be done, thanks to the savings of all sorts that would ensue, what an advantage for me and them! Two or three women, aided by children, would suffice to make ready the daily repasts; instead of buying wood and charcoal in fractions,[33] and so paying for it double its value, the association of my workmen would, upon my security (their wages would be an efficient security for me in return), lay in their own stock of wood, flour, butter, oil, wine, *etc.*, all which they would procure directly from the producers. Thus, they would pay three or four sous for a bottle of pure wholesome wine, instead of paying twelve or fifteen sous for poison. Every week the association would buy a whole ox, and some sheep, and the women would make bread, as in the country. Finally, with these resources, and order, and economy, my workmen may have wholesome, agreeable, and sufficient food, for from twenty to twenty-five sous a day.”

“Ah! this explains it, M. Agricola.”

“It is not all, mademoiselle. Our cool-headed speculator would continue: ‘Here are my workmen well lodged, well warmed, well fed, with a saving of at least half; why should they not also be warmly clad? Their health will then have every chance of being good, and health is labor. The association will buy wholesale, and at the manufacturing price (still upon my security, secured to me by their wages), warm, good, strong materials, which a portion of the workmen’s wives will be able to make into clothes as well as any tailor. Finally, the consumption of caps and shoes being considerable, the association will obtain them at a great reduction in price.’ Well, Mdlle. Angela! what do you say to our speculator?”

“I say, M. Agricola,” answered the young girl; with ingenuous admiration, “that it is almost incredible, and yet so simple!”

“No doubt, nothing is more simple than the good and beautiful, and yet we think of it so seldom. Observe, that our man has only been speaking with a view to his own interest—only considering the material side of the question—reckoning for nothing the habit of fraternity and mutual aid, which inevitably springs from living together in common—not reflecting that a better mode of life improves and softens the character of man—not thinking of the support and instruction which the strong owe to the weak—not acknowledging, in fine, that the honest, active, and industrious man has a positive right to demand employment from society, and wages proportionate to the wants of his condition. No, our speculator only thinks of the gross profits; and yet, you see, he invests his money in buildings at five per cent., and finds the greatest advantages in the material comfort of his workmen.”



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"It is true, M. Agricola."

"And what will you say, mademoiselle, when I prove to you that our speculator finds also a great advantage in giving to his workmen, in addition to their regular wages, a proportionate share of his profits?"

"That appears to me more difficult to prove, M. Agricola."

"Yet I will convince you of it in a few minutes."

Thus conversing, Angela and Agricola had reached the garden-gate of the Common Dwelling-house. An elderly woman, dressed plainly, but with care and neatness, approached Agricola, and asked him: "Has M. Hardy returned to the factory, sir?"

"No, madame; but we expect him hourly."

"To-day, perhaps?"

"To-day or to-morrow, madame."

"You cannot tell me at what hour he will be here?"

"I do not think it is known, madame, but the porter of the factory, who also belongs to M. Hardy's private house, may, perhaps, be able to inform you."

"I thank you, sir."

"Quite welcome, madame."

"M. Agricola," said Angela, when the woman who had just questioned him was gone, "did you remark that this lady was very pale and agitated?"

"I noticed it as you did, mademoiselle; I thought I saw tears standing in her eyes."

"Yes, she seemed to have been crying. Poor woman! perhaps she came to ask assistance of M. Hardy. But what ails you, M. Agricola? You appear quite pensive."

Agricola had a vague presentiment that the visit of this elderly woman with so sad a countenance, had some connection with the adventure of the young and pretty lady, who, three days before had come all agitated and in tears to inquire after M. Hardy, and who had learned—perhaps too late—that she was watched and followed.

"Forgive me, mademoiselle," said Agricola to Angela; but the presence of this old lady reminded me of a circumstance, which, unfortunately, I cannot tell you, for it is a secret that does not belong to me alone."



“Oh! do not trouble yourself, M. Agricola,” answered the young girl, with a smile; “I am not inquisitive, and what we were talking of before interests me so much, that I do not wish to hear you speak of anything else.”

“Well, then mademoiselle, I will say a few words more, and you will be as well informed as I am of the secrets of our association.”

“I am listening, M. Agricola.”

