The Adventures of the Chevalier de Faublas

By

Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvray

Published in French 1786-1790
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FRONTISPIECE

Portrait of Louvet de Couvray

CONTENTS

FRONTISPIECE....2
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND EDITORIAL NOTE....4
TITLE PAGE OF VOLUME 1....5
PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.....6
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR....7
ADVERTISEMENT.....10
ONE YEAR OF THE LIFE OF THE CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS.....11
I.....12
II.....30
III.....52
IV.....66
V.....82
VI.....107
VII.....118
VIII.....139
IX.....167
X.....189
XI.....211
XII.....218
SIX WEEKS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS....236
XIII.....237
XIV.....258
XV.....283
XVI.....308
XVII.....329
TO THE PUBLIC.....340
CONCLUSION OF THE AMOURS OF THE CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS....341
XVIII.....342
XIX.....363
XX.....388
XXI.....405
XXII.....426
XXIII.....453
XXIV....473
XXV.....494
XXVI....508
XXVII.....536
XXVIII.....551
XXIX....574
XXX.....596
XXXI....618
NOTES....629

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND EDITORIAL NOTE

The Adventures of the Chevalier de Faublas was written in French by Jean-Baptise Louvet de Couvray in three volumes*: Les Amours du Chevalier de Faublas* 1786, followed in 1788 by *Six semaines de la vie du chevalier de Faublas* and in 1790 by *La Fin des amours du chevalier de Faublas*. These were republished several times in the nineteenth century. An English translation (notoriously imperfect and mutilated) was published in 1795, and a much better version, translated by 'G.C.', in 1822. This 1822 version was republished in 1898, with illustrations by Paul Avril.

This Ex-Classics edition is taken from the 1898 publication. The eccentric punctuation has been standardised and the text, which was continuous, broken up into chapters. Some parts had been left in the original French (and in one case, in Italian): a translation has ben provided in each case. Notes are identified by <nn> and will be found at the end of the book. .Some notes have been added by the transcriber: these have been marked [TN]; others were footnotes in the original.

TITLE PAGE OF VOLUME 1

THE AMOURS

OF THE

CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS

BY

JOHN BAPTISTE LOUVET DE COUVRAY

FOUNDED ON HISTORICAL FACTS. INTERSPERSED
WITH MOST REMARKABLE NARRATIVES

A LITERAL UNEXPURGATED TRANSLATION
FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1821

VOLUME I

WITH NUMEROUS BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS
ETCHED BY LOUIS MONZIES
FROM DRAWINGS BY PAUL AVRIL
EDITION STRICTLY LIMITED TO ONE HUNDRED COPIES

LONDON
PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR SOCIETE DES BIBLIOPHILES
MDCCCXCVIII

PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

This Work, on its first appearance in France, was received with the same *éclat* as the novels of the author of Waverley have since been in this country. Its popularity has continued to this day, and it has been translated into almost every European language. It affords an excellent picture of French manners, previously to, and at the period of, the revolution; and however minutely it may describe the foibles and vices of our species, it, at the same time, places in a most elevated point of view all those virtues which are an honour to our nature. Shakespeare observes, that "the thread of life is of a mingled yarn;" following up this idea, may we not say that society is of a many coloured texture, and cannot be described without being examined on both sides. Such books as give but the fair side of human nature, are only calculated to mislead the inexperienced, and cause them to form those sanguine expectations of frail mortality, which end in misanthropy, in consequence of the repeated mortifications and disappointments they meet with. Whereas, by the bad being blended with the good, as it really exists, we are enabled to form a just estimate of mankind, and by not expecting too much, are capable of continuing in better temper with them. The characters in this Romance are, generally speaking, drawn by the hand of a master, and some of them are most highly finished. Though the gay and dissipated libertine and the lively and intriguing Marchioness are delineated with more precision than could be wished, and though they may dazzle the eyes by the showy splendour of their colouring, there are other figures on the canvas, whose superior qualities appeal directly to our hearts, and whose amiable and heroic virtues strike us with an indelible impression. Where can we find a more faithful portraiture of youthful innocence and simplicity; of the constancy of female affection and conjugal devotion amidst continued trials and accumulated sufferings; of philosophic fortitude, manly courage, disinterested patriotism, and consummate heroism, than in the Romance of Faublas. The affecting episode of Lodoiska has been dramatized many years since, but the most interesting part of the story will be found to follow the catastrophe which terminates the play.

The present translation was undertaken in consequence of a great demand arising for the work, and the former one being extremely scarce. That published in 1795 was notoriously imperfect and mutilated; it was, therefore, deemed more advisable to make a new and faithful translation, than to be at the pains of correcting the old one. The edition made use of was that printed by Didot, the king's printer, for Ambroise Tardieu, at Paris, in four elegant 8vo volumes, in 1821.

The translator has rendered it as close as the idioms of the two languages will admit, not wishing to alter the style of a work so elegant in the original, although the sententious and interjectional mode of writing, familiar to the French, may not sound quite so natural to an English ear.

G.C.

London, June 5, 1822.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR.

JOHN BAPTISTE LOUVET DE COUVRAY was born at Paris in the year 1764. His youth was devoted to study, and afforded nothing remarkable. Destined to the profession of the law, but disgusted with an occupation so little conformable to his taste, he gave himself up to literary pursuits.

He published the first part of this romance, under the title of *One Year of the Life of the Chevalier de Faublas*, in 1789. A lively and poignant style: much truth, mingled with a long series of events and stories, told with grace, rendered this production a fashionable book.

It is not that Louvet always paints the society he brings before us with a rigorous exactness; for some of his personages are rather conceived than studied; but the beings he has created are not unnatural; the passions which he causes to act are ours; and it is pleasant sometimes to forget an afflicting reality, and roam without restraint in the fields of imagination.

The Marquis de Lauraguais assigns an historical origin to Faublas. According to him, this personage was the Abbé de Choisi, who lived under Louis the Fourteenth. Being a priest, and paying his court de Madame Maintenon, in order to obtain some benefice, he dedicated to her a translation he had made of the "Imitation of Jesus Christ." With this motto in the title page, *Concupiscit rex decorum tuum*, and which he said could only be rendered with decency as follows: "Thy charms have excited the concupiscence of the king." This Abbé de Choisi published his memoirs under the name of the Comtesse des Barres, and had played the part of a woman with more than a Marchioness de B***, and more than a Comtesse de Lignolle.

However it may be, Louvet lived a long time in the country near a lady to whom he was passionately attached from his earliest years. A forced marriage separated them in vain; at liberty, after six years of absence, they were united to part no more. Happy, both by temperament and philosophy, Louvet continued his work, of which the first-fruits supplied his wants. Retired from the world, he thought himself sheltered from its storms—but the revolution broke out; with the Bastille fell the yoke which oppressed France. Louvet received the tricoloured cockade from the hands of that Lodoiska whose name he has attached to the most pathetic episode of his work. This act of liberty became the cause of a persecution which Louvet experienced from some gentlemen in his neighbourhood, and ultimately determined him to go to Paris.

A pamphlet which he published against M. Mounier of the Constituent Assembly, after the affair of 1789, procured him an admission to the Jacobin Club. This club was then open but to patriotism and talent. Launched into a political career, he published *Emilie de Varmont, et les Amours du curé Sevin*, a romance, the object of which was to prove the necessity of divorce, and the marriage of priests. He composed, at the same time, three comedies, only one of which was presented; it was intended to ridicule the troops assembled at Coblenz.

Free from ambition, Louvet appeared but seldom in popular assemblies. Persuaded that the natural course of things would bring about the reform they had a right to expect, he remained in the obscure ranks of the revolution, of which he took upon himself all the trouble, entirely regardless of his private interests. As soon as he learnt that a party had conspired against the Constitution which had been sworn to, and that several of the representatives of the people had sold themselves to power, he thought himself obliged, in his turn, to enter the lists.

On the 25th December, 1791, he presented himself at the bar of the legislative assembly, at the head of a deputation from the Section of the Lombards, to obtain a decree against the princes who had emigrated, and a war against the sovereigns who were arming in their favour.

Louvet was very assiduous in the club of which he became a member; he spoke with much force when they discussed the question of the war with Austria. Robespierre opposed him. The reply of Louvet overwhelmed his antagonist, who never forgave him from that time, but continued to bear him the most implacable hatred. The ministers, who were all desirous of war, were pleased to find Louvet so powerful an auxiliary. To testify their gratitude and their esteem, they had it in contemplation to put him at the head of the judicial department. The inimical faction, alarmed at this resolution, employed every resource to prevent its accomplishment. They spared neither menaces nor calumnies, and succeeded in frustrating his appointment. This weakness on the part of government emboldened the adversaries which it thought to calm by an act of condescension, and we know to what a pitch they afterwards carried their audacity.

Connected in a close friendship with the minister Roland, whose house was the rendezvous of all who advocated a prudent liberty, Louvet became the soul of his counsels. This virtuous citizen induced him to conduct *The Sentinel*, a journal which he destined to neutralize the fatal doctrines of the demagogues. Louvet, in acquitting himself of this task, displayed such an excess of zeal for liberty, as caused him to lose the ambassadorship to Constantinople, for which Dumouriez, than in full power, destined him. His friends thought to repair this disgrace, by offering him the place of commissary at St. Domingo; but he refused it, that he might not leave his country at a moment when she was a prey to the most dreadful convulsions.

We have not room to follow Louvet through his political career; to do that would require considerable reference to the progress of the French Revolution, and a variety of details, probably uninteresting to the majority of our readers. From the moment he discovered the violent and ambitious views of Robespierre, he openly denounced him, and opposed him with all his might. He was spontaneously chosen to represent the department of Loiret, which circumstance called down upon him a special proscription from the Terrorists.

When Louis XVI was brought up for judgment, Louvet insisted on an appeal to the people, and said, if it was not made, no power on earth should compel him to vote. Although his opinion was little favourable to the monarch, his heart sought to reconcile the duties of a representative with the rights of humanity. He was convinced, that by investing the nation with the sovereignty, they would do away with the influence of party, and in awakening all the citizens to a sense of their strength and their dignity, they should paralyze the factious.

The appeal to the people being rejected, the punishment then became the question.

"Representatives," said Louvet, after having repeated his opinion, "you are about to pronounce an irreparable judgment; may the tutelary genius of my country ward off the evils that are preparing for her! May his all-powerful hand retrieve you from the abyss into which some ambitious men have contributed to precipitate you! May his avenging hand crush the tyrants who have started up! The dangers of the republic become immense and pressing; but her safety is still in your hands. Be

careful of parting with your power; pay homage to the rights of those who have sent you; and if, for having fulfilled your duties, you should fall by the hands of assassins, you will, at least, fall worthy of regret and esteem. Times, men, and circumstances may change, but principles can never change; nor will I change any more than principles."

Louvet did not vote for the death of the king.

After being President of the Convention, Member of the Committee of Public Safety, Deputy for La Gironde, one of the Council of Five Hundred, and pursuing a most zealous but consistent political career, up to the year 1797, he found that the heat of political controversy had injured his health; his soul was aggrandized in the school of misfortune, at the expense of his too delicate constitution. He withdrew from active life, and was named Consul for Palermo, but died on the 5th of August, 1797. The celebrated Madame Roland, speaking of our author, says:—

"Louvet is small, delicate, near-sighted, and of a slovenly habit, but there is nothing vulgar about him. Who has not remarked the nobleness of his forehead, and the life which animates his eyes at the expression of an important truth? His pretty romances are known to the men of letters, and the science of politics is indebted to him for labors of a graver nature. It is impossible to unite more wit with less pretensions, and more good nature. Courageous as a lion, mild as an infant, he is a sensible man, a good citizen, and a vigorous writer. He could make a Catiline tremble at the tribune, and sup with Bachaumont."

After having partaken of his dangers and disgraces, his wife, Lodoiska, who had ever afforded him the sweetest consolation, could not support the loss of a man she had loved so much. She poisoned herself; but her family compelled her to take an antidote, which, by extending her life, only prolonged her regrets.

Louvet is generally represented to have been a man of probity and rigid morals; and of all the members of the deliberative assemblies the most invariably attached to his principles. Neither times nor circumstances had any influence upon him during a revolution so remarkable for the fickleness and tergiversation of its actors. Inaccessible to corruption as to threats, and undeviating in his duties, he sacrificed his fortune to the interests of the people, and defended liberty at the peril of his life, and still defended it, when the victim of anarchy, he paid, by a merciless proscription, for the honour of so noble a devotion. "Since even in a country which I thought ready to regenerate itself," he said when dying, "the good people are so indolent, and the wicked so furious, it is clear that all collections of men, improperly called PEOPLE by such fools as myself, are nothing but an imbecile herd, who are happy in being trampled on by a master."

The feelings of Louvet, in his last moments, seemed much like those of the virtuous Brutus, when he exclaimed:

"OH, VIRTUE! I HAVE WORSHIPPED THEE AS A REAL GOOD, BUT FIND THOU ART ONLY AN EMPTY NAME!"

Extracted from the Memoir prefixed to the Paris edition., dated Feb. 16, 1821.

ADVERTISEMENT.

This work is now so universally read and admired in the original, that a great demand has arisen for it in an English dress by those who do not read French. In consequence of this demand the publisher has procured it to be faithfully translated, and he has printed it verbatim, without any of the mutilations which he is given to understand a former translation (now out of print, and very scarce) underwent.

April, 1822.

ONE YEAR OF THE LIFE OF THE CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS.

First Published 1786

I.

THEY tell me that my ancestors were persons of consideration in their province, having always enjoyed there a handsome fortune, and a distinguished rank. My father, the Baron Faublas, transmitted to me their ancient nobility without disgrace; but my mother died too soon. I was not sixteen years of age, when my sister, still younger than myself by eighteen months, was placed in a convent at Paris. The Baron, who conducted her there, embraced with pleasure that opportunity of showing the capital to a son, for whose education he had neglected nothing.

It was in October, 1783, that we entered the capital, by the suburb of Saint Marceau. I looked for the superb city of which I had read such brilliant descriptions. I saw lofty but ugly cottages; streets long but very narrow; wretches covered with rags, and a crowd of children almost naked; I saw a numerous population and dreadful misery. I demanded of my father, if this was Paris; he replied coldly, that it was not the finest part of it; that next day we should have time to visit another quarter. It was almost night; Adelaide (which was the name of my sister) entered her convent, where she was expected. My father descended with me near the Arsenal, at the house of Monsieur du Portail, his intimate friend, of whom I shall speak more than once in the course of these memoirs.

The next day my father kept his word with me; in a quarter of an hour a swift conveyance conducted us to the square of Louis the Fifteenth. There we got out, and walked: the spectacle which struck my eyes dazzled them with its magnificence. To the right, *La Seine a regret fugitive*; upon the banks extensive mansions; upon the left superb palaces; delightful walks behind me; and in front a noble garden. We advanced, and I saw the dwelling of kings. It is easier to imagine my astonishment than to describe it. My attention was attracted by new objects at every step: I admired the richness of the fashions; the gaiety of the dress and the elegance of the manners of those by whom I was surrounded. All at once I remembered the other quarter of the city, and my astonishment was greatly excited; I could not comprehend how objects so different could be contained within the same circumference; experience had not then taught me that everywhere the palaces concealed cottages; that luxury produced misery; that the great opulence of a single person always produced the extreme poverty of many.

We employed several days in visiting what was most remarkable in Paris. The Baron showed me a number of monuments celebrated by foreigners, which were almost unknown by those who possessed them. How many *chefs d'oeuvres* astonished me at first, for which in a little time I felt but a cold admiration. But what do we know at fifteen years of age about the glory of the arts and the immortality of genius? It requires beauties more animated to warm a youthful heart.

Illustration. My father perceived, and was amused at my embarrassment:

It was at the convent of Adelaide that I was to meet the adorable object in whom my existence centred. The Baron, who loved my sister, went almost every day to see her in the conversation room. All young ladies of good birth find that in a convent they have good friends; many fine ladies affirm, that it is difficult to find them elsewhere. However that may be, my sister, naturally sensible, had presently chosen hers. One day she spoke to us of Mademoiselle de Pontis, and pronounced a eulogium on this young person, which we thought exaggerated. My father was curious to see the good friend of his daughter. I know not what soft presentiment made my heart palpitate, when the Baron told Adelaide to go and fetch Mademoiselle de Pontis. My sister ran and brought her—figure to yourself a Venus of fourteen. I wished to advance towards her—to speak to her—to salute her, but I remained with my eyes fixed, my mouth open, and my hands hanging by my sides. My father perceived, and was amused at my embarrassment; "You will salute the lady, at least," he said to me. My trouble augmented; I made a most awkward bow. "Mademoiselle," continued the Baron, "I assure you that this young man has had a dancing master." I was entirely disconcerted. The Baron paid a very flattering compliment to Sophia; she replied to it modestly, and with a faltering voice which reverberated to my heart. I stared at her

with astonishment, and I attended most minutely to everything she said, but I was still incapable of giving vent to my feelings. Being about to leave them, my father embraced his daughter, and made his reverence to Mademoiselle de Pontis; and I, in an involuntary transport, made a bow to my sister, and was going to embrace Sophia. The old *gouvernante,* preserving more presence of mind than myself, took care to tell me of my mistake; the Baron regarded me with an air of astonishment, and the face of Sophia was covered with an amiable blush, but a slight smile nevertheless escaped her rosy lips.