“Let us still keep in view the speculator from mere interest. 'Here are my workmen, says he, 'in the best possible condition to do a great deal of work. Now what is to be done to obtain large profits? Produce cheaply, and sell dear. But there will be no cheapness, without economy in the use of the raw material, perfection of the manufacturing process, and celerity of labor. Now, in spite of all my vigilance, how am I to prevent my workmen from wasting the materials? How am I to induce them, each in his own province, to seek for the most simple and least irksome processes?”



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“True, M. Agricola; how is that to be done?”

“‘And that is not all,’ says our man; ‘to sell my produce at high prices, it should be irreproachable, excellent. My workmen do pretty well; but that is not enough. I want them to produce masterpieces.’”

“But, M. Agricola, when they have once performed the task set them what interest have workmen to give themselves a great deal of trouble to produce masterpieces?”

“There it is, Mdlle. Angela; what interest have they? Therefore, our speculator soon says to himself: ‘That my workmen may have an interest to be economical in the use of the materials, an interest to employ their time well, an interest to invent new and better manufacturing processes, an interest to send out of their hands nothing but masterpieces—I must give them an interest in the profits earned by their economy, activity, zeal and skill. The better they manufacture, the better I shall sell, and the larger will be their gain and mine also.’”

“Oh! now I understand, M. Agricola.”

“And our speculator would make a good speculation. Before he was interested, the workman said: ‘What does it matter to me, that I do more or do better in the course of the day? What shall I gain by it? Nothing. Well, then, little work for little wages. But now, on the contrary (he says), I have an interest in displaying zeal and economy. All is changed. I redouble my activity, and strive to excel the others. If a comrade is lazy, and likely to do harm to the factory, I have the right to say to him: ‘Mate, we all suffer more or less from your laziness, and from the injury you are doing the common weal.’”

“And then, M. Agricola, with what ardor, courage, and hope, you must set to work!”

“That is what our speculator counts on; and he may say to himself, further: ‘Treasures of experience and practical wisdom are often buried in workshops, for want of goodwill, opportunity, or encouragement. Excellent workmen, instead of making all the improvements in their power, follow with indifference the old jog-trot. What a pity! for an intelligent man, occupied all his life with some special employment, must discover, in the long run, a thousand ways of doing his work better and quicker. I will form, therefore, a sort of consulting committee; I will summon to it my foremen and my most skillful workmen. Our interest is now the same. Light will necessarily spring from this centre of practical intelligence.’ Now, the speculator is not deceived in this, and soon struck with the incredible resources, the thousand new, ingenious, perfect inventions suddenly revealed by his workmen, ‘Why’ he exclaims, ‘if you knew this, did you not tell it before? What for the last ten years has cost me a hundred francs to make, would have cost me only fifty, without reckoning an enormous saving of time.’ ‘Sir,’ answers the workman, who is not more stupid than others, ‘what interest had I, that you should effect a saving of fifty per



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cent? None. But now it is different. You give me, besides my wages, a share in your profits; you raise me in my own esteem, by consulting my experience and knowledge. Instead of treating me as an inferior being, you enter into communion with me. It is my interest, it is my duty, to tell you all I know, and to try to acquire more.' And thus it is, Mdlle. Angela, that the speculator can organize his establishment, so as to shame his oppositionists, and provoke their envy. Now if, instead of a cold hearted calculator, we take a man who unites with the knowledge of these facts the tender and generous sympathies of an evangelical heart, and the elevation of a superior mind, he will extend his ardent solicitude; not only to the material comfort, but to the moral emancipation, of his workmen. Seeking everywhere every possible means to develop their intelligence, to improve their hearts, and strong in the authority acquired by his beneficence, feeling that he on whom depends the happiness or the misery of three hundred human creatures has also the care of souls, he will be the guide of those whom he no longer calls his workmen, but his brothers, in a straightforward and noble path, and will try to create in them the taste for knowledge and art, which will render them happy and proud of a condition of life that is often accepted by others with tears and curses of despair. Well, Mdlle. Angela, such a man is—but, see! he could not arrive amongst us except in the middle of a blessing. There he is—there is M. Hardy!"

"Oh, M. Agricola!" said Angela, deeply moved, and drying her tears; "we should receive him with our hands clasped in gratitude."

"Look if that mild and noble countenance is not the image of his admirable soul!"

A carriage with post horses, in which was M. Hardy, with M. de Blessac, the unworthy friend who was betraying him in so infamous a manner, entered at this moment the courtyard of the factory.

A little while after, a humble hackney-coach was seen advancing also towards the factory, from the direction of Paris. In this coach was Rodin.

[30] The average price of a workman's lodging, composed of two small rooms and a closet at most, on the third or fourth story.

[31] This calculation is amply sufficient, if not excessive. A similar building, at one league from Paris, on the side of Montrouge, with all the necessary offices, kitchen, wash-houses, *etc.*, with gas and water laid on, apparatus for warming, *etc.*, and a garden of ten acres, cost, at the period of this narrative, hardly five hundred thousand francs. An experienced builder less obliged us with an estimate, which confirms what we advance. It is, therefore, evident, that, even at the same price which workmen are in the habit of paying, it would be possible to provide them with perfectly healthy lodgings, and yet invest one's money at ten per cent.



[32] The fact was proved in the works connected with the Rouen Railway. Those French workmen who, having no families, were able to live like the English, did at least as much work as the latter, being strengthened by wholesome and sufficient nourishment.



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[33] Buying penny-worths, like all other purchases at minute retail, are greatly to the poor man's disadvantage.

CHAPTER LII.

Revelations.

During the visit of Angela and Agricola to the Common Dwelling-house, the band of Wolves, joined upon the road by many of the haunters of taverns, continued to march towards the factory, which the hackney-coach, that brought Rodin from Paris, was also fast approaching. M. Hardy, on getting out of the carriage with his friend, M. de Blessac, had entered the parlor of the house that he occupied next the factory. M. Hardy was of middle size, with an elegant and slight figure, which announced a nature essentially nervous and impressionable. His forehead was broad and open, his complexion pale, his eyes black, full at once of mildness and penetration, his countenance honest, intelligent, and attractive.

One word will paint the character of M. Hardy. His mother had called him her Sensitive Plant. His was indeed one of those fine and exquisitely delicate organizations, which are trusting, loving, noble, generous, but so susceptible, that the least touch makes them shrink into themselves. If we join to this excessive sensibility a passionate love for art, a first-rate intellect, tastes essentially refined, and then think of the thousand deceptions, and numberless infamies of which M. Hardy must have been the victim in his career as a manufacturer, we shall wonder how this heart, so delicate and tender, had not been broken a thousand times, in its incessant struggle with merciless self-interest. M. Hardy had indeed suffered much. Forced to follow the career of productive industry, to honor the engagements of his father, a model of uprightness and probity, who had yet left his affairs somewhat embarrassed, in consequence of the events of 1815, he had succeeded, by perseverance and capacity, in attaining one of the most honorable positions in the commercial world. But, to arrive at this point, what ignoble annoyances had he to bear with, what perfidious opposition to combat, what hateful rivalries to tire out!

Sensitive as he was, M. Hardy would a thousand times have fallen a victim to his emotions of painful indignation against baseness, of bitter disgust at dishonesty, but for the wise and firm support of his mother. When he returned to her, after a day of painful struggles with odious deceptions, he found himself suddenly transported into an atmosphere of such beneficent purity, of such radiant serenity, that he lost almost on the instant the remembrance of the base things by which he had been so cruelly tortured during the day; the pangs of his heart were appeased at the mere contact of her great and lofty soul; and therefore his love for her resembled idolatry. When he lost her, he experienced one of those calm, deep sorrows which have no end—which become, as it were, part of life, and have even sometimes their days of



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melancholy sweetness. A little while after this great misfortune, M. Hardy became more closely connected with his workmen. He had always been a just and good master; but, although the place that his mother left in his heart would ever remain void, he felt as it were a redoubled overflowing of the affections, and the more he suffered, the more he craved to see happy faces around him. The wonderful ameliorations, which he now produced in the physical and moral condition of all about him, served, not to divert, but to occupy his grief. Little by little, he withdrew from the world, and concentrated his life in three affections: a tender and devoted friendship, which seemed to include all past friendships—a love ardent and sincere, like a last passion—and a paternal attachment to his workmen. His days therefore passed in the heart of that little world, so full of respect and gratitude towards him—a world, which he had, as it were, created after the image of his mind, that he might find there a refuge from the painful realities he dreaded, surrounded with good, intelligent, happy beings, capable of responding to the noble thoughts which had become more and more necessary to his existence. Thus, after many sorrows, M. Hardy, arrived at the maturity of age, possessing a sincere friend, a mistress worthy of his love, and knowing himself certain of the passionate devotion of his workmen, had attained, at the period of this history, all the happiness he could hope for since his mother's death.