We returned to the house of M. du Portail and sat down to dinner; I ate like a youth of fifteen just smitten with love, and when the table was cleared, pretended a slight indisposition in order that I might retire to my apartment. There I freely ruminated on Sophia, and all her charms. "What grace! What beauty!" I said: "her charming figure is full of animation, and her mind, I am sure, must correspond with her person. Her fine black eyes have inspired me, I know not how—it is love, without doubt. Ah! Sophia, it is with love and for life!" Recovered from this first transport, I remembered to have seen in several romances, the wonderful effects of an unexpected meeting; the first glance of a beautiful eye had been sufficient to captivate a tender lover, and the fair lady herself, flattered by the powerful impression she had made, became immediately susceptible of a similar sentiment, and irresistibly impelled to follow its bias. I had also read long dissertations wherein profound philosophers had denied the power of sympathy, and called it a chimera. "Sophia!" I exclaimed, "I feel truly that I love you; but have you shared my trouble and my agitations?" The manner in which I was presented was not such as to give me much confidence; but her sweet voice, at first so faltering, and which she with so much difficulty recovered; that sweet smile by which she appeared to sanction my mistake, and to console me for my privation! Hope cheered my heart; it appeared to me very possible that on the subjects of sensibility, philosophers talked nonsense, and the romances had reason on their side.

I had approached, by chance, towards my window; I saw the Baron and M. du Portail walk with hasty steps in the garden. My father spoke with energy, his friend every now and then smiled, and both, at intervals, cast their eyes upon my window; I judged that it was of me they were discoursing, and that my father perhaps had already suspected my new-born passion. This idea made me uneasy, much less, however, than that of the departure of my father, which I believed near at hand. To quit my Sophia without knowing when I should have the happiness of seeing her again! To have more than a hundred leagues between us! I could not think of it without trembling. A thousand painful reflections occupied me during the evening. I made but a poor supper; I was, as yet, ignorant of the pleasures of love, but I already groaned under its most poignant anxieties.

Part of the night passed in the same agitations. I went to sleep in hopes of seeing my Sophia the next day; her image came to embellish my dreams; love, propitious to my vows, deigned to prolong so charming a sleep. It was late when I awoke; I learned with regret that they had suffered me to sleep when I found that father had gone out in the morning, and would not be back before the evening.

While bewailing my misfortune in not being able to visit my sister, M. du Portail entered; he made me many kind professions of friendship, and asked me if I was satisfied with the Capital; I assured him that I feared nothing so much as quitting it. He told me I should not have that mortification; that my father, anxious to give me

a very good education, as the only heir of his house, and that he might watch very closely the happiness of a daughter whom he loved, had resolved to continue at Paris some years: and in order to live there in a manner suitable to a man of his rank, had taken a house. This good news gave me a pleasure which I could not dissimulate; he, however, soon moderated its excess when he informed me that my father had commenced by choosing me a tutor and a faithful servant. At this instant, Monsieur l'Abbé Person was announced.

A very thin and pale little gentleman entered, and his mien fully justified the ill-humour with which his title had inspired me. He advanced with a grave and composed air, and in a low and mild tone began: "Monsieur, your figure"—satisfied with the words he had uttered, he stopped to consider what he should next say—"your figure corresponds with your person." I replied very dryly to this sweet compliment.

Deprived of the happiness of seeing Sophia, I could find no other resource than the pleasure of thinking of her; and M. l'Abbé came to rob me of that consolation. I resolved, therefore, to probe him to the bottom, and from the first day succeeded.

In the evening my father confirmed with his own mouth the arrangements he had proposed; he signified to me at the same time, that I was never to go out but with my tutor: this warned me that I must gain him to my interest. My situation became critical, and my love, irritated by obstacles, seemed to increase with my constraint. I had made a very good progress in my studies, and my tutor was charged with the painful task of making me perfect in them; happily, I had an opportunity, in my first lessons, of perceiving that the pupil knew as much as the instructor. Monsieur l'Abbé, I said to him, you are as capable of teaching as I am curious to learn. Why, then, should we mutually trouble each other? Listen to me, let us leave there the books upon which we can speak at leisure; come and see my sister at her convent, and if Mademoiselle Sophia de Pontis comes to the conversation room, you will see how pretty she is. The Abbé was inclined to be angry, but profiting by the advantage I had over him, "I see you do not love exercise," I replied to him, "well, we'll remain here; but this evening I will declare to the Baron the extreme desire I have to be advanced in my studies, and your absolute insufficiency to lighten my labours. If you deny it, I will demand an examination, which my father himself will make us undergo." The Abbé was overcome by the strength of my last arguments; he made a hideous grimace, took his little cane and his rusty hat, and accompanied me to the convent.

Adelaide came to the conference room accompanied only by her governess whom they called Manon. This woman was an old domestic of my mother, who had brought her up. I asked her to leave us, and she did so without hesitation. The cursed little tutor remained, and it was impossible to remove him. My sister complained that we had suffered several days to pass without seeing her, and I was astonished to learn that the Baron had neglected her as well as myself. We concluded that his mind must have been so much occupied with his new projects, that he forgot his dear girl. "But you, Faublas, what has detained you all this time? Do you slight your sister, and her dear friend? It is ungrateful of you. Mademoiselle de Pontis is gone out; come and see us tomorrow; and above all, take care you give no offence, and Sophia will endeavour to make your peace with her old *gouvernante,* who has not yet quite pardoned your indiscretions." I told my sister that I must obtain permission of the Abbé, and that he possessed a rage for study without any relaxation. Adelaide, believing that I spoke seriously, addressed the most charming solicitations to my grave tutor, which I

followed up by my own entreaties. He sustained this jeering better than I expected; I remarked also, that when I spoke of going home, he observed, that it was all in good time: this complaisance entirely reconciled me to him.

My father expected me at M. Du Portail's, in order to conduct us to a very fine house, which he had taken in the Faubourg St. Germain. I was put, the same evening, in possession of the apartment he had allotted me. I found there Jasmin, the servant of whom they had spoken to me: he was a stout youth, of good appearance, and he pleased me on first sight.

"Do you slight your sister and her dear friend? It is ungrateful of you," said Adelaide to me. I repeated this reproach to myself a hundred times, and commented on it in a hundred different ways. Have they then talked about me? Have they expected me? Have I then been wished for? How long the night seemed to me! What a torment it is to hear the hours strike, and not have it in your power to hasten that which will bring us to the much-loved object.

At last the long desired moment arrived, I saw my sister, and I saw Sophia, who appeared to me more beautiful and interesting than when I first saw her. There was, in her simple dress, a something which I cannot express, most attractive and seducing. In this second visit my eyes scrutinized minutely her charms, and more than once our glances met during the charming examination. I admired her long black hair, which contrasted singularly with her fine skin, the whiteness of which dazzled one's sight; her waist so elegant and slender, that I could have embraced it with my ten fingers; the most enchanting graces spread themselves over her whole person, her little feet, of which I knew not the favourable omen, and above all her eyes—her bright eyes, which seemed to say to me: "Ah! That we might render the mortal happy who possesses the power to please us!"

I made Mademoiselle a compliment which was calculated to flatter her, in as much as it was easy to perceive that it was not studied. The conversation was at first general, and Sophia's *gouvernante* joined in it; I saw that they contrived to amuse the old woman, and that she loved to hear herself talk, therefore I appeared delighted with her foolish stories. In the meantime the Abbé chatted with my sister, and I, in a low and trembling voice, put a hundred questions and paid as many compliments to my lovely Sophia. The old woman continued to relate her nonsensical histories, which we no longer listened to, and she perceived, at last, that she had been speaking a long time to no purpose. She rose abruptly, and said, "You made me begin my narrative, sir, and you do not attend to the conclusion; this is not very polite." Sophia, on leaving me, consoled me with a tender look.

We heard the rattling of a carriage; it was that of the Baron, who entered immediately. Adelaide complained of the rarity of his visits; he alleged, in a constrained tone, the embarrassments of a new establishment. He talked with her a few minutes, in a manner as if he had something on his mind, after which he left her hastily, and took me home with him.

We found a brilliant equipage at our door. The porter told my father that a great black gentleman had been waiting for him above an hour, and that a pretty lady had that moment arrived; my father appeared as much pleased as surprised, he went in with eagerness, and I wished to follow, but he told me to go to my own room. Jasmin, of whom I enquired if he knew "the great black gentleman," and the "pretty lady," answered in the negative.

Curious to penetrate the mystery, I placed myself to watch at one of the windows of my apartment which overlooked the street; I did not wait long without seeing a stout gentleman, dressed in black, go out by himself, and with the appearance of perfect satisfaction. A quarter of an hour after I saw a young lady spring lightly into her carriage. The Baron, much less nimble, wished to jump as expertly, but fell, and I thought he had broken his neck. I was much alarmed, but the burst of laughter which came from the carriage fully satisfied me. I was astonished that my father, who was naturally choleric, showed no signs of ill humour, but stepped in quietly; he bowed his head to the porter, saw me at my casement, and appeared rather confused. I heard him order the servants to tell me he was gone out on business, and that I need not wait supper for him. I imparted my curiosity to Jasmin, who appeared to merit my confidence. He enquired without affectation of the domestics of the Baron, and I learnt the same evening that my father frequented public places, and read the newspapers; that he was gone to take a mistress to the opera: I concluded that the Baron must be very rich to charge himself with such a burden. The reflection did not affect me much. I had hopes of success with my fair Sophia, and in the spring-tide of life we know no other wealth.

In a little time I paid my sister very frequent visits; Mademoiselle de Pontis almost always accompanied her to the conference room. The old *gouvernante* was no longer angry, because I let her finish her histories, and likewise, because Adelaide took care to make her some little presents. The Abbé was no longer the severe tutor, possessed (like many of his profession) with the rage for teaching that of which he was ignorant; but he became, like many others also, a little rosy-faced pedant, with his hair very regularly dressed, minute in his apparel, lax in his morals, displaying profound erudition with the women; and with the men affecting to skim but over the surface. As mild and complaisant, as he was at first untractable and obstinate, he appeared to have no other desire than to anticipate my wishes, and to facilitate their accomplishment; when I spoke of going to the convent, I found him equally eager with myself.

In the meanwhile, my father, devoted to the noisy pleasures of the Capital, entertained much company at home. I was caressed by the fair sex, who gave me enticements which I could not comprehend. A certain dowager in particular, tried on me the power of her charms, gave herself a number of childish airs, and exhausted all her affected conceits: I alone was ignorant of what it all meant. Elsewhere I saw no one in the world but Sophia; the love with which she inspired me was pure and innocent, and I knew not, as yet, that there existed a passion of another description.

For more than five months I had seen Sophia almost every day, and we were so accustomed to meet, that we looked upon it as a matter of course, and it seemed as necessary as our daily food. When we are ignorant of our love, or seek to disguise it, we frequently use names or phrases which are familiar and friendly, instead of those still more tender, which would excite suspicion. Sophia called me her young cousin, and I called Sophia my pretty cousin. The tenderness which we felt towards each other was evinced by our most indifferent actions, and expressed by our looks; my lips had not yet hazarded the avowal, and my sister was either blind to it, or she kept well the secret of her fair friend. I followed the first impulses of NATURE, but was far from suspecting the ends she had in view. Content to speak to Sophia, happy to hear her, and to kiss sometimes her pretty hand, I desired no more, or at least I could not have said what I desired. The moment approached, when one of the most

charming women in the capital was to dissipate the darkness that environed me, and initiate me into the most delightful mysteries of Venus.

We were in that bustling season of the year when pleasure and folly united hold dominion over the city; Momus had given the signal for the dance, and the days were spent in festivity. The young Count de Rosambert, who had been for three months companion of my exercises, and who was loaded with civilities by my father, reproached me for the retired and tranquil life I led; ought I, at my age, to bury myself alive in the house of my father? To confine my walks to foolish visits to a nunnery to see my sister? Was it not time to quit my childhood which they wished eternally to prolong? And ought I not to hasten my entrance into the world, where with my figure and understanding, I could not fail to be favourably received? "Be advised by me," he continued, "I will, tomorrow, conduct you to a charming ball, where I go regularly four times a week, and you will there see good company." I hesitated; "He is cautious, like a girl," replied the Count: well, do "you fear that your chastity will run some hazard? Dress yourself as a woman; in this garb you will be safe." I burst into laughter, without knowing why. "Indeed," he said, "that will become you best; you have a slender and graceful figure, your cheeks are hardly covered with a light down; you will pass admirably! And then— Mind you, I wish to torment a certain person. Faublas, dress yourself as a woman, we will amuse ourselves. It will be delightful You shall see, you shall see!"

The idea of this disguise pleased me, and I thought it would be very agreeable to go and see Sophia in the habiliments of her own sex. The next day an expert tailor whom the Count de Rosambert had spoken to, brought me the complete dress of an Amazon, such as is worn by the English ladies when they ride on horseback. An experienced milliner dressed my hair, consistent with my new character, and placed on my virgin head, a little hat of white beaver. I went down to my father; the moment he saw me, he came to me with an air of inquietude; then stopping all at once: "Good," he said, laughing, "I had at first thought it was Adelaide!" I observed to him, that he flattered me very much. "No, I took you for Adelaide, and was endeavouring to guess what motive induced her to quit the convent without my peremission, and come here in that strange habit. But as to yourself, be not proud of this trifling advantage; a pretty person is, in a man, one of the lowest merits."

It was my father who in the first place testified a desire to go to the convent, and he conducted me there. Adelaide did not know me until after some minutes' examination. The Baron, enchanted with the extreme resemblance there was between my sister and me, loaded us with caresses, and embraced us alternately. Nevertheless Adelaide seemed to repent having come to the conversation room alone: "I am sorry," she said, "that I have not brought with me my dear friend! How we should delight in her surprise! Permit me, my dear father, to go and fetch her?" The Baron consented. In re-entering, Adelaide said to Sophia: "My good friend, embrace my sister." Sophia with astonishment eyed me from head to foot, and stood confounded. "Embrace Mademoiselle," said the old *gouvernante*, deceived by the metamorphosis. "Mademoiselle, embrace my daughter," said the Baron, who was amused by the scene. Sophia blushed, and trembled as she approached; my heart palpitated. I know not what secret instinct conducted us, I know not with what address we concealed our happiness from the interested witnesses who observed us; they thought that our cheeks alone had met—but my lips had pressed the lips of Sophia You, readers, who are susceptible; who have been affected by the lovers of Saint Preux,<1> judge what bliss we experienced. This was also the first kiss of love.

On our return, we found the Count de Rosambert, who had been waiting for me. The Baron was presently informed of the scheme, and permitted me, more readily than I had expected, to pass the whole night at the ball, where we were conveyed in his own chariot. "I am going," said the Count to me, "to present you to a young lady that I esteem very much; it is full two months since I have sworn an eternal attachment to her, and more than six weeks that I have proved it to her." This language was quite enigmatical to me, but already I began to blush at my ignorance, and I put on a knowing smile, to make Rosambert think that I understood him. "As I am going to torment her," he continued, "assume an air as if you loved me very much, you'll see what effect it will make on her! Above all, let me caution you against telling her that you are not a girl. We shall be sure to mortify her."

As soon as we appeared in the assembly, all eyes were fixed on me; I was vexed to feel that I blushed, and could not keep my countenance. Sometimes I thought that a part of my dress must be out of order, or that my borrowed character had betrayed me; but presently, from the general attention of the men, and the universal discontent of the women, I judged that I was well disguised. One lady threw at me a disdainful look; another examined me with a pouting air; they agitated their fans, they whispered among themselves, and smiled maliciously. I saw that I received such a welcome with which they honour, in a numerous circle, a rival who is too pretty, when she appears for the first time.

A very handsome woman entered; it was the mistress of Rosambert. He presented to her his relation, who came, he said, from a convent. The lady (who was called the Marchioness B***) welcomed me in the most obliging manner; I took a seat by her, and the young folks formed a semicircle round us. The Count, much pleased to excite the jealousy of his mistress, affected to give me a marked preference. The Marchioness, apparently piqued at his coquetry, and fully resolved to punish him, in concealing from him her resentment, redoubled her politeness towards me: "Mademoiselle, have you a taste for the convent?" she said to me. "I should like it well, Madame, if I found there many persons like yourself." The Marchioness testified by a smile, how much this compliment flattered her; she put several other questions to me, and appeared delighted with my answers. She loaded me with the caresses which the women lavish on each other; told Rosambert, that he was happy in having such a relation, and finally gave me a tender kiss, which I returned very politely. This was neither what Rosambert wished, nor what he had promised himself. Hurt at the vivacity of the Marchioness, and still more at the readiness with which I received her caresses, he whispered into her ear, and discovered to her the secret of my disguise. "A very likely tale!" cried the Marchioness, after having regarded me for a few moments: the Count protested he had told her the truth. She looked at me again: "What folly! It cannot be." The Count renewed his protestations. "What an idea!" replied the Marchioness and dropping her voice; "do you know what he says? He insists that you are a young man disguised." I answered timidly, in a low voice, that he had said the truth. The Marchioness darted a tender look at me, gently squeezed my hand, and pretending to have misunderstood me: "I know it well," she said, sufficiently loud, "it has not the shadow of probability." Then addressing the Count, "but sir, to what end are all these jokes?"