M. de Blessac, his bosom friend, had long been worthy of his touching and fraternal affection; but we have seen by what diabolical means Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin had succeeded in making M. de Blessac, until then upright and sincere, the instrument of their machinations. The two friends, who had felt on their journey a little of the sharp influence of the north wind, were warming themselves at a good fire lighted in M. Hardy's parlor.

"Oh! my dear Marcel, I begin really to get old," said M. Hardy, with a smile, addressing M. de Blessac; "I feel more and more the want of being at home. To depart from my usual habits has become painful to me, and I execrate whatever obliges me to leave this happy little spot of ground."

"And when I think," answered M. de Blessac, unable to forbear blushing, "when I think, my friend, that you undertook this long journey only for my sake!—"

"Well, my dear Marcel! have you not just accompanied me in your turn, in an excursion which, without you, would have been as tiresome as it has been charming?"

"What a difference, my friend! I have contracted towards you a debt that I can never repay."

"Nonsense, my dear Marcel! Between us, there are no distinctions of meum and tuum. Besides, in matters of friendship, it is as sweet to give as to receive."



“Noble heart! noble heart!”

“Say, happy heart!—most happy, in the last affections for which it beats.”



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“And who, gracious heaven! could deserve happiness on earth, if it be not you, my friend?”

“And to what do I owe that happiness? To the affections which I found here, ready to sustain me, when deprived of the support of my mother, who was all my strength, I felt myself (I confess my weakness) almost incapable of standing up against adversity.”

“You, my friend—with so firm and resolute a character in doing good—you, that I have seen struggle with so much energy and courage, to secure the triumph of some great and noble idea?”

“Yes; but the farther I advance in my career, the more am I disgusted with all base and shameful actions, and the less strength I feel to encounter them—”

“Were it necessary, you would have the courage, my friend.”

“My dear Marcel,” replied M. Hardy, with mild and restrained emotion, “I have often said to you: My courage was my mother. You see, my friend, when I went to her, with my heart torn by some horrible ingratitude, or disgusted by some base deceit, she, taking my hands between her own venerable palms, would say to me in her grave and tender voice: ‘My dear child, it is for the ungrateful and dishonest to suffer; let us pity the wicked, let us forget evil, and only think of good.’—Then, my friend, this heart, painfully contracted, expanded beneath the sacred influence of the maternal words, and every day I gathered strength from her, to recommence on the morrow a cruel struggle with the sad necessities of my condition. Happily, it has pleased God, that, after losing that beloved mother, I have been able to bind up my life with affections, deprived of which, I confess, I should find myself feeble and disarmed for you cannot tell, Marcel, the support, the strength that I have found in your friendship.”

“Do not speak of me, my dear friend,” replied M. de Blessac, dissembling his embarrassment. “Let us talk of another affection, almost as sweet and tender as that of a mother.”

“I understand you, my good Marcel,” replied M. Hardy: “I have concealed nothing from you since, under such serious circumstances, I had recourse to the counsels of your friendship. Well! yes; I think that every day I live augment my adoration for this woman, the only one that I have ever passionately loved, the only one that I shall now ever love. And then I must tell you, that my mother, not knowing what Margaret was to me, as often loud in her praise, and that circumstance renders this love almost sacred in my eyes.”

“And then there are such strange resemblances between *Mme.* de Noisy’s character and yours, my friend; above all, in her worship of her mother.”



“It is true, Marcel; that affection has often caused me both admiration and torment. How often she has said to me, with her habitual frankness: ‘I have sacrificed all for you, but I would sacrifice you for my mother.’”

“Thank heaven, my friend, you will never see *Mme.* de Noisy exposed to that cruel choice. Her mother, you say, has long renounced her intention of returning to America, where M. de Noisy, perfectly careless of his wife, appears to have settled himself permanently. Thanks to the discreet devotion of the excellent woman by whom Margaret was brought up, your love is concealed in the deepest mystery. What could disturb it now?”



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“Nothing—oh! nothing,” cried M. Hardy. “I have almost security for its duration.”

“What do you mean, my friend?”

“I do not know if I ought to tell you.”

“Have you ever found me indiscreet, my friend?”

“You, good Marcel! how can you suppose such a thing?” said M. Hardy, in a tone of friendly reproach; “no! but I do not like to tell you of my happiness, till it is complete; and I am not yet quite certain—”

A servant entered at this moment and said to M. Hardy: “Sir, there is an old gentleman who wishes to speak to you on very pressing business.”

“So soon!” said M. Hardy, with a slight movement of impatience. “With your permission, my friend.” Then, as M. de Blessac seemed about to withdraw into the next room, M. Hardy added with a smile: “No, no; do not stir. Your presence will shorten the interview.”

“But if it be a matter of business, my friend?”

“I do everything openly, as you know.” Then, addressing the servant, M. Hardy bade him: “Ask the gentleman to walk in.”

“The postilion wishes to know if he is to wait?”

“Certainly: he will take M. de Blessac back to Paris.”

The servant withdrew, and presently returned, introducing Rodin, with whom M. de Blessac was not acquainted, his treacherous bargain having been negotiated through another agent.

“M. Hardy?” said Rodin, bowing respectfully to the two friends, and looking from one to the other with an air of inquiry.

“That is my name, sir; what can I do to serve you?” answered the manufacturer, kindly; for, at first sight of the humble and ill-dressed old man, he expected an application for assistance.

“M. Francois Hardy,” repeated Rodin, as if he wished to make sure of the identity of the person.

“I have had the honor to tell you that I am he.”



“I have a private communication to make to you, sir,” said Rodin.

“You may speak, sir. This gentleman is my friend,” said M. Hardy, pointing to M. de Blessac.

“But I wish to speak to you alone, sir,” resumed Rodin.

M. de Blessac was again about to withdraw, when M. Hardy retained him with a glance, and said to Rodin kindly, for he thought his feelings might be hurt by asking a favor in presence of a third party: “Permit me to inquire if it is on your account or on mine, that you wish this interview to be secret?”

“On your account entirely, sir,” answered Rodin.

“Then, sir,” said M. Hardy, with some surprise, “you may speak out. I have no secrets from this gentleman.”

After a moment’s silence, Rodin resumed, addressing himself to M. Hardy: “Sir, you deserve, I know, all the good that is said of you; and you therefore command the sympathy of every honest man.”

“I hope so, sir.”

“Now, as an honest man, I come to render you a service.”

“And this service, sir—”



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“To reveal to you an infamous piece of treachery, of which you have been the victim.”

“I think, sir, you must be deceived.”

“I have the proofs of what I assert.”

“Proofs?”

“The written proofs of the treachery that I come to reveal: I have them here,” answered Rodin “In a word, a man whom you believed your friend, has shamefully deceived you, sir.”

“And the name of this man?”

“M. Marcel de Blessac,” replied Rodin.

On these words, M. de Blessac started, and became pale as death. He could hardly murmur: “Sir—”

But, without looking at his friend, or perceiving his agitation, M. Hardy seized his hand, and exclaimed hastily: “Silence, my friend!” Then, whilst his eye flashed with indignation, he turned towards Rodin, who had not ceased to look him full in the face, and said to him, with an air of lofty disdain: “What! do you accuse M. de Blessac?”

“Yes, I accuse him,” replied Rodin, briefly.

“Do you know him?”

“I have never seen him.”

“Of what do you accuse him? And how dare you say that he has betrayed me?”

“Two words, if you please,” said Rodin, with an emotion which he appeared hardly able to restrain. “If one man of honor sees another about to be slain by an assassin, ought he not give the alarm of murder?”

“Yes, sir; but what has that to do—”

“In my eyes, sir, certain treasons are as criminal as murders: I have come to place myself between the assassin and his victim.”

“The assassin? the victim?” said M. Hardy more and more astonished.