"What!" he replied, to this, with astonishment, "does mademoiselle pretend—"

"How, if she pretends! Look at her! A child so amiable! So pretty!"

"What!" said the Count again. "Oh! Sir, do pray drop this nonsense," continued the Marchioness, in a manner peculiarly *piquante*; "you either take me for a fool, or you are mad yourself."

I began seriously to think she had not understood me; I said in a low tone: "I beg your pardon, Madame, I have, perhaps, badly explained myself; I am not what I appear to be: the Count has told you the truth."

"I do not believe you, any more than him," she replied, speaking still lower than myself, and squeezing my hand. "I assure you, Madame—"

"Hold your tongue, you are a hypocrite; but you shall not deceive me any more than him;" and she embraced me. Rosambert, who had not heard us, remained stupefied. The young folks who surrounded us, seemed to wait with as much curiosity as impatience the end and explanation of a dialogue so obscure to them; but the Count restrained by the fear of offending his mistress if he covered himself with ridicule; and also flattering himself, that I should presently put an end to the mistake, bit his lips, and dared not say a word. Happily at this moment, the Marchioness saw her friend the Countess C*** enter the ball-room: I know not what she whispered into her ear, but the Countess immediately attached herself to Rosambert, nor quitted him during the evening.

In the meanwhile the ball had commenced, I joined in a country dance; it happened, by chance, that the Countess and Rosambert were seated behind the place which I occupied. The young lady said to him: "No, no, all that is useless, I have taken possession of you for the whole evening, I do not give you up to anyone. More jealous than a sultan, I shall not suffer you to speak to any one whatever; you dance not at all, or you dance with me; and if you mean all the obliging things you have said to me, I forbid you to say a word, a single word, to the Marchioness, or your young relation!"

"My young relation? said the Count: "If you knew—"

"I will know nothing—only I wish you to remain here. Suppose," she added, in a softer tone, "I have designs upon you; are you going to be cruel?" I heard no more of it, for the country dance finished.

The Marchioness had not lost sight of me for a moment; I wished to rest myself, I found a place near her; we began, and re-began! Broke off, and began twenty times, a very animated conversation, which was often interrupted by caresses, and in which I saw plainly, that I must leave her in the error which appeared to please her so much.

The Count did not cease to observe us with great inquietude, but the Marchioness would not appear to see him: "My intention," she said to me, "is not to pass the whole night here, and if you take my advice, you will be careful of your health. Come home and have some slight refreshment with me; it is past midnight. Monsieur the Marquis will not be long in coming to join me; we will go and sup, and I will afterwards conduct you to your own house; you will find the Marquis a very singular man. He has occasionally fits of tenderness for me—at other times caprices of jealousy, very ridiculous, and frequently is inclined to pay me attentions with which I could willingly dispense. When he vows fidelity to me, I neither believe it nor care for it; nevertheless I shall not be sorry to put him to the proof: he will see you, and find you charming. You will not begin then with this pretty tale of your disguise; 'tis an amusing joke, but we have worn it out; therefore, instead of repeating it before

the Marquis de B***, you will do well, if you have no objection to oblige me a little, to make him some advances." I demanded of her what advances she meant. She laughed heartily at the simplicity of my question, and then regarding me with a tender look: "Hear me," she said, "it is clear that you are a woman: therefore, all the caresses which I have given you this evening, are only out of friendship; but if you had indeed been a young man disguised, and believing it, I had treated you in the same manner, that would have been called making advances, and very warm ones too." I promised her to make advances to the Marquis. "Very well! Smile at his proposals, look at him in a significant manner, but do not let him press your hand as I have done, nor embrace you as I have embraced you; that would be neither proper nor decent."

The Marquis arrived. He still had a young look: he was well made, but of very small stature; his appearance was gay, but the gaiety was of that sort which always causes a laugh at its expense. "Here is Mademoiselle du Portail," said the Marchioness (for I had taken that name), "she is a young relation of the Count, you will thank me for having introduced her to you; she is kind enough to sup with us." The Marquis found that I had *a very happy physiognomy*, he lavished on me the most ridiculous eulogiums, and I returned them by the most extravagant compliments. "I am very happy, Mademoiselle," he said, in a formal manner, which he thought very fine, "that you do me the honour to sup with me; you are very pretty—very pretty, and you may depend on what I say in that respect, for I am skilled in physiognomy. "My dear child," said the Marchioness, "you have given me your word, you are too polite to break it; I will disembarrass you of the Marquis as soon as he becomes tiresome." She squeezed my hand, and the Marquis saw it. "Oh! That I might press one of those little hands in mine!" he said. I cast a scornful glance at him: "Let us go, ladies, let us go," he cried, with an air of levity and triumph, and went out to call his servants.

Rosambert, who heard him, came to us notwithstanding the efforts of the Countess to restrain him: "Monsieur" (he said to me, in a tone of serious irony,) "you no doubt find your new dress very convenient, and do not intend to undeceive the Marchioness." I replied in the same tone, but lowering my voice: "My dear kinsman, would you so soon destroy your own work?" He addressed himself to the Marchioness: "I feel myself bound in conscience, Madame, to warn you once more, that it is not Mademoiselle du Portail who will have the honour to sup with you, but the Chevalier de Faublas, my very young and very faithful friend."

"And I, sir, declare to you, that you have reckoned too much on my credulity and my patience. Have the goodness to drop this impertinent badinage, or determine never to see me more."

"I have the courage to choose either the one or the other, Madame, but I should be sorry to interfere with your pleasures, by my indiscretions, or baulk them by my importunities."

The Marquis re-entered at the same moment; he tapped Rosambert on the shoulder, and holding him by the hand, said: "What? Do you not sup with us? Do you leave your relation with us! Know you that she is pretty! Know you what her physiognomy promises!" He lowered his voice: "but between us, I think the little creature is somewhat lively."

"Oh! Yes, very pretty, and very lively," replied the Count, with a sarcastic smile; "she resembles many others;" and then, as if he had predicted the approaching

fate of this good husband; "I wish you a good night," he said. "What! Think you," replied the Marquis, "that I keep your relation for? Listen then, if she is desirous!"

"I wish you a good night," repeated the Count, and he went out laughing heartily. The Marchioness contended that Rosambert had become mad; and I considered that he was very impolite. "Not at all," said the Marquis, confidently to me, "he loves you to distraction; he has observed that I pay my court to you, and he is jealous."

In five minutes we were at the residence of the Marquis. Supper was served up immediately, and I was placed between the Marchioness and her gallant spouse, who never ceased saying to me, what he thought very pretty things. Too much occupied at first in satisfying an appetite, rather masculine, which dancing had given me, I did not find time to reply to him, except by the language of the eyes. As soon as my hunger was a little abated, I applauded, without exception, all the foolish things that he had been pleased to utter, and his bad *bon mots* produced him a hundred compliments, with which he was enchanted. The Marchioness, who had all along paid me the greatest attention, and whose looks were visibly animated, possessed herself of one of my hands. Curious to see how far the power of my deceitful charms extended, I abandoned the other to the Marquis, who seized it with an inexpressible transport.

Illustration: The Marquis squeezed it in a manner that made me cry out.

The Marchioness, plunged into the most profound reflections, seemed meditating some important project; I observed her blush, tremble by turns, and without saying a word, she gently pressed my right hand, which she held within her own. But my left hand was in a prison less agreeable; the Marquis squeezed it in a manner that made me cry out. Charmed with his good fortune, proud of his happiness, and astonished at the address with which he deceived his wife, even in her own presence, he began alternately to heave deep sighs, and to burst into fits of laughter, which made the ceiling ring; at length, fearing to betray himself, and wishing to stifle this laughter, which the Marchioness might notice, and also, perhaps, thinking thereby to convince me of his passion, he bit my fingers.

The beautiful Marchioness waking from her reverie, said: "Mademoiselle du Portail, it is late; you were to have passed the whole night at the ball, and they do not expect you at home before eight or nine o'clock in the morning; stay, therefore, with me. I offer to any one an apartment in my house, but my own room shall be at your

service. I ought," she added, "in an affectionate tone, to act as your mamma; and I would not that my daughter should have any other room to sleep in than my own; I will go and make up a little bed for you, near mine."

"And why make up a bed," interrupted the Marquis, "there is quite room enough for two in your own: when I come to you there, shall I incommode you? I sleep all the night, and so do you." Having said this, he gave me, in an amorous manner, beneath the table, so hard a blow on the knee, that it grazed the skin. I instantly replied to this gallantry in the same manner, and so vigorously, that he uttered a loud cry. The Marchioness rose with an air of alarm. "It is nothing," he said, "I have only hit my leg against the table." I burst with laughter, the Marchioness could no more restrain herself than me, and her dear spouse, without knowing why, began to laugh still louder than us both.

When our excessive gaiety was a little moderated, the Marchioness renewed her offers. "Accept the half of the Marchioness' bed," cried the Marquis, "accept it, I beg of you, you will be well there, you will be very comfortable indeed there."

"I am going for the present, but do pray, in the meantime accept her offer." He left us. "Madame," I said to the Marchioness, "your invitation is as flattering as it is agreeable, but is it for Mademoiselle du Portail, or Monsieur de Faublas that you intend it?"

"What! The Count's bad jokes over again, you little rogue! And do you repeat them! Have I not told you, that I do not believe you?"

"But, Madame—"

"Peace, peace," she replied, putting her hand on my mouth; "the Marquis is coming, let him not hear such nonsense as this. What a charming girl!" (she said, embracing me tenderly) "how timid and how modest she is! But she is also very whimsical; come on, you little wag, come:" she held out her hand to me, and we passed into her chamber.

I hesitated about going to bed. The maids of the Marchioness wished to lend me their assistance; I trembled and begged them to offer their services to their mistress, as I could dispense with them. "Yes," said the Marchioness, attentive to all my motions, "do not trouble her; 'tis the childishness of the convent; leave her to herself." I got immediately behind the curtains; but I found myself much embarrassed when I was obliged to strip myself of a dress to which I was so little familiar. I broke the strings, tore out the pins, pricked myself in one place, scratched myself in another, and the more I hurried the less progress I made. A chambermaid passed near me at the very moment when I was pulling off the last petticoat. I trembled lest she should open the curtains; I jumped into bed, astonished at the singular adventure which brought me there, but not as yet suspecting that in sleeping together, we should have any other desire than of chatting with each other, before we went to sleep. The Marchioness was not long in following me; we heard the voice of her husband: "These ladies might as well permit me to assist them in going to bed. What! Already in bed?" He wanted to embrace me; the Marchioness was greatly offended; he closed the curtains himself, and bade us good night.

A profound silence reigned for some moments. "Are you asleep already, my sweet child," said the Marchioness in a gentle tone. "Oh! No, I am not asleep." She threw herself into my arms, and pressed me against her bosom. "Oh, heaven!" she

cried, with an astonishment very naturally assumed, if it was assumed, "it is a man!" and then, quickly repulsed me: "What! Is it possible?"

"Madame," I replied, trembling, "I told you so. "You told me so, sir, but was it to be believed? Well, you must not remain in my house—or at least another bed must be prepared for you."

"Madame, it is not me, it is the Marquis—"

"But, sir, speak then in a lower tone. You must not remain in my house, you must go away."

"Well, Madame, I'm going." She then took hold of me by the arm. "You are going away! Where, and what to do? To awake my maids; to hazard your life in jumping out of the window! To discover, in all probability, to my servants, that I have had a man in bed with me!"

"Pardon me, Madame, be not angry; I am going to recline in the armchair."

"Yes, undoubtedly you must—but what a fine resource," (still holding me by the arm) "fatigued as you must be! To remain in the cold, and to injure your health! You deserve that I should treat you with this rigour—well, rest there, but promise that you will be prudent."

"Provided, Madame, that you will pardon me."

"No, I do not pardon you! But I have still more regard for you, than you have for me. See how cold your hand is already!" And out of pity she put it on her ivory bosom. Guided by nature, and by love, this happy hand descended a little; I knew not the stimulus which caused my blood to boil. "No woman," said the Marchioness in a milder tone, "ever experienced the embarrassment in which you place me."

"Ah! Pardon me then, my dear mamma"! "Your dear mamma, indeed! You have a great regard for your dear mamma, little libertine that you are!" Her arms which had at first repulsed me, gently drew me towards her: presently we were so close to each other, that our lips came in contact, and I was emboldened to print a burning kiss upon hers. "Faublas," she said in a voice scarcely audible, "is this what you promised me?" Her hand strayed; a raging flame circulated in all my veins—"Ah! Madame! Pardon me, I die."

"Ah! My dear Faublas—my friend!" I continued motionless. The Marchioness felt for my embarrassment, which could not displease her. She kindly aided my inexperience, and I reeceived, with as much astonishment as pleasure, a charming lesson, which I repeated more than once.

We employed several hours in this agreeable exercise; I began to fall asleep on the bosom of my fair mistress, when I heard the noise of a door which opened gently; somebody entered and advanced on tiptoe; I was without arms, in a house with which I was unacquainted, and I could not help experiencing a sensation of alarm. The Marchioness guessed who it was, told me in a whisper to take her place, and give her mine, and I immediately obeyed her.

Scarcely had I changed places, when someone opened the curtains on the side which I had just quitted. "Who comes to wake me thus?" said the Marchioness. The person hesitated a few moments, but presently explained himself, without replying to her. "And what a strange whim is this, sir?" she continued, "the time too that you choose sir, is also very improper; without consideration for me, and without respect

for the innocence of this young person, who perhaps is not asleep, or who may awake! You are very unreasonable, I beg you will retire." The Marquis insisted, and endeavoured to apepease his wife by some very comic excuses. "No, sir," she said, "I will not, it shall not be, I assure you, you shall not, therefore I beg you will retire;" she jumped out of bed, took him by the arm and put him out of the door.

My beautiful mistress returned to me laughing, "Was not that well done," she said, "you see what I have refused on your account." I felt that I owed her a remuneration, which I offered her with ardour, and she accepted with gratitude: so complaisant is a woman of twenty-five when she loves! And so fertile are the resources which nature gives to a novice of sixteen!

Nevertheless everything has its bounds with us weak mortals; I was not long before I fell into a profound sleep. When I awoke the daylight penetrated the apartment in spite of the curtains: I thought of my father—Alas! My Sophia came into my remembrance! A tear escaped me, and the Marchioness perceived it. Already capable of some dissimulation, I attributed it to my fears on her account and to the painful regret I felt at leaving her; she embraced me tenderly. She appeared to me so lovely! And there was so little time to spare!—The sound sleep had completely invigorated my frame—the intoxication of pleasure dissipated the remorse of love.

We were at length obliged to think of rising. The Marchioness herself served me for a chamber-maid; she was so expert, that the affairs of the toilette had been presently finished, if our own minds had been tranquil. When we thought that nothing more was wanting in the adjustment of my disguise, the Marchioness rung for her women. The Marquis had been up above an hour. He complimented me on my diligence; "I am sure," he said to me, "you have passed an excellent night;" and without giving me time to answer: "She appears fatigued, nevertheless; her eyes arc hollow! See the effects of dancing, I always tell the Marchioness of it, but she pays no attention to it: come, we must restore the strength of this charming girl, and then we will conduct her home."

Nothing was more calculated to render me more uneasy than this "*we will conduct her*." I told the Marquis that it would be quite sufficient for the Marchioness to take that trouble, but he insisted on going. The Marchioness joined me in persuading him from his purpose. He replied that M. du Portail could not think amiss of his bringing home his daughter since the Marchioness would be with us, and he was anxious to be acquainted with the happy parents of so amiable a child. All our efforts could not prevent his accompanying us.

I began to fear that this adventure, which had so happy a commencement, would terminate badly. I knew no plan better than to give the Marquis's coachman the correct address of M. du Portail, "At M. du Portail's, near the Arsenal," I said. The Marchioness perceived my embarrassment, and partook of it, no expedient had as yet occurred to me, when we arrived at the door of my pretended father.

He was at home; they told him that the Marquis and Marchioness of B***, had brought home his daughter! "My daughter!" he cried, with the most lively emotion, "My daughter!" He ran towards us, without giving him time to say a word, I threw my arms around his neck: "Yes," I said, "you are a widower, and you have a daughter."

"Speak still lower," he replied, with much vivacity, "speak lower; who told you so?"

"My God! Do you not understand me? It is I who am your daughter. Pray don't deny me before the Marquis." M. du Portail more tranquil, but not less astonished, seemed to wait for some explanation. "Monsieur," said the Marquis to him, "Mademoiselle du Portail has passed part of the night at a ball, and the remainder at my house. Are you angry," said the Marquis, who observed his astonishment," that she has passed part of the night with us? You are wrong, for she has slept in my wife's apartment, and even in her own bed with her, and she could not be lodged better. Are you angry that I have accompanied her home? I confess that the ladies did not wish it; it is my—"

"I am very sensible," replied M. du Portail, now recovered from his first surprise, and somewhat better instructed by the discourse of the Marquis; "I am very sensible of the kindness you have had for my daughter; but I ought to declare to you before her (he looked at me, and I trembled) that I am very much astonished at her going to a ball disguised in this fashion."

"How disguised, sir? said the Marchioness. "Yes, Madame, in an Amazonian habit, which but ill becomes my daughter? At least, ought she not to have asked my advice and permission?"

Charmed at the ingenious turn my new father had given the affair, I affected to appear bumbled. "Ah! I thought that papa knew it," said the Marquis; "Monsieur, you must pardon this little fault. Mademoiselle your daughter has a most happy physiognomy; I tell you so, and I know it; Mademoiselle your daughter—is a charming girl; she has delighted all the world, and my wife above all; Oh! Believe me, my wife is enraptured with her."

"It is true, sir," said the Marchioness, with an admirable *sang-froid*, "that Mademoiselle has inspired me with the friendship she merits."

I thought myself saved, when my real father, the Baron de Faublas, who never caused himself to be announced at the house of his friend, entered suddenly. "Ah! Ah!" he said, on perceiving me. M. du Portail ran to him with open arms: "My dear Faublas, you see my daughter, whom Monsieur the Marquis and Madame the Marchioness de B***, have brought me home!"

"Your daughter!" interrupted my father. "Yes, my daughter, but you do not recognize her under this ridiculous habit! Mademoiselle, he added, with anger, go to your room, that no one may again surprise you in this indecent garb."

I made, without saying a word, a bow to M. du Portail, who seemed to pity me, and one to the Marchioness, who appeared alarmed at the dilemma we were placed in; for at the name of my father, she was so agitated, that I feared she would be taken ill. I retired to an adjoining room and listened. "Your daughter!" again repeated the Baron. "Yes! My daughter! Who was advised to go to the ball in the dress which you have seen, the Marquis will tell you the rest." And, indeed, the Marquis did recapitulate to the Baron everything which he had told M. du Portail; that I had slept in his wife's chamber, and even in her own bed with her. "She is very lucky," said my father, looking at the Marchioness, "very lucky," repeated he, "that so great an imprudence had not had a disagreeable termination. "And what very great imprudence has this dear child committed," replied the Marchioness, whom I had seen so disconcerted, but who had so soon recovered her wits? "What! Because she has assumed the habit of an Amazon!"

"Without doubt," interrupted the Marquis, "it is but a trifle! And you, sir," (addressing himself to my father in an angry tone) "permit me to say, that instead of making reflections upon this young lady calculated to hurt her feelings, you had better join us in soliciting her father to pardon her."

"Madame," said M. du Portail to the Marchioness, "I pardon her on your account:" (then addressing himself to the Marquis) "but on condition that she goes there no more in the habit of an Amazon."

"Be it so," replied the latter, but I hope we shall see her again in her ordinary dress; it would be a great deprivation if we were not to see the charming girl again."

"Assuredly," said the Marchioness, rising up, "and if Monsieur her father would do us a real favour, he will accompany her." M. du Portail reconducted the Marchioness to her carriage, pouring forth the thanks which he was presumed to owe for her attention to his daughter.

Their departure relieved me from a great burden. "This is a very singular adventure," said M. du Portail on re-entering. "Very singular," replied my father; "the Marchioness is a very fine woman, and the little wag is very happy."

"Know you," replied his friend, "that your son had almost penetrated my secret; when they announced my daughter, I thought that my own daughter was come home to me, and some words escaped, which have betrayed me."

"Never fear; there is a remedy; Faublas is more reasonable than youths generally are at his age, he wanted but a little practical knowledge, which he has no doubt acquired last night: he has a noble soul and an excellent heart; a secret that we penetrate does not bind us, as you know; but an honest man would think it dishonourable to betray that which a friend has confided to him; impart yours to my son; no half confidence; you may depend on his discretion."

"But for secrets of this importance—he is so young! "So young, my friend! My son, already a youth and ignorant of one of the most sacred duties of a thinking being! A child whom I have educated, must have seen very little of his father if he would do a mean action! My friend, I must now return. My dear du Portail, believe me, you will never repent it. I hope, moreover, that this confidence, which is become almost necessary, will not be entirely useless. You know that I have made some sacrifices to give my son an education suitable to his birth, and the hopes I have conceived of him; he will remain another year in this Capital to perfect himself in his studies, I think it will be sufficient; afterwards he will travel, and I shall not be displeased if he continues some months in Poland."

"Baron," interrupted M. du Portail, "the contrivance which your friendship has had recourse to, is as ingenious as delicate; I feel all the civility of your proposition, which I confess is very agreeable to me."

"Then," replied the Baron, "you'll do well to give Faublas a letter for the faithful servant you have left in that country; Bolesas and my son will make new researches. My dear Lovinski, do not yet despair of your fortune; if your daughter exists, it is not impossible but she may be restored to you. If the King of Poland," my father spoke lower, and took his friend to the other end of the apartment: they conversed there more than half-an-hour, when both of them having approached the door behind which I was, I heard the Baron, who said: "I will not require of him the details of his adventure; probably they are very pleasant, and I should not hear them

with the gravity I ought. Without doubt he will relate to you minutely the whole affair, and you can inform me. From appearances, I think we shall hear of a very foolish husband." H"e is not the only one, my friend," replied M. du Portail. "It is very true," replied the Baron, "but we must say nothing about it." I heard them coming towards my door, and I went and threw myself on an armchair. The Baron said to me, on entering: "My carriage is below, let it take you home; go and rest yourself, and I forbid you to go out in that dress again."

"My friend," said M. du Portail, who followed me to the door, "one of these days we will dine together by ourselves; you know a part of my secret, I will tell you the rest; but above all things be discreet; remember also that I have rendered you a service." I assured him that I should never forget it, and that he might rely upon me. As soon as I arrived at home, I went to bed and slept profoundly.

II.

It was very late when I awoke: the Abbé accompanied me to the convent; with what soft emotion did I again behold my Sophia! Her modest countenance—her ingenuous simplicity—the timid yet tender welcome which she gave me—the air of embarrassment caused by the remembrance of the last night's kiss, all combined to inspire me with love—a love the most pure and respectful.

Nevertheless, the idea of the Marchioness' charms followed me even to the conversation room of the convent; but what precious advantages her young rival had over her! It is true that the pleasures of the last night had made a lively impression on my heated imagination; but how much did I prefer to that, the delightful moment when I found on the lips of Sophia an immortal soul! The Marchioness reigned in my astonished senses, but my heart adored Sophia.

The next day I remembered that the Marchioness expected me to visit her; I recollected also that the Baron had said: "I forbid you to go out in that dress." Besides, how was I to go to the Marchioness, without being at least accompanied by a *femme de chambre*? I could not think of the Count, it was not likely he would conduct me there; and as to the Marquis, would he not think it odd for a young lady to come out entirely alone?

Impatient once more to behold my fair mistress, but restrained by the fear of displeasing my father, I knew not which way to resolve myself. Jasmin came to tell me that a middle-aged woman, sent by Mademoiselle Justine, wished to speak with me. "I know not who this Justine is; but let her enter."

"Mademoiselle Justine has charged me to present her compliments to you," said the woman to me, "and to give you this packet, and this letter." Before opening the packet, I took the letter, of which the address was simply, *To Mademoiselle du Portail*. I opened it with eagerness, and read:

> Send me some news of yourself, my dear child; have you passed a good night; you had need of repose; I fear that the fatigues of the ball, and the disagreeable scene which took place in the presence of your father, may have injured your health. I am grieved to think you incurred displeasure on my account; believe me, that during that interview, I suffered as much as yourself. The Marquis talks of going to the ball again this evening; but I do not feel disposed to go, and I think you'll have no more desire than myself. Nevertheless, as a mother ought to have some complaisance for her daughter, and particularly when she has one as amiable as yourself, we will go there if you wish it. I have not forgot that your Amazonian dress is forbidden you, and I thought that you might not have another ball dress, as it is not a necessary article in a convent, therefore I have sent you one of mine, we are very nearly of the same stature, and I think it will fit you well.
> Justine has told me that you are in want of a *femme de chambre*; she who brings you this letter is prudent, *intelligent and adroit*! You can take her into your service, and place your *entire confidence* in her, I will answer for her.
> I do not invite you to dinner with me, I know that M. du Portail seldom dines without his daughter; but if you love your dear mamma as much as she loves you, you will come in the evening as soon as you can. The Marquis does not dine at home; come in good time, my dear child, I shall be alone all the evening, and you can keep me company. Believe that no one loves you so well as your dear mamma.
> The Marchioness de B***.

P. S.—I have not the patience to write all the foolish things which the Marquis bade me tell you on his part. You can scold him well when you see him; he wished this morning to send in his own name to M. du Portail's. I had great trouble in persuading him that it was not proper, and that it was more becoming for me to write.

I was enchanted with this letter. "Monsieur," said the intelligent woman who brought it to me, "Justine is the *femme de chambre* of Madame the Marchioness de B***, and if Mademoiselle wishes it, I can be hers today and tomorrow. In short, Monsieur or Mademoiselle may equally confide in me; when Mademoiselle Justine and Madame Dutour engage in an intrigue, they never spoil it, that is why I am chosen."

"Very well," I said, "Madame Dutour, I see you know your business; you shall accompany me to the Marchioness. I offered my duenna a double Louis d'Or, which she accepted. "It is not but they have already well paid me," she said: "but Monsieur ought to know that persons of my profession always receive from both parties."

As soon as the Baron had dined, he set out for the opera, according to his custom. My milliner was sent for; a plume of feathers was placed on my head instead of the little hat. Madame Dutour dressed me completely in the charming ball dress, sent by the Marchioness, and which became me wonderfully; my resemblance to Adelaide was now more striking. I took a fan, and a large nosegay, and flew to the rendezvous the Marchioness had assigned me.

I found her in her boudoir, negligently reclining upon an ottoman; an elegant *dishabille*, instead of concealing, showed her charms to advantage. She rose as soon as she saw me. "How charming you look in this dress, Mademoiselle du Portail! How well this gown becomes you!" and as soon as the door was shut: "Oh! How happy am I to see you, my dear Faublas, how your punctuality flatters me! My heart told me you would find the means of coming in spite of your two fathers." I only replied by the most tender embraces; and compelling her to take the position from which she rose to receive me, *I proved to her that her lessons were not forgotten*; when we heard a noise in the adjoining room. Dreading to be surprised in a situation by no means equivocal, I rose precipitately, and, thanks to my convenient garments, I had only to change my posture, for my disorder to be repaired. The Marchioness, without appearing embarrassed, merely put that in order which was most necessary; this was only the affair of a moment. The door opened; it was the Marquis. "I knew well, sir," she said to him, "that no one but yourself, could come in to me without being announced, but I thought at least that you would knock at this door before opening it; this dear child had some secret griefs to impart to her dear mamma; a moment sooner you would have surprised her!—it is not usual to enter thus abruptly where there are ladies!"

"Good," replied the Marquis, "I surprise her—oh, no! I have not surprised her, there cannot be much mischief done if that is all; however, I am sure the dear girl will pardon me; she is more indulgent than you. But we must agree that her father was right in wishing her to lay aside that Amazonian habit; she is so much more lovely in her present attire."

He resumed with me, that ridiculous strain of gallantry which had already so much amused us; he found that I was perfectly recovered, that my eyes were brilliant, my countenance very animated, and even that there was something extraordinary, and which augured well in my physiognomy.

After this he said: "Fair ladies, do you go to the ball this evening?

The Marchioness answered in the negative.

"You are jesting with me, certainly. I am come home purposely to conduct you there."

"I assure you that I shall not go."

"And why not? You told me this morning—"

"I said that I might go there out of complaisance to Mademoiselle du Portail; but she does not care to go; she is afraid of again meeting there the Count de Rosambert, who conducted himself very improperly the last time;"

I interrupted the Marchioness: "Certainly his behaviour to me was very impolite, therefore in future his company will give me as much uneasiness, as it formerly afforded me pleasure."

"You are right," said the Marquis, "the Count is one of those coxcombs who think all the women are in love with them; it is proper that these gentlemen should sometimes be taught that there are those in the world who know how to treat them—" I perceived his drift, and to justify his remark, I darted at him, by stealth, a glance of the eye, which was very expressive, "—and who treat them with the contempt they deserve," he added, immediately raising his voice, and rising on tip-toe to give himself an affected swing, which he accomplished in a very unfortunate manner. He struck his head with great violence against the wainscot, and experienced a very heavy fall on the floor, which gave him a large bruise on the forehead. Ashamed of his misfortune, but wishing to dissemble, he appeared insensible to the pain which he felt. "Charming girl," he said to me with great *sang-froid*, but making every now and then some ugly grimaces which betrayed him, "you have reason to avoid the Count; but be not afraid of meeting him this evening, it is a masked ball, the Marchioness has luckily two dominoes, she will lend you one, and take the other herself; we will go to the ball, you shall come back and sup with us; and if you were not too badly accommodated the night before last—"

"Oh! Yes, that will be delightful," cried I with more vivacity than prudence; "we will go to the ball."

"What! With my dominoes, which are so well known to the Count," interrupted the Marchioness, more thoughtful than myself. "Yes, Madame, with your dominoes! We must treat this child with a sight of a masked ball, she has never seen such a thing; the Count will not recognize you, he may not perhaps be there." The Marchioness appeared dubious, I could see she was embarrassed between the desire to keep me another night with her, and the fear of going there again in the presence of the Marquis, to be subject to the sarcasms of the Count. "As for myself," said the accommodating husband, in a mysterious tone, "I will conduct you there, but I have business, and cannot stop, I shall leave you there, and come and look for you at midnight." This last remark of the Marquis, more than all his entreaties, determined the Marchioness upon going; she still declined it for a while, but in a tone which gave me to understand that I must press her, and that she was about to consent.

In the meanwhile, the contusion which the Marquis had received, became more apparent, and the bump seemed to increase while one looked at it. I demanded of him, with an air of astonishment, what he had on his forehead. "It is nothing," he said to me, with a forced laugh; "when we are married, we are exposed to such accidents." I remembered the torture he had made me undergo when my hand was

within his—and resolving to avenge myself, I drew a piece of money out of my pocket, placed it on his forehead, and then struck it with all my force, as if to beat down the bump. The patient pressed his sides with his closed fists, ground his teeth together, groaned grievously, and made the most horrible contortions. "She has strength in her wrist," he said, in great pain. I redoubled my efforts: he at last uttered a terrible cry, and escaping from me with violence, would have tumbled heels over head if I had not caught him. "Oh! The little devil has almost split my skull!"

"The little wag has done it on purpose," said the Marchioness, who with difficulty restrained herself from laughing.

"Do you think she did it on purpose? Well! I'll embrace her to punish her."

"To punish me? Be it so:" I presented my cheek with a good grace, and he thought himself the happiest of men: if I had been willing to listen to him, I should have continued, at the same price, to put his courage to the proof.

"Let us have done with this nonsense," said the Marchioness, pretending to be a little angry, "and let us think of this ball, since we must go there."

"Oh! Madame is out of temper!" replied the Marquis: "let us be prudent," he said to me, in a low tone, "there is a little jealousy." He looked at us both with an air of satisfaction; "You love each other very much," he continued, "but if you should quarrel about me one of these days—that would be very singular!"

"Do we go to the ball, or do we not?" interrupted the Marchioness. She immediately began to prepare herself; they brought her the dominoes, but she did not wish to use them; she sent for two others, in which we were gaily muffled up. "You know mine," said the Marquis; "I shall put it on when I come to look for you: I am not afraid to be recognised, not I!" He conducted us to the ball, and promised to join us at twelve o'clock precisely.

As soon as we appeared at the door of the assembly-room, we were surrounded by a crowd of masks; they examined us minutely, and made us dance; my eyes were at first greatly delighted with the novelty of the spectacle—the elegant dresses—the rich ornaments—the singular and grotesque costumes—even the ugliness of their droll metamorphoses—the odd representation of all the faces with paint and pasteboard—the mixture of colours—the buzz of a hundred confused voices—the multitude of objects—their perpetual motion, which unceasingly varied and animated the picture, all combined to arrest my attention, which was soon fatigued. Some new masks having entered, the country dance was interrupted, and the Marchioness, profiting by the circumstance, mingled with the crowd: I followed her in silence, curious to examine in detail this many-coloured scene. I was not long in observing that some of the actors were busily occupied in doing nothing, and talked prodigiously without saying anything. They seek you with eagerness, they regard you with curiosity, join you with familiarity, and quit you without knowing why: the next moment they meet you again with a sneer; one deafens you by boring your ear with his squeaking voice; another, in a nasal tone, stammers a hundred dull things, which he scarcely comprehends himself: this one, lisps a gross *bon mot*, which he accompanies with ridiculous gestures; that, puts a stupid question, which is answered by an attempt at wit still more foolish. I saw, nevertheless, some persons cruelly tormented, who certainly would have paid very dear for the opportunity of escaping from malicious tricks and spiteful looks. I saw others very much wearied, whose principal object appeared to be in passing the night at the ball in any manner they

could; and who no doubt remained there with the slender consolation of saying, the next day, how much they were amused the night before. "Is this, then, a masked ball?" I said to the Marchioness. "I am not astonished that good people are here abused by scoundrels; and persons of wit perplexed by fools. I should certainly not remain here if I was not with you."

"Hold your tongue," she replied to me, "we are followed, and perhaps recognised—do you not see the mask which is treading in our steps? I fear much that it is the Count; let us go out of the crowd, and do not be alarmed."

It was indeed M. de Rosambert: we had no trouble in recognising him, for he did not even disguise his voice, but merely dropped it sufficiently low to be heard only by the Marchioness and myself. "How does Madame the Marchioness and her charming friend?" demanded he of us with an affected interest. I dared not reply. The Marchioness, feeling that it would be useless to attempt to make him believe that he was mistaken, preferred entering into a polite conversation, which she might, perhaps, by her address, have terminated happily, if the Count had been less informed of our affairs. "Ah! It is you, M. de Rosambert! You have recognised me! I am astonished at that! I thought you had sworn never to see me, or speak to me again."

"It is true that I have promised it, Madame, and I know how much that assurance which I gave you, has given you satisfaction."

"I do not understand you, and you misunderstand me; if I did not wish to see you, what obliges me to speak to you? Why am I come here in order to meet you?"

"In order to meet me, Madame! Flattering as such a profession is, I might, perhaps, have had the weakness to deem it sincere, if this dear child who is here—"

"Sir," replied the Marchioness, "have you not brought the Countess? The Countess is very amiable! What say you?"

"I say, Madame, that she is, moreover, very officious!"

The Marchioness interrupted him again—"The Countess is very amiable! You ought to have brought her."

"Yes, Madame! And you apparently would again have confided to her the polite employment which she so generously accepted, and executed with so much complaisance."

"What! Would you insinuate that I employed her to occupy you the whole evening, to engage you in a disagreeable quarrel with myself, to repeat to me a hundred times an uncivil pleasantry, to push me to such extremities, that I was at last obliged to speak to you in very harsh terms, which you have not failed to take in the most literal acceptation, and of which I should have repented, if you had come the next day; as I hoped to beg your pardon."

"My pardon! You would have granted me, Madame. Oh, how generous you are! But be tranquil, I will not abuse so much goodness; I fear that I embarrass you too much, and also that I give pain to my young relation, who listens to us so attentively, and who has such good reasons for remaining silent."

"What, sir!" I replied immediately, "what can I say to you?"

"Nothing—nothing but what I know, or what I can guess."

"I acknowledge, Monsieur de Rosambert, that you know something which Madame does not know; But," added I, in a lower voice, "have a little discretion; the Marchioness was not willing to believe you the day before yesterday; what does it cost you to leave her but for one day more in an error which still continues agreeable?"

"Very well," he cried, "it is an admirable turn! Ou, such a novice before yesterday, today so artful! You must certainly have received some good lessons!"

"What say you, then?" replied the Marchioness, a little mortified. "I say, Madame, my young relation is advanced greatly in four and twenty hours; but I am not astonished, we know how soon girls become enlightened."

"You do us the favour at last then, to acknowledge, that Mademoiselle is of her own sex!"

"I shall not think proper to deny it any more, Madame, since I perceive how painful it would be to you to be undeceived. To lose a fair friend, and to find in her place but a young suitor! The misfortune would be too severe."

"What you say is very reasonable," replied the Marchioness, with an impatience very badly disguised, "but the tone in which you say it is so singular— "Explain yourself, sir; is this child, whom you have introduced to me as your relation, (speaking low) Mademoiselle du Portail, or Monsieur de Faublas? You compel me to ask you a very extraordinary question, but you must tell me seriously which is the truth."

"Tell you the truth, Madame! I could have hazarded such a thing the day before yesterday; but today it is for me to ask you that question."

"Me," she replied, without being disconcerted, "I have no kind of doubt about it: her air, her looks, her conduct, her discourse, all proclaim to me that she is Mademoiselle du Portail; and, besides, I have proofs which I did not look for."

"Proofs!"

"Yes, sir, proofs; she supped with me the night before last."

"I know it well, Madame; and she was still with you at ten o'clock the next morning."

"At ten in the morning?—be it so; but after that we conducted her home."

"To her house in the Faubourg Saint Germain!"

"No, near the Arsenal; and Monsieur her father—"

"Her father, the Baron de Faublas?"

"No such thing! But M. du Portail. M. du Portail returned many thanks to the Marquis and myself for taking his daughter home!"

"The Marquis and you, Madame! What! The Marquis accompany you to the house of M. du Portail?"

"What is there so astonishing in that?"

"And M. du Portail thanked the Marquis?"

"Yes, sir."

Here the Count burst into a fit of laughter. "Oh! The good husband! he cried aloud—what a charming adventure! Oh, what a polite husband!" He was preparing to quit us. I thought that it would be for the interest of the Marchioness and myself if we could moderate his excessive gaiety.

"Monsieur," I said to him, lowering my voice, "Could I not have a more serious explanation with you?"

He regarded me with a smile. "A serious explanation between us this evening, my dear friend?—(he lifted my mask up a little)—you are too pretty: I leave you TO LOVE and TO PLEASE: moreover, it is fit I should profit to-day of my advantages; the explanation will do for tomorrow, if you desire it."

"For tomorrow, sir, at what hour, and in what place?"

"The hour I cannot fix with you; that will depend upon circumstances. Do you not go to sup with the Marchioness? Tomorrow, it will, perhaps, be noon when the very accommodating Marquis will reconduct you to the very complaisant M. du Portail's; you will probably be fatigued, I will not take an improper advantage of you, it is necessary that you have time to rest; I shall pass near your house in the evening; I shall not take my leave of you, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again by-and-by, before the hour of departure from hence." He bowed to us, and left the room.

The Marchioness was much pleased at his absence. "He has given us some home-thrusts," she said to me; "but we could not have defended ourselves better." I observed to her, that the Count endeavoured to lower his voice whenever he launched at us any very pointed remark; and that his intention being only to torment us severely, he seemed unwilling to compromise the matter until it reached a certain point. "I do not trust to that," she said; "he knows that you have passed the night with me, and he is piqued at it. The return that he announced to you is no good omen; he is, without doubt, preparing a stronger attack for us: let us go without waiting for him, or the Marquis either."

We were preparing ourselves to go out, when two masks stopped us. One of the two said to the Marchioness, "I know you, beautiful mask. Good evening to you, Monsieur de Faublas, said the other to me. I did not reply. Good evening, Monsieur de Faublas," repeated he. I felt that I must summon up my strength, and answer with boldness. "You have not the art of divination, beautiful mask; you deceive yourself as to my name and my sex."

"One or the other must be very doubtful."

"You are mad, beautiful mask."

"Not at all; some baptize you Faublas, and contend that you are a fine boy, and others call you du Portail, and swear that you are a very pretty girl."

"Du Portail or Faublas," I replied, much confounded, "what matters it?"

"We will explain, beautiful mask."

"If you are a pretty damsel, it is of consequence to me; if you are a fine young man, it is of importance to that fair lady (pointing to the Marchioness.)" I remained stupefied. He resumed: "Answer me, Mademoiselle du Portail; speak, then, Monsieur de Faublas; decide to give me one of the names. Ah! If I only considered my personal interests and appearances, you are Mademoiselle du Portail; but if I believe the chronicles of scandal, you are M. de Faublas."

The Marchioness did not lose a word of this dialogue, but already too hard pressed by the unknown who had attacked her, she could render me no assistance. I know not but my embarrassment might have betrayed me, but there arose in the assembly-room a great tumult; they all crowded towards the door, and surrounded a mask who was just entering; some pointed with their fingers, others broke out into long peals of laughter, and altogether cried out: "It is Monsieur the Marquis de B***, who has a bump on his forehead!" As soon as the two demons who were persecuting us had heard these joyous exclamations, they quitted us to swell the number of laughers. At length, "Behold the party!" said my fair mistress to me, a little astonished: "But, among these reiterated cries, do you not hear the name of the Marquis? I'll wager that it is some new trick that they are playing my poor husband!"

In the meanwhile, the rumour continued increasing; we approached, we heard a confusion of voices, who said, "Good evening to you, Monsieur the Marquis de B***; what have you on your forehead, Monsieur? How long have you had this bump?" And presently, in the transports of their turbulent gaiety, all the masks cried, "It is the Marquis de B***, who has a bump on his forehead!" By dint of elbowing our neighbours, we were enabled to join the mask who was so much ridiculed: it was neither the yellow domino of the Marquis, nor his short stature, but it was, notwithstanding, the Marquis himself! We perceived that someone had stuck between his shoulders a slip of paper, upon which was written, in very legible characters, these words, which he had already heard so often repeated: "It is the Marquis de B***, who has a bump on his forehead!" He instantly recognised us. "I cannot comprehend what all this means," he said to us, in a mortified tone; let us go. Still pursued by the shouts of derision, and pressed to suffocation in the crowd, he had as much difficulty in regaining the door, as he had in penetrating into the middle of the room.

We followed him closely. "Zounds," cried the Marquis, so confounded that he had not power to take his seat in the carriage, "I cannot comprehend all this; I never was so well disguised, and yet every one recognised me." The Marchioness asked him what was his design. "I was desirous," he replied, "of affording you an agreeable surprise; as soon as I saw you in the ballroom, I returned home and imparted my project to Justine, your *femme de chambre*, and to that of this charming girl, for I found them both together. I took a new domino, and shoes with very high heels, which elevated me a great deal, so that no one might recognise me. Justine presided at my toilette." (While he was speaking, the Marchioness adroitly removed the perfidious label from his back, and put it into her pocket.) "Ask Justine: she will tell you that I was never so well disguised, for she told me so a hundred times, but nevertheless, all the world discovered me!"

The Marchioness and myself easily guessed that our *femmes de chambre* had served us faithfully. "But," replied the Marquis, after a moment's reflection, "how could they see that I had a bump on my forehead? Have you spoken of my accident?"

"To no one, I assure you."

"That is very singular; my face was covered with a mask, and they saw my bump! I was disguised better than usual, yet every one recognized me!" The Marquis did not cease to testify his astonishment by exclamations such as these; while the Marchioness and I congratulated ourselves on the address of our women, who had saved us in so comic a manner from the disagreeable consequences to which we should have been exposed, by the disguise of her husband, and the vengeance of my rival.

What was our astonishment when, on arriving at the hôtel of the Marquis, we found the Count de Rosambert had been waiting for us some minutes. He approached in an easy and familiar manner: "I was sure, ladies, that you would not remain long at the ball: this masked ball is a very dull thing! Those whom we do not know are tiresome to us, and those we do know torment us!"

"Oh!" Replied the Marquis, "I had not time to get tired, not I! You see how I am disguised!"

"Very well, indeed!"

"Well! As soon as I entered, everybody knew me."

"How, everybody?"

"Yes, yes, everybody; they immediately surrounded me: [and said] 'Ah! Good evening to you, Monsieur, how came that bump on your forehead?' and they squeezed me! They pushed me! They laughed at me! Made faces at me! And made such a noise, that I thought I should never have recovered my hearing. I'll be hung if ever I go there again! But how could they have known that I had this bump on my forehead?"

"Zounds! It might be seen for a league!" said the Count.

"But my mask!"

"That matters nothing! Look at me, I also was recognized."

"Good!" replied the Marquis, a little consoled.

"Yes," continued the Count, my adventure is very droll; "I met there a very pretty lady, who esteemed me very much, last week!"

"I understand you, I understand you," said the Marquis."

"This week she has shifted me off in a very curious manner!"

"Imagine that I was at the ball with one of my friends, who was very prettily disguised." The Marchioness, being alarmed, interrupted him: "Monsieur the Count sups with us this evening, without doubt?" He answered in the most polite and flattering manner: "If it will not embarrass you too much, Madame."

"What!" interrupted the Marquis, "are you going to stand upon ceremony with us? Endeavour rather to make your peace with your young relative, who requires it of you."

"Me, sir, not at all! I have always thought that the Count de Rosambert was a man of honour, and I believe him too gallant a man to take advantage of circumstances."

"We must abuse nothing," said the Count to me, "but we must make use of everything."

"What are these circumstances?" cried the Marquis. "What means she by circumstances? What circumstances are these? Rosambert, you will tell me that: but go on with your story."

"Most willingly.—"

"Gentlemen," again interrupted the Marchioness, "they have already told you that supper was served."

"Yes, yes, let us to go to supper," replied the Marquis; "you can relate to us your misfortune while we are at table." The Marchioness then approached her husband, and in a low voice, said, "Do you think it proper, sir, that one should relate an affair of gallantry before this child?"

"Well, well," he replied to her, "at her age they are not so ignorant;" and then addressing himself to the Count: "Rosambert, you will go on with your adventure, but you must gloss everything over in such a manner that this child—you understand me."

The Marchioness arranged us in such order that the Count was placed between me and her, so that I found myself between the Count and the Marquis. My beautiful mistress gave me a particular look, which warned me to pay every attention to our critical situation; not to speak without reflection, and to act with the greatest circumspection.

The Marquis ate a great deal, and talked still more; I replied but by monosyllables to the kind things he said to me. The Count, encouraged by the eulogiums of the Marquis, began to lavish on me, in a tone of raillery, the most fulsome and overstrained compliments; asserting that no one in the world was more amiable than his young relation, and demanded of the Marchioness, what she thought of her; at the same time protesting that she alone, up to this moment, knew precisely how much Mademoiselle du Portail merited to be beloved. The Marchioness, equally adroit and prompt, replied quickly and with great aptitude, always measuring the defence to the attack, she eluded without affectation, or defended without asperity: determined to manoeuvre an enemy she could not hope to vanquish, to pointed questions she opposed equivocal answers; she parried strong allegations by mitigated negations, and rebutted sarcasms more bitter than embarrassing, by recriminations more subtle than spiteful: extremely interested to penetrate the designs of the Count, with whom vengeance was so easy, she examined him often with a piercing eye; then endeavouring to bend him by interesting him, she overwhelmed him with politeness and attention. Pretending to have a bad headache, she uttered her sweet accents in a faint and languishing manner, and by supplicating looks solicited his mercy, but could not obtain it.

As soon as the servants had placed the dessert on the table and retired, the Count commenced a still warmer attack, which threw both the Marchioness and myself into the most dreadful anxiety.

The COUNT. I was telling you, Monsieur, that last week a young lady honoured me with a very particular attention.

THE MARCHIONESS. [Aside.] What a coxcomb! [Aloud.] Again in good fortune! It is your old subject.

The COUNT. No, Madame, a sudden infidelity, with circumstances very novel, which will amuse you.

THE MARCHIONESS. Not at all, sir, I assure you.

The MARQUIS. Good! The women always say that the relation of an affair of gallantry tires them. Rosambert, tell us yours.

The COUNT. This lady was at the ball;—I forget the night. [To the Marchioness.] Madame, assist me, you were there also.

The MARCHIONESS. [In a lively manner.] The night, sir! Of what consequence is the night? Besides, do you think that I noticed—

The MARQUIS. Go on, go on: the night signifies nothing.

The COUNT. Well, then, I went to the ball with one of my friends, who was disguised so admirably that no one knew him.

The MARQUIS. That no one knew him! He was very clever! What habit had he then?

The MARCHIONESS. [With gaiety.] He went in character, most probably.

The COUNT. Dressed in character! No, but [looking at the Marchioness,] nevertheless, it shall be so, if you wish it; dressed in character! No one recognised him; no one, except the lady in question, who guessed that it was a very fine youth.

[Here the Marchioness rung for a servant, whom she detained some time under different pretences; the Marquis became impatient, sent him away, and the Count resumed.] The lady, charmed with her discovery but I will say no more, because the Marquis knows her.

The MARQUIS [laughing.] That may be: I know a great many; but that's no matter, go on.

The MARCHIONESS. Monsieur, they gave us a new play last night.

The COUNT. Yes, Madame, but permit me to finish my tale.

The MARCHIONESS. No; I wish to know what you think of the piece.

The COUNT. Permit me, Madame.

The MARQUIS. Yes, Madame, let him then tell us.

The COUNT. To be short, you shall know that my young friend pleased the lady very much; that my presence became embarrassing to her; and the means which she devised to get rid of me—

The MARCHIONESS. This adventure of yours is nothing but a romance.

The COUNT. A romance, Madame! Ah, I can presently, if I am forced, convince the most incredulous. The means which she conceived was to detach me by a young Countess, her intimate friend, a very skilful and obliging woman, who took possession in such a manner as—

The MARQUIS. Ah! Did she play her part well, then?

The COUNT. Not amiss, not amiss; but not so well as the husband, who arrived—

The MARQUIS. Ah! A husband in the case! So much the better: I am fond of an adventure where a husband figures; at least, such as I know many of! Well, the husband arrived. What is the matter with you, Madame?

The MARCHIONESS. A most shocking headache! I am in torture. [To the Count.] Monsieur, have the goodness to defer the recital of this adventure until another day.

The MARQUIS. Oh no; go on, go on; it will cure her headache.

The COUNT. Yes, in two words; I have done.

MADEMOISELLE DU PORTAIL. [To the Marquis, in a very low voice.] M. de Rosambert is very fond of tattling, and tells falsehoods, sometimes, with a good grace.

The MARQUIS. I know it well, I know it well; but this story is droll: there is a husband in it; I'll wager that they entrap him like a fool.

The COUNT. [Without listening to the Marchioness, who wished to speak with him.] The husband arrived, and what is most astonishing, that on seeing the slender figure, agreeable person, and fresh complexion of this young man, who was so well disguised, he took him for a woman.

The MARQUIS. Good! Oh! That was excellent. I could not have been taken in like that, not I; I am too well skilled in physiognomy.

MADEMOISELLE DU PORTAIL. But it is not credible.

The MARCHIONESS. Impossible! M. de Rosambert has been inventing tales for us; which he had better finish, for I feel myself very unwell.

The COUNT. He thought himself so happy, that he lavished compliments, a variety of attentions, and even went so far as to take his hand, and pressed it gently. [To the Marquis.] For instance, much after the manner as you do at present to my cousin.

The MARQUIS. [Astonished, immediately quitting my hand, which, in truth, he had been pressing.] He has done it on purpose, [he said to me;] I think that he would the Marchioness should perceive our understanding. He is jealous! He is mischievous!" "And a liar," I replied; "he lies like a counsellor."

THE COUNT, always deaf to the entreaties which the Marchioness had had time to renew, resumed: Whilst the good husband, on the one side, exhausted all the commonplaces of antiquated gallantry, and fondly pressed the cherished hand—the lady, not less sensible, but more happy—

The MARCHIONESS. Oh, Monsieur! What sort of women have you then known; You represent this to us under such colours! Might she not have been deceived by appearances, as well as her husband?

The COUNT. That was possible; but I believe it was not the case. But of that you shall judge for yourself, if you hear me to the end.

The MARCHIONESS. If it is absolutely necessary that you should finish this story, I beg at least you will have some regard [looking towards Mademoiselle du Portail] for certain persons who listen to you.

The MARQUIS. Madame is right; gloss it over a little, on account of this child.

The COUNT. Yes, yes. The lady, much captivated—

The MARCHIONESS. Do, pray, sir, abridge the details, which are not—decent.

MADEMOISELLE DU PORTAIL. [In a very abrupt tone.] It is midnight, sir.

The COUNT. [Harshly.] I know it well, Mademoiselle; and if the conversation tires you, I will say but one word—to finish it.

The MARQUIS. [To Mademoiselle du Portail.] He is much piqued against you. The kindness you show to me!—He is jealous as a tiger.

The MARCHIONESS. Monsieur, *a propos*, while I think of it, have you obtained of the minister—

THE COUNT. Yes, Madame, I have obtained everything I wished; but let me see—

The MARQUIS. Ah! Ah! What is it, then, that you solicited?

The COUNT. A little pension of ten thousand livres for the young Viscomte de G***, my kinsman; it is now some days past—but to return to my adventure.

THE MARQUIS. Yes, yes, let us return to it.

The MARCHIONESS. I suppose the Viscount must be very well pleased with you?

The COUNT. The lady was very much affected—

The MARCHIONESS. Monsieur, why do you not answer my question?

THE COUNT. Yes, Madame, he is very well pleased—the lady was very much affected—

The MARCHIONESS. And his dear uncle, the commander?

The COUNT. He is very well pleased also, Madame; but you interest yourself very much.

The MARCHIONESS. Yes, everything which regards my friends touches me sensibly, and this affair torments me on your account; if you had spoken to me of it sooner I could have served you.

THE COUNT. Madame, I am very sensible—but permit me—

THE MARCHIONESS. Has the Viscount, in point of fact, rendered any service to the state?

THE COUNT. [Laughing.] Yes, Madame, without him, the Duke de B*** would not have had an heir; the family would have been extinct.

The MARCHIONESS. But if they recompense so munificently all those who serve the state in this manner, I am no longer astonished at the embarrassment of the royal treasury.

The COUNT. Very true, Madame; but nevertheless permit me—

The MARCHIONESS. Well, it's no matter; if ever the like occasion should occur, employ me, or we shall quarrel seriously.

The COUNT. Madame, I return you thanks: permit me at last to finish the recital of my adventure.

The MARCHIONESS. Oh! If you apply to anyone else, I shall not pardon you, I assure you.

The MARQUIS. Come enough of that; let him finish his story.

THE COUNT. The lady, quite enraptured, lavished on the young Adonis—

The MARCHIONESS. Oh! What a headache I have!

The COUNT. Lavished on the young Adonis—

The MARCHIONESS. [Taking the Marquis aside, and speaking to him in a low voice.] Monsieur, I repeat it, it is not decent to relate before this child.

The MARQUIS. Never mind; she knows more than you are aware of; the little wag is crafty! I'm skilful in physiognomy.

The COUNT. I shall never be able to finish my narrative, they interrupt me so at every moment; I am going home, tomorrow morning I will send you the details in writing.

The MARCHIONESS. A good joke, certainly.

The COUNT. [To the Marquis.] No, I'll send it you, upon my honour; and I will put the initial letters to each name—at least, unless they'll let me finish it this evening.

The MARQUIS. Well, go on, then, finish it.

The MARCHIONESS. Well, make haste, then, and finish it; but reflect—

The COUNT. The lady, quite enraptured, lavished on the young Adonis the most delicate and flattering confidence, the kindest offers, and the most tender embraces; in fact, one ought to behold so delightful a scene to form a proper idea of it: it cannot be described, but one might act it—here, let us perform it.

The MARQUIS. You are in jest.

The MARCHIONESS. What folly.

MADEMOISELLE DU PORTAIL. What an idea!

The COUNT. Let us act it; Madame shall be the lady in question; I will be the poor discarded lover. Ah! But we shall want a Countess!—[To the Marchioness.]—But Madame is very clever, she can easily fill two characters at the same time.

The MARCHIONESS. [Endeavouring to restrain her anger.] Monsieur!—

The COUNT. I beg your pardon, Madame; it is only a supposition.

The MARQUIS. Certainly; you cannot be angry at that.

The MARCHIONESS. [In a faint voice, and with tears in her eyes.] The question is not about the parts you offer me, but it is very cruel, when I have been complaining, for this hour past, of being very ill, that you do not deign to pay me the least attention. [To the Count, in agitation.] Could one, sir, without offence, observe to you that it is late, and I have need of repose!

The COUNT. [A little affected.] I am grieved to importune you so, Madame.

The MARCHIONESS. You do not intrude upon me, sir; but I repeat it to you, that I am ill—very ill.

The MARQUIS. Well! But what are we to do now? Where does Mademoiselle du Portail sleep?

The MARCHIONESS. [In a lively manner.] Indeed, sir, it would seem as if we had but one apartment in the house.

Alarmed at the turn which the conversation was likely to take, I approached the Count. "Charming girl," he said to me, in a very low voice, "leave it to me;

nothing you can say to me will have any effect, because I am curious to know the whole, and shall have it presently."

The MARQUIS. There are apartments, Madame; but will not this child be afraid to be alone?

The COUNT. [With great vivacity.] No more so than the last time.

The MARQUIS. [Abruptly, and pointing towards the Marchioness.] But the last time she slept with Madame.

The COUNT. Ah!

The MARCHIONESS. [With much embarrassment, and stammering.] She slept in my chamber—and I—

The MARQUIS. She slept in your own bed with you; I know it well, because I closed the curtains myself; do you not remember it? [The Marchioness, confounded, made no reply; the Marquis continued, affecting to speak low.] Do you not remember my coming in the night? [The Marchioness held her hand to her forehead, cried out, and fainted.]

I could not discover if the fainting was very natural, but I know that as soon as the Marquis had quitted us, to fetch some waters, which he said were a sovereign remedy in such cases, the Marchioness recovered her senses, cheered up immediately, and addressing herself to the Count: "Monsieur," she said to him, "have you then sworn to ruin me?"

"No, Madame, I wished to inform myself of certain matters that I was ignorant of, to prove to you that I am not to be tricked with impunity, and to make you acknowledge that I am capable of avenging myself."

"Of avenging yourself?" she cried, "and for what?"

"I know, nevertheless," he continued, "how to govern my resentment, and do not carry my vengeance too far. Now, Madame, you may be tranquil, but upon one condition. I feel," he added, looking at us in a malignant manner, "that I have afflicted you both; you promised yourselves a happy night—happy as the night before the last; but you, sir—you have had too little skill to interest me in the success of your gallant projects; and you, Madame, expect, without doubt, that as a complaisant minister to your pleasures, I—"

"Me, sir!" she cried, "I expect nothing from you; but I believe, also, that I have nothing to fear: and whatever has been my conduct, from whence do you derive, I should like you to know, the right you claim to investigate it?" Rosambert only replied to this question by a sarcastic smile: "As a complaisant minister to your pleasures, I can see as a husband."

"Dare you to use that epithet?"

"I can see M. de Faublas clasped in your arms, even in my presence."

"M. de Faublas in my arms!"

"Or Mademoiselle du Portail in your bed, is it not the same thing! Ah! But, Madame, I believe we are agreed upon that score. The time is precious, let us not lose it in disputing any longer about words: let us be composed. Let this charming girl give me the honour of accompanying her, that I may conduct her presently to her father: on this condition I hold my tongue."

The Marquis entered, with a bottle in his hand. "I am very sensible of your care, "said the Marchioness to him, "but you see that I am better; I wish I was quite well, that I might keep Mademoiselle du Portail."

"What!" cried the Marquis. "I am always incommoded. It is impossible for this dear child to pass the night with me."

"Hey dey! Madame, is there not, as you said just now, more than one chamber in the house?"

"Yes, sir, but you have made an objection to which I agree—this child would be afraid. Besides, to leave her all alone! I could not suffer it."

"She shall not be alone, Madame; her *femme de chambre* is here."

"Her *femme de chambre*!—her *femme de chambre*! Well, sir, since we must tell you everything, M. du Portail does not wish that his daughter should sleep here tonight."

"Who told you so, Madame?"

"Monsieur the Count has just announced to me that M. du Portail begged him to come here, and bring home his daughter."

"Wherefore did you not tell us that before?"

"But," replied Rosambert, laughing, "it was because I would not interfere with your mirth during supper."

"M. du Portail send for his daughter!" replied the Marquis. "Does he think she is not safe here? And why, moreover, did he charge you with such a commission? He owes us a visit of acknowledgment; when he comes himself I shall see him. I would know his reasons—I shall see him."

I made a profound reverence to the Marchioness; she rose, and came to embrace me. M. de Rosambert threw himself between us: "Madame, you are fatigued; do not disturb yourself;" and taking her gently by the hand, he forced her to sit down; after which he took me by the arm, with an air of gallantry, and the Marquis saw, with a lively regret, Mademoiselle du Portail and Madame Dutour go away in the carriage of the Count.

At the turning of the first street, M. de Rosambert ordered his coachman to stop. "I know that face," he said, on looking at my pretended *femme de chambre*; "I do not think the service of this good woman will be required at the house of the Baron de Faublas, therefore we will dispense with her accompanying us so far." La Dutour got out without saying a single word, and we continued our route.

I remarked to the Count that we were now at liberty; that he had taken too much advantage of the awkward circumstances in which I was placed, and that he could not excuse himself from giving me immediate satisfaction. "I see no one this evening but Mademoiselle du Portail," he replied to me; "tomorrow, if the Chevalier de Faublas has anything to say to me, he will find me at home. We will breakfast together, and I will tell my friend what I think of his conduct; and if he is reasonable, I hope to convince him, without much trouble, that be ought to be satisfied with mine."

In the meanwhile we arrived at the door of my father's mansion; it was the Abbé Person himself who opened it to me; he informed me that the Baron had expected my return with more anxiety than anger, and that despairing at last to see me

this evening, he retired to bed, after having told Jasmin about twenty times, to go as soon as it was light, and seek me at the ball, or at the house of the Marquis de B***.

I went to my chamber, where, calling to mind the various events of this bustling day, I was astonished at being able to pass it without once thinking of my Sophia; and to make amends for this long forgetfulness, I repeated to myself, a hundred times, her much loved name.

I confess also, that that of the Marchioness came sometimes upon my lips; I acknowledge that, at first, it seemed hard to be reduced to vent such useless sighs in my solitary bed; but I determined to offer to my adored Sophia the sacrifice of my pleasures, involuntary, or at least unsought for, as they had been, and went to sleep almost reconciled with the celibacy to which the Count's vengeance had condemned me.

As soon as it was morning I made my respects to the Baron. He said to me, in a very mild manner, "Faublas, you are no longer a child; I shall give you a reasonable liberty; I hope that you will not abuse it, and I trust you will never pass your night otherwise than in this house; remember that I am your father, and that if my son loves me, he will be careful not to displease me."

I hastened to the house of M. de Rosambert, who was already waiting for me. The moment he saw me, he came to me laughing, and without giving me time to say a single word, he threw his arm round my neck: "Let me embrace you, my dear Faublas! Your adventure was delightful! The more I think of it, the more it amuses me."

I interrupted him bluntly. "I am not come to receive your compliments."

The Count begged me, in a serious tone, to sit down: "You may," he said, "wish them to me again. I see you in the same disposition. Come on, then, my young friend, you are mad. What! An ungrateful beauty favours you, and discards me; it is I who am sacrificed; it is to you that I am immolated; and yet you are angry about it. I punished but by a momentary uneasiness the deceitful gallantry of the skilful couple who play upon me; and it is by the blood of his friend that M. de Faublas pretends to avenge the petty tribulations of Mademoiselle du Portail: I swear to you, it shall not be. My dear de Faublas, I have over you the advantage of six years' experience; I know very well that at sixteen we know but one's mistress and one's sword; but at twenty-two a man of the world fights no more for a woman."

I evinced some symptoms of astonishment, which he observed. "Do you believe there is such a thing as true love?" he added, immediately; "it is one of the illusions of youth, and I warn you against it. For my part, I have seen throughout nothing but gallantry. What else is there in your adventure? Great success, and nothing more; and out of a comic tale we should make a tragedy! We should cut each other's throats for a fine lady, who quits me today, and tomorrow will discard you. Chevalier, keep your courage for a more important occasion; you cannot hereafter suspect mine. It is too true that the fatal concourse of circumstances compels us sometimes to shed the blood of a friend; may honour, inflexible honour, never reduce you to this horrible extremity! My dear Faublas, I was about your age when the Marchioness de Rosambert, whose son I am, completed her thirty-fifth year; she was still as comely as if she had been only twenty-five; and when among strangers, she was taken for my eldest sister. With all the agreeableness of youth, she had preserved its propensities; she loved crowded assemblies and the bustle of public places. One

night, when I had conducted her to the ball of the opera, she was publicly insulted. I heard the cries of the Marchioness, and ran to her assistance; she was about to take off her mask; already the insolent unknown had apologized for his mistake, and mingled with the crowd. I followed him, and obliged him to unmask; I recognised in him the young Saint Clair,—Saint Clair, the companion of my youth! And of all friends the most dear, 'I knew not that it was the Marchioness de Rosambert!' This was all he said to me: it was enough, no doubt. But, alas! A general murmur gave us to understand that it was not sufficient: honour would have blood; we fought—Saint Clair fell—I sunk insensible near my dying friend. For more than six weeks a dreadful fever raged in my veins, and disordered my reason. In my frightful delirium, I saw nothing but Saint Clair; his wound bleeding before my eyes; the convulsions of death agitated his trembling limbs; yet he, nevertheless, regarded me with a tender look, and, in a faint voice, he bade me a most affectionate farewell. In his last moments he seemed sensible of no other grief than what he felt at quitting the barbarian who sacrificed him. This frightful phantom of the imagination pursued me for a long time; for a long time my life was despaired of; at length, nature, seconded by the efforts of art, brought about my cure; but I recovered my reason, without losing my remorse. Time, which reconciles everything, dried up my tears; but never, never, will the remembrance of that frightful combat be effaced from my mind. Chevalier, it is always with regret that I am obliged to fight, even with a stranger; judge, then, if I would go rashly to oppose my life in order to threaten yours. Ah! If ever inflexible honour compels us to it, my dear Faublas, I swear to you that your victory will neither be difficult nor glorious; I have too often experienced that in such cases, he who dies is not the most unhappy."

Rosambert stretched his arms toward me; I embraced him with all my heart, and his seriousness was soon dissipated. "Let us breakfast," he said to me; and resuming his former gaiety: "You came to pick a quarrel with me, you ungrateful rogue, at the very time that you owe me a thousand thanks."

"I owe you?"

"Without doubt: was it not I who introduced you to the Marchioness? It is true I did not foresee the mischievous trick that was to be played upon me: I had calculated upon an infidelity, but never guessed that it was to happen so speedily, and under such singular circumstances! [He burst into a fit of laughter.] Oh! But the more I think on it, the more I ought to congratulate you. Your adventure was most delightful! How charming it is to be introduced to the world through such a beautiful door! The Marchioness is young, handsome, witty, of consideration in the city, well received at court, and intriguing as the devil: her interest and her influence are very extensive, and she is zealous in serving her friends." I assured the Count that I should never employ such means in seeking my fortune. "Then you are wrong," he replied; "how many persons of real merit are, notwithstanding, advanced by such means alone! But let us drop this subject: do you not give me any details of this joyous night? You must have been completely happy; you must have been bathed in ecstasy, and lapped in Paradise!"

I complied with his request. "Ah! The crafty Marchioness!" exclaimed the Count, after having heard me. "Ah! The subtle dame! How admirably she manoeuvred for her own pleasure! And her honest spouse, the dear Marquis, the most kind, credulous, and complaisant, of all the accommodating husbands with which France

abounds. Indeed, it makes me believe that certain men have been created to serve for the amusement of their friends. But his wife! His wife!"

"Is very amiable."

"I know it well; I knew it even before you; and we should have killed each other on her account."

"Ah! I agree, Rosambert, that we should have done wrong—very wrong;"

"And then such a freak would have been a very dangerous example."

"How?"

"Listen, Faublas: in the small circle of each of the societies which compose what is called the fashionable world, there are a number of intrigues which interfere, and a variety of interests which jar, the one with the other: such as the husband of this lady, who is the lover of that: one is discarded that another may be embraced today, and the last, perhaps, will be sacrificed tomorrow.

"The men are enterprising, and they attack unceasingly; the women are weak, and they always yield. It results from this, that celibacy is a very agreeable state, and that the yoke of matrimony appears less insupportable; the young are amused, subjects are produced for the state, and all the world are satisfied. Now if jealousy was at this day to spread among us its deadly poison; if the husbands whose heads we embellish were to arm themselves to repair the honour of their frail ribs; if the lovers they discard killed each other in disputing about an inconstant heart, you would see a general desolation; the city and the court would become a vast field of slaughter. How many wives, who are considered virtuous, would presently become widows! How many fine children, reputed legitimate, would have to mourn the loss of their fathers! How many charming bastards would then be left destitute! The present generation would pass away after having produced, but without having brought up its offspring!"

"What a picture you draw, Rosambert; you paint gallantry, but love, tender and respectful love!—"

"Exists no more; it was tiresome to the women; the women have destroyed it."

"You estimate the women but lightly, then?"

"True; I love them as they wish to be loved."

"Ah!" I replied, with the greatest vivacity, I pardon your blasphemies, you know not my Sophia!" He demanded an explanation of these last words; but I refused him with that discretion which, particularly in the beginning, accompanies a sincere affection.

In the meantime we took a breakfast substantial enough for a dinner; the champagne was not spared, and we know that Bacchus is the father of gaiety. It appeared to me that the Count valued the women very little, loved them very much, and was fond of talking about them. Full of the system which he had detailed, he supported it by a recital of scandalous anecdotes concerning the gallantry of the day. Rosambert embarrassed me without persuading me; to every example which he gave me, I uniformly replied that an exception, far from destroying the rule, served but to prove it. "But you know not," he said, with some warmth, "you do not know to what a pitch the greater part of this sex, so much honoured, carry every day, their forgetfulness of that natural timidity, that innate modesty, which you suppose them to

possess." He rose with great vivacity, and laughing with all his might. "Zounds! I'll convince you. You have not engaged yourself to-day? Come with me, come; I will in a moment present you to a fine lady; we shall find her among several others: they are all pretty; you shall have an opportunity of estimating the whole of them, or as many as you like."

We were both elevated with wine; we took a decent hackney chariot, and were driven to a house of respectable appearance; the air of freedom, however, which was remarkable in the mistress of it, the familiarity with which the Count treated her, and the no less familiar welcome with which she honoured me, made me suspect that I was to be introduced to a party of Cyprians. I was presently convinced of it, when the good lady, to whom the Count appeared very well known, and who wished, as she said politely, to initiate me, had shown me all the curiosities of her house.

Rosambert took the pains to explain everything to me himself; "Behold there," he said, "the bath, where they scour and perfume the sturdy and athletic recruits, which both the city and the country daily furnish to this active procuress. In this closet, you see several flasks of a very astringent liquor, the great merit of which is to repair every species of breach made in what virgins call their virtue. Thousands of young ladies, of the first respectability, use it with discretion, and have the satisfaction, on their wedding night, to offer to the happy mortal who marries them a new virginity. On another side is 'L'Essence a l'usage des Monstres,' which produces effects entirely opposite to the other; and, therefore, it is never wanted! Alas! The age of miniatures is gone! And I would wager that, in all Paris, you would not find a single little woman who stood in need of this remedy: on the contrary, if that which you see in those very large bottles possessed the virtues they pretend, it would have a prodigious consumption; you would see the Doctor Guibert de Preval beset with a crowd of lawyer's clerks, some lawyers, numerous great lords, many of the military, and almost all the Abbés; it is the 'Infallible Specific.'

"You know, Faublas, what the closet of a dressing-room is; this has nothing remarkable, let us go further. This is the ball-room; but they do not dance here, they only disguise. Look at this door, you would take it for a closet; it is only a passage of communication; it comes from a house, the entrance of which is in another street. If a lady of quality has certain delicate and secret wants, which she is anxious to satisfy, she enters by that door, disguised as a waiting-woman, exposes her charms for attraction, and receives the vigorous embraces of some robust countryman, dressed up, perhaps, like a bishop; or of a fat bishop, so naturally metamorphosed, that one would take him for a rustic. Thus they render each other a mutual service! And, as they are entirely unknown, they are under no obligation.

"Presently we will enter the infirmary—but let not the name alarm you. Open, if you like, these licentious pamphlets; examine the obscene prints; they were placed here to warm the imagination of those old debauchees whom Death has already struck in the most sensible part; and it is here, likewise, that, with little *fasces* of perfumed broom, they endeavour to 'rouse the Venus loitering in their veins.'<2>

"You think, perhaps, that a like method would be too violent for the fair sex, but some of them resort to it, and others avail themselves of these pastilles, which are so stimulating that no sooner has a woman eaten one, than she is infected with what they call *la rage d'amour*. These are, however, seldom employed except against some pretty country girl, who is cold by temperament, and resolutely virtuous. Our ladies of

fashion and education never evince sufficient resistance to require our attacking them with such manoeuvres.

"Come here, look at this; among the curious plants in the king's garden, have you never observed this? It is what many poor girls call their comforter; you cannot conceive how many devotees Madame has furnished with it.

"This last apartment is called the hall of Vulcan: there is nothing remarkable in it but that infernal armchair. The wretched fair one who sits down on it, finds herself immediately thrown on her back; her arms are spread open; and in fact she is fixed, by means of springs, in such a position, as to be violated without her being capable of making the least resistance. You shudder, Faublas! And for this time you have reason. I am young, ardent, and a libertine not over scrupulous; but, indeed, I think I could never resolve to rifle a poor girl, by force, in this machine."

The Count added: "If we had come sooner, they would have furnished us with two young lasses from the city; but, for want of better, let us see the seraglio." It was thus he called the saloon, wherein we found a great many nymphs assembled, who all passed before us as candidates for the honour of the handkerchief. Rosambert chose the prettiest, and I had the singular whim to select the most ugly amongst them.

"While we are waiting," said the Count, "for the dinner which I have ordered, we can each of us have a dish of chat with our girls; at table, we will form a party for general conversation." Naturally curious, I thought I would examine minutely the nymph I had chosen; it appeared to me important to ascertain whether there was any difference between a handsome Marchioness and an ugly courtesan. The investigation amused me at first, merely by the objects of comparison which she offered me; I was insensibly inflamed, and began mechanically to think of pushing the examination as far as it could go. The nymph, perceiving how I was disposed, left me no time for reflection, but invited me to the attack, and prepared herself vigorously to sustain it; but all at once, without my having had occasion to explain to her my pacific intentions, the experienced heroine perceived that there would not have been between us even the slightest skirmish, she rose up with great *sang-froid*, and looking at me earnestly: So much the better, she said, "it would have been a pity!" It is impossible to conceive how I was struck by the idea, so forcibly conveyed in these words *It would have been a pity*. I enquired not what had become of Rosambert, but fled from this infamous house, swearing never to enter it again.

The Count called on me the next morning by ten o'clock: he came to know what panic terror had seized me, and assured me, that my adventure was spread throughout the house, and had afforded them very great diversion. "What! Rosambert, that girl said to me, 'It would have been a pity!' And you call my alarm a panic of terror!"

"Oh, that is different! The girl has a little misrepresented the adventure: she took care not to tell us, that 'it would have been a pity!' which changes her story entirely. Well! Faublas, do you esteem this woman for having coldly suffered you to escape a danger into which she had invited you to run?"

"You ask me a very droll question, Rosambert; what deduction could you draw from my answer against her sex in general?"

"You quibble, my friend; you are incorrigible. Well! Esteem them—esteem them, since you are resolved to do it: as for me, I must go to bed."

"How! Go to bed?"

"From whence come you then? From where would you have me come? In this world we must amuse ourselves with everything. I met with the Commander de G***, the little Chevalier de M**, and the Abbé de R**; we spent all the evening, and all the night, in revelry—in Bacchanalian orgies! Oh! It was delightful!—but I must go to bed."

I was scarcely dressed, when my father came up to me, and informed me, that M. du Portail expected me to dinner. "You will pass the whole evening together," he added, "and as I shall sup in that quarter, I will call and bring you home."

I hastened to get out, as I longed to see my pretty cousin. She came to the conversation room with my sister. "You are lucky," said Adelaide to me in a very lively manner, "to go to balls, to pass whole nights at them, and to get acquainted with a very fine lady!"

"And who has told you all that?"

"The Abbé, who keeps no secret from us." Sophia held down her eyes and was silent; but my sister continued: "Tell us, then, who this lady is; and a masked ball! That must be very grand!"

"Very tiresome, I assure you; and as to the lady, she is pretty, certainly; but much less so than—oh! Much less so than my charming cousin." Sophia, still silent, still looking on the ground, appeared to be entirely occupied with some trinket on the string of her watch; but the deep crimson blush with which her countenance was suffused, betrayed her. I perceived that our conversation touched her in proportion as she affected to be least interested in it. "Something vexes you, my pretty cousin?"

"Why do you not reply, Mademoiselle?" said the old *Gouvernante.*

"No, sir; but it is that I did not sleep well last night."

"Yes, "said the old woman, that is true; "she has not slept for these three or four nights past; it is a very bad habit, very bad, and will soon kill you. I knew a young lady—Mademoiselle Storch—you did not know her, you are too young; it is five-and-forty years since it happened—Mademoiselle Storch—"

The old woman had thus commenced her story, and if I did not wish to be deprived of the happiness of seeing my pretty cousin, I must of course listen to her long narration. Sophia spared me this mortification, by giving a still greater. She rose; the *Gouvernante* demanded, with some warmth, what was the matter with her; she replied that she was very unwell; her voice faltered. "This is the way you always serve me," replied the old woman; "one never has time to speak to a person. Monsieur the Chevalier, come tomorrow, you will find it interesting, and that there is good reason for saying young people ought to sleep."

"Permit me, brother, to follow my dear friend."

"Yes, my dear Adelaide, yes; take good care of her." At length, Sophia lifted her eyes to salute me; and gave me a look so full of anguish, that it penetrated to my heart, and awakened my remorse.

III.

It was time for me to visit M. du Portail. After having repeated my thanks to him, I related all my adventures, not forgetting the breakfast with Rosambert; but did not tell him where our gaiety conducted us afterwards. "I am glad," he said, "that M. de Rosambert, who, from the details you have given me, appears to be a fop, in every sense of the word, has, at least, just ideas regarding real honour. Keep in mind, my young friend, that of all the laws of your country, that which forbids duels is the most respectable. In this age of literature and philosophy, the ferocity of mankind is greatly softened down. How many lives have been spared to the nation, and how many families have been saved from the most poignant distress, by the happy revolution which has taken place on this subject in the minds of men! As to the women, it appears, indeed, that the Count does not esteem them; if it is only through the example of so many young men, like himself, who affect for them the most profound contempt, which, in reality, they have not, I pity him; but I pity him still more, if he has only known such women as were unworthy of esteem.

"Faublas, trust to my experience, which is much greater than that of the Count, who thinks, at the age of twenty-two, that he has seen a great deal. Rely on my judgment, which is deeper, and my observation, which has been more extensive. If we do meet in the world some women without shame, we meet with more young men without principle. Be cautious of listening to the stale declamation of these fops. There are women existing, whose modest graces can inspire the most pure and tender love, whose susceptible hearts are formed for tenderness, who command our homage by the amiableness of their manners, and our respect by the mildness of their virtues. We meet, less rarely than they have told you, with affectionate and disinterested females, with prudent wives, and excellent mothers of families. There are some who would shed their blood for their husbands and their children. I have known some who united to the mildest virtues of their sex the most masculine virtues of our own; who have given to men worthy of them, examples of generous devotion, of heroic courage, and of patience, which was proof against everything.

"Your Marchioness is not a heroine, he added with a smile, she is very young, and very imprudent. My friend, endeavour to be more reasonable than her, and put an end to this dangerous connection; for, however credulous the husband may be, some unforeseen event must necessarily bring everything to light; promise me never to visit Madame de B*** any more."

I hesitated: M. du Portail pressed me; but, while making his eulogium on woman, he had recalled the charming Sophia to my mind. I at length promised that it should be as he wished. "Now," he said, "I have some important secrets to reveal to you; when you shall have heard me, you will feel that you must repay the great confidence I place in you by an inviolable secrecy.

"My history affords a frightful example of the vicissitudes of fortune. It is generally very convenient, but sometimes very dangerous, to have an ancient name to sustain, and great wealth to preserve. The only heir of an illustrious family, the origin of which it is now impossible to trace, I ought to be occupying the principal offices of the state in the country which produced me, instead of being condemned to languish in a foreign nation, and in idle obscurity. The name of Lovinski is honourably inscribed in the annals of Poland, and that name is about to perish with me! I know that an austere philosophy rejects vain titles and corrupting riches; perhaps I could console me if I had lost nothing else; but my young friend, I mourn a wife whom I

adored, I seek a daughter whom I dearly love, and I shall never behold my native country again what fortitude can be hardened against misfortunes like these?

"My father, Lovinski, still more distinguished by his virtues than his rank, enjoyed at court that consideration which always follows the favour of the Prince, and which personal merit sometimes obtains. He gave to the education of my two sisters the attention of a most tender father; he occupied himself, above all, concerning mine, with the zeal of an old gentleman jealous of the honour of his house, of which I was the only hope, and with the activity of a good citizen, who desired nothing more than to leave to the state a successor worthy of himself.

"I pursued my studies at Warsaw; whilst there the young M. de P*** distinguished himself amongst us by the most amiable qualities; to a very agreeable person he joined a highly cultivated understanding; he possessed an address rarely to be met with among our young warriors; and his modesty was such that he seemed uniformly desirous of concealing his own merit, and of exalting the humbler talents of his rivals, who were almost always vanquished; the urbanity of his manners, and the gentleness of his character, attracted attention, commanded esteem, and rendered him dear to the brilliant assemblage of youth who partook of our labours and our pleasures. To say that it was the resemblance of characters and sympathy of minds which began my connection with M. de P***, would be arrogating too much to myself; let it be as it will, we became presently the most inseparable friends. How happy, but how quickly fled, is that age, when we are ignorant either of the ambition which sacrifices everything to the ideas of fortune and of glory which possesses it, or of love, whose power supreme, absorbs and concentrates all our faculties upon a single object! That age of innocent pleasure, and implicit confidence, when the heart, still inexperienced, pursues freely the growing impulses of sensibility, and devotes itself, without reserve, to the object of its disinterested affections! Then, my dear Faublas, then, friendship is not a vain and empty name. Being the confidant of all the secrets of M. de P***, I undertook nothing of which I did not previously inform him; his counsels regulated my conduct, mine determined his resolutions; and by this agreeable reciprocity our youth had no pleasures which were not participated, no pains which were not alleviated.

"With what grief I saw the fatal moment arrive when M. de P***, obliged, by his father's orders, to leave Warsaw, bade me the most tender farewell. We promised each other that we would preserve throughout life the same lively attachment, which had been the happiness of our youth; I swore rashly, that the passions of another age should not alter it.

"Oh! What a void the absence of my friend left in my heart! At first, it seemed as if nothing could recompense me for the loss of him; the tenderness of a father, the caresses of my sisters, affected me but slightly. I thought that there remained no other means of dispelling my ennui, than by occupying my leisure with some useful labour. I learned the French language, which was already spread throughout Europe. I read with delight some famous works, eternal monuments of genius, and wondered how, in an idiom so unfavourable for poetry, so many great poets had been able to distinguish themselves, and so many great writers had, with justice, obtained immortality. I applied myself seriously to the study of geometry; I adopted, moreover, that noble trade which makes a hero at the expense of a hundred thousand victims, and which men, less humane than valiant, have called the grand art of war.

"Several years were employed in these studies, as difficult as profound. At last, they occupied my whole mind. M. de P***, who wrote to me often, but rarely received answers, and those were short: our correspondence languished in this manner until love put an end to it, by making me forget friendship.

"My father had been for a long time very closely connected with the Count Pulauski. Remarkable for his rigid morals, and the inflexibility of his truly republican virtues: Pulauski, at once a great captain and brave soldier, had signalized, in more than one engagement, his heroic courage, and his ardent patriotism. Addicted to reading the ancients, he had derived from their history lessons of noble disinterestedness, of unchangeable constancy, and absolute devotion. Like the heroes, to whom idolatrous Rome, out of gratitude, erected altars, Pulauski had sacrificed all his wealth to the prosperity of his country; he had shed his blood in her defence; he had even immolated his only daughter, his dear Lodoiska.

"Lodoiska! Oh, how beautiful she was! Oh, how I loved her! Her cherished name is always on my lips; her adored image is still fresh upon my heart. From the moment I had seen her, I saw no one but her; I abandoned my studies, entirely forgot my friendship, and consecrated all my time to Lodoiska. My father and hers could not be long ignorant of our amour: they never spoke to me of it.—Did they not then approve it?—This idea appeared to me so well founded, that I gave myself up, without solicitude, to the pleasing fascination of hope and love. I concerted measures, in order to see Lodoiska almost every day, either at her own house or that of my sisters, by whom she was loved very much. In this delightful occupation, two years passed away.

"At length, Pulauski took me aside one day, and said to me: 'Thy father and I have formed great hopes regarding thee, which thy conduct hitherto justifies; I have observed thee, for a long time, employing thy youth in labours as honourable as useful. To-day—' (he saw I was about to interrupt him, and he prevented me) 'what art thou going to say to me? Dost thou think to inform me of anything I do not know? Thinkest thou that it was necessary for me to be every day witness of thy transports, to convince me how much my Lodoiska deserves to be beloved? It is because I know, as well as thou dost, the worth of my child, that thou wilt not obtain her but by meriting her.

"'Young man, know that weaknesses, being legitimate, is not a sufficient excuse for them; that a good citizen ought to turn everything to the advantage of his country; that love, even love, will be like all the vile passions, but despicable and dangerous if it does not present to generous hearts a more powerful stimulus to tread in the paths of honour.

"'Now attend to me: Our monarch is drawing towards his end; his health, each day more tottering, has awakened the ambition of our neighbours; they are preparing, without doubt, to sow divisions amongst us; they calculate, by biasing our votes, to give us a king of their choice. Foreign troops have dared to show themselves on the frontiers of Poland: already, two thousand gentlemen have assembled to check their audacious insolence; go and join these brave youths; go, and above all, at the end of the campaign, come back covered with the blood of our enemies, and present to Pulauski a kinsman worthy of himself.'

"I did not hesitate a moment; my father approved my resolutions, but it was with regret he consented to my precipitate departure. He held me for a long time

clasped to his breast; his countenance was marked by the most anxious solicitude; he bade me farewell in the most painful manner; his looks evinced the anguish of his heart, and our tears mingled on his venerable face.

"Pulauski, who was present at this affecting scene, reproached us stoically with what he called a weakness. 'Dry thy tears,' he said to me, 'or keep them for Lodoiska; it belongs but to weak lovers to shed them at parting for only six months.' He even informed his daughter, in my presence, of my departure, and the motives which determined it. Lodoiska turned pale, sighed, looked at her father with a blush, and assured me in a trembling voice, that her prayers would hasten my return, and that her happiness was in my hands. Encouraged in this manner, what dangers could I fear? I set out; but in the course of this campaign, nothing passed deserving of notice. The enemy, as careful as ourselves in avoiding an action, which might plunge the two nations into open war, contented themselves with fatiguing us by frequent marches. We confined ourselves to following and observing them; they did the same by us, whenever the country was sufficiently open to afford them easy access. At the approach of bad weather, they prepared themselves to retire homeward for winter quarters; and our little army, composed almost entirely of gentlemen, separated.

"I returned to Warsaw, full of joy and impatience. I thought that Love and Hymen were about to present me with Lodoiska. Alas! I had no longer a father! I learnt, on entering the capital, that the night before my father died of an apoplexy. Thus I had not even the melancholy satisfaction of receiving the last sighs of the tenderst of fathers; I could only recline upon his tomb, which I watered with my tears.

"'It is not,' said Pulauski, very little touched by my grief, 'it is not by useless tears that they honour the memory of a father like thine. Poland regrets in him an heroic citizen, who would have been of important service in the critical circumstances to which I am about to draw your attention. Exhausted by a long illness, our monarch has not many days to live, and on the choice of his successor depends the happiness or the misery of our citizens. Of all the rights which the death of your father transmits to you, the most valuable, without doubt, is that of assisting at the States, where you will go as a representative; it is there that your father should revive in you; it is there that you must prove a courage much more difficult than that of braving death in the field of battle. The valour of a soldier is but a common virtue; but those are not ordinary men who preserve a tranquil firmness on the most trying occasions; and by displaying a penetrating activity, discover the projects of the powerful who cabal, frustrate secret intrigues, and set at defiance the most daring factions; who, always firm, incorruptible and just, never give their votes but to those they deem the most worthy of them; who study nothing so much as the welfare of their country; whom neither gold nor promises can seduce, entreaties bend, or menaces intimidate. Those are the virtues which distinguished thy father; this is the truly precious inheritance which you should eagerly possess. The day when our States assemble for the election of a king, is an epoch when several of our fellow-citizens, more occupied with their personal interests, than jealous for the safety of their country; and the insidious designs of powerful neighbours, whose wicked policy destroys our strength, by dividing us, manifest their pretensions. If I do not deceive myself, the fatal moment approaches, which will fix forever the destinies of my tottering country; her enemies conspire her ruin; they have planned, in secret, a revolution, which they shall never carry into execution whilst my arm can lift a sword. May God, the protector of my country, spare it from evil war! But that extremity, however dreadful, may, perhaps, be necessary. I flatter myself, however, there will be but one violent crisis; after which,

this state, being regenerated, will resume its ancient splendour. Thou shouldst second my efforts, Lovinski; the trifling interests of love ought to be waived before interests more sacred: I cannot give thee my daughter in times of mourning, when the country is in danger; but I promise thee that the first days of peace shall be marked by thy marriage with Lodoiska.'

"Pulauski did not speak in vain; I was sensible of the very important duties it was incumbent on me to perform; but these weighty cares which I took upon myself did not afford my grief sufficient alleviation: I own it without blushing: the sorrow of my sisters, their affectionate friendship, the embraces, more reserved, but not less sweet, of my fair mistress, made a more lively impression upon my heart than the patriotic counsels of Pulauski. I beheld Lodoiska sensibly affected at the irreparable loss I had sustained, and equally afflicted as myself by the cruel events which deferred our union: my griefs, being thus participated, were considerably lightened.

"In the meanwhile the king died, and the Diet was convoked. On the very day that it was about to open, and at the moment I was going there, a person whom I knew not, presented himself in my palace, and demanded to speak to me, without witnesses. As soon as my servants had retired, he entered with precipitation, threw himself in my arms, and embraced me with tenderness. It was M. de P***: the ten years which had passed since our separation, had not so much changed, but that I recognised him. I testified the joy and surprise which his unexpected return gave me. 'You will be much more astonished, he said, when you know the cause. I have this instant arrived, and am going to the assembly of the States. Is it too presumptuous of thy friend to reckon on thy vote?' 'On my vote! And for whom?' 'For myself, my friend.' He observed my astonishment. 'Yes, for me,' he continued, with vivacity; 'there is no time to tell you of the happy revolution which has taken place in my fortune, and prompts me to indulge such lofty hopes; let it suffice you for the present to know, that my ambition is justified by the greater number of votes, and that it is in vain for my two feeble rivals to dispute the crown to which I pretend. Lovinski,' he continued, embracing me again, 'if you were not my friend, if I esteemed you less, I might perhaps dazzle you by great promises; I might, perhaps, point out the great favour that attends you, the honourable distinctions which are reserved for you, and the noble and extensive career which is open to you; but I have no need to seduce you, I shall only persuade you. I see it with grief, and you know it as well as I do, that for several years Poland has been so weak, that she has only been indebted for her safety, to the understanding of three powers which surround her, and that the desire of enriching themselves with our plunder, might unite, in a moment, our divided enemies. Let us prevent, if we can, so unfortunate an occurrence, of which the dismemberment of our provinces would be the infallible result. There is no doubt but, in happier times, our ancestors maintained the liberty of elections; we must at present yield to the necessity which presses upon us. Russia will, as a matter of course, protect the king who shall be of her own making; in receiving that which she has chosen, you prevent that triple alliance which would render our fall inevitable; and you are sure of a powerful ally, which we can oppose with success to the two enemies that remain. These, then are the reasons which have determined me. I abandon some of our rights, to preserve others that are more precious. I would not mount a tottering throne, but to strengthen it by a sound policy; I do not, in fact, alter the constitution of this state but to save it altogether.'

"We went to the Diet; I voted for M. de P***, and he obtained the greatest number of suffrages; but Pulauski, Zaremba, and some others, declared for the Prince C****: nothing could be decided in the tumult of this first assembly.

"When the assembly broke up, M. de P*** came to me again, and invited me to follow him to the palace, which some secret emissaries had prepared for him in the capital. We shut ourselves up for several hours: we renewed our protestations of eternal friendship; I informed him of my connection with Pulauski, and my love for Lodoiska. He returned my confidence by a confidence still greater; he told me the events which had paved the way to his approaching greatness; he explained to me his most secret designs, and I quitted him, convinced that he was less occupied by the desire of elevating himself than of restoring to Poland her ancient prosperity.

"Under these impressions, I flew to my future father-in-law, whom I was anxious to bring over to the party of my friend. Pulauski was walking, with hasty strides, the apartment of his daughter, who appeared as much agitated as himself. 'Behold him,' he said to Lodoiska, as soon as he saw me enter: 'Behold this man that I esteemed, and you loved! He has sacrificed us both to a blind friendship.' I was going to reply, but he continued: 'You have been bound, from infancy, to M. de P***; a powerful faction bears him towards the throne; you know it—you know his designs; this morning, at the Diet, you voted for him; you have deceived me; but think not to deceive me with impunity.' I begged of him to hear me; he preserved a stern silence. I informed him that M. de P***, whom I had so long neglected, had surprised me by his unforeseen return. Lodoiska appeared delighted on hearing my justification. 'You cannot deceive me like a credulous woman,' said Pulauski, 'but it's no matter, go on.' I gave him an account of the short conversation I had with M. de P*** before I went to the assembly of the States. 'And these are your projects,' he cried: 'M. de P*** sees no other remedy for the misfortunes of his fellow citizens than their slavery! He proposed it, and Lodoiska approved it! And they despise me sufficiently to tempt me to enter into this infamous plot! Do you think I could see the Russians commanding in our provinces, while it was pretended we were governed by a Pole? The Russians,' repeated he, regenerate my country—!' (he came towards me with the greatest impetuosity) 'Perfidious wretch! Thou hast deceived me, thou hast betrayed thy country! Get out of this palace instantly, lest I tear thee in pieces.'

"I acknowledge to you, Faublas, that an affront, so cruel, and so little merited, made me forget myself in the first transport of my passion. I put my hand upon my sword; quicker than lightning, Pulauski drew his. His daughter, his distracted daughter, threw herself upon me: 'Lovinski, what are you about?'

"The sweet accents of her much-loved voice recalled my scattered senses, but I felt that in a moment he might snatch Lodoiska from me for ever. She had quitted me, to throw herself in the arms of her father; the cruel man perceived the poignancy of my anguish, and was pleased to augment it. 'Go, traitor,' he said, 'you see her for the last time.'

"I returned home in despair; the odious epithets which Pulauski had lavished on me presented themselves continually to my mind. The interests of Poland and those of M. de P*** appeared to me so strictly allied, that I could not conceive how I could betray my fellow citizens in serving my friend. Nevertheless, I must either abandon that, or renounce Lodoiska. How must I resolve? Which part must I take? I passed the whole night in this cruel uncertainty; and, in the morning, I went to Pulauski without knowing how I should determine.

"One domestic alone remained in the place, who informed me that his master, after having taken leave of his friends, went away early in the evening before with Lodoiska. You may judge of my grief at this news. I demanded of the domestic where

Pulauski was gone. 'I am entirely ignorant,' he said: 'all I can tell you is, that last night, you had scarcely left here, when we heard a great noise in the apartment of his daughter. Still frightened at the dreadful scene which was likely to have taken place between you, I ventured to approach and listen; Lodoiska wept; her father was loading her with insults; he even cursed her—and I heard him say to her: Who would love a traitor, could be one also. Ungrateful wretch! I am going to put you into a place of security, where you shall be hereafter free from seduction.'

"Could I be any longer ignorant of my misfortunes? I called Boleslas, one of the most faithful of my domestics; I ordered him to place around the palace of Pulauski some vigilant spies, who might render me an account of everything that passed there; to follow Pulauski everywhere, if he entered the capital before me; and not despairing to meet with him again in the neighbouring districts, I set off myself in the pursuit.

"I went over all the estates of Pulauski; I enquired for Lodoiska of all the travellers I met—but it was useless. After having spent eight days in this painful search, I determined upon returning to Warsaw. I was not greatly astonished at beholding a Russian army encamped almost under its walls, on the borders of the Vistula.

"It was night when I entered the capital; the palaces of the great were illuminated; an immense populace filled the streets, and I heard the acclamations of mirth; I saw wine running from fountains in the public squares; everything announced to me that Poland had a king.

"Boleslas had expected me with impatience. 'Pulauski,' he said, 'returned alone the second day; he has never left his house but to go to the Diet, where, in spite of his efforts, the ascendancy of Russian interest manifested itself more and more every day. In the last assembly, held this morning, M. de P*** obtained almost all the votes, and was elected; Pulauski pronounced the fatal veto; at that instant, twenty sabres were drawn. The fierce Palatine de ***, whom Pulauski had so little pleased in the preceding assembly, was the first who drew and aimed a terrible stroke at his head. Zaremba, and some others, flew to the defence of their friend, but all their efforts could not have saved him, if M. de P*** himself had not sprung amongst them, crying out that he would immolate, with his own hand, the first that dared approach. The assailants retired. In the meanwhile, Pulauski lost both his blood and his strength! He fainted, and was carried away. Zaremba went out, swearing to avenge him. The numerous partisans of M. de P***, remaining masters of the deliberations, immediately proclaimed him king. Pulauski, when taken to his palace, soon recovered his senses. The surgeons, called in to examine his wound, declared that it was not mortal: then, although he experienced very great pain, and though several of his friends opposed themselves to his design, he made them place him in his carriage. It was almost noon when he set out from Warsaw, accompanied by Mazeppa and some other discontents. Your spies have followed him, and will, no doubt, in a few days, inform you of the place of his retreat.

"It was scarcely possible for them to announce to me more disagreeable intelligence. My friend was on the throne, but my reconciliation with Pulauski appeared hereafter impossible; and, seemingly, I had lost Lodoiska for ever. I knew her father sufficiently to make me fear he had taken very violent resolutions; I was terrified at the present aspect of things; I dared not reflect upon the future, and my

grief oppressed me to such a degree, that I did not even go to congratulate the new king.

"One of my people, whom Boleslas had despatched in pursuit of Pulauski, came back the fourth day; he had followed him even to fifteen leagues from the capital; there, Zaremba, always seeing an unknown at some distance from the post-chaise, had conceived suspicions. A little further on, four of his people, hid behind some ruins, surprised my courier and conducted him to Pulauski. A pistol was presented at him, and he was compelled to acknowledge to whom he belonged. I will send you to Lovinski, said Pulauski to him, and tell him from me, that he shall not escape my just vengeance. At these words, they bound the eyes of my courier; he could not tell where they had conducted him, and shut him up: but at the expiration of three days they came to fetch him, and having again taken the precaution of binding his eyes, after riding for several hours, the carriage stopped, and they made him descend. He had scarcely set his foot to the ground when his guard left him at swift pace: he detached the bonds from his eyes, and found himself