“You doubtless know M. de Blessac’s writing?” said Rodin.

“Yes, sir.”



“Then read this,” said Rodin, drawing from his pocket a letter, which he handed to M. Hardy.

Casting now for the first time a glance at M. de Blessac, the manufacturer drew back a step, terrified at the death-like paleness of this man, who, struck dumb with shame, could not find a word to justify himself; for he was far from possessing the audacious effrontery necessary to carry him through his treachery.

“Marcel!” cried M. Hardy, in alarm, and deeply agitated by this unexpected blow. “Marcel! how pale you are! you do not answer!”

“Marcel! this, then, is M. de Blessac?” cried Rodin, feigning the most painful surprise. “Oh, sir, if I had known—”

“But don’t you hear this man, Marcel?” cried M. Hardy. “He says that you have betrayed me infamously.” He seized the hand of M. de Blessac. That hand was cold as ice. “Oh, God! Oh God!” said M. Hardy, drawing back in horror: “he makes no answer!”

“Since I am in presence of M. de Blessac,” resumed Rodin, “I am forced to ask him, if he can deny having addressed many letters to the Rue du Milieu des Ursins, at Paris under cover of M. Rodin.”



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M. de Blessac remained dumb. M. Hardy, still unwilling to believe what he saw and heard, convulsively tore open the letter, which Rodin had just delivered to him, and read the first few lines—interrupting the perusal with exclamations of grief and amazement. He did not require to finish the letter, to convince himself of the black treachery of M. de Blessac. He staggered; for a moment his senses seemed to abandon him. The horrible discovery made him giddy, and his head swam on his first look down into that abyss of infamy. The loathsome letter dropped from his trembling hands. But soon indignation, rage, and scorn succeeded this moment of despair, and rushing, pale and terrible, upon M. de Blessac: “Wretch!” he exclaimed, with a threatening gesture. But, pausing as in the act to strike: “No!” he added, with fearful calmness. “It would be to soil my hands.”

He turned towards Rodin, who had approached hastily, as if to interpose. “It is not worth while chastising a wretch,” said M. Hardy; “But I will press your honest hand, sir—for you have had the courage to unmask a traitor and a coward.”

“Sir!” cried M. de Blessac, overcome with shame; “I am at your orders—and—”

He could not finish. The sound of voices was heard behind the door, which opened violently, and an aged woman entered, in spite of the efforts of the servant, exclaiming in an agitated voice: “I tell you, I must speak instantly to your master.”

On hearing this voice, and at sight of the pale, weeping woman, M. Hardy, forgetting M. de Blessac, Rodin, the infamous treachery, and all, fell back a step, and exclaimed: “Madame Duparc! you here! What is the matter?”

“Oh, sir! a great misfortune—”

“Margaret!” cried M. Hardy, in a tone of despair.

“She is gone, sir!”

“Gone!” repeated M. Hardy, as horror-struck as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet.

“Margaret gone!”

“All is discovered. Her mother took her away—three days ago!” said the unhappy woman, in a failing voice.

“Gone! Margaret! It is not true. You deceive me,” cried M. Hardy. Refusing to hear more, wild, despairing, he rushed out of the house, threw himself into his carriage, to which the post-horses were still harnessed, waiting for M. de Blessac, and said to the postilion: “To Paris! as fast as you can go!”

As the carriage, rapid as lightning, started upon the road to Paris, the wind brought nearer the distant sound of the war-song of the Wolves, who were rushing towards the factory. In this impending destruction, see Rodin’s subtle hand, administering his fatal



blows to clear his way up to the chair of St. Peter to which he aspired. His tireless, wily course can hardly be darker shadowed by aught save that dread coming horror the Cholera, whose aid he evoked, and whose health the Bacchanal Queen wildly drank.

That once gay girl, and her poor famished sister; the fair patrician and her Oriental lover; Agricola, the workman, and his veteran father; the smiling Rose-Pompon, and the prematurely withered Jacques Rennepont; Father d'Aigrigny, the mock priest; and Gabriel, the true disciple; with the rest that have been named and others yet to be pictured, in the blaze of the bolts of their life's paths, will be seen in the third and concluding part of this romance entitled,

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"The wandering Jew: Redemption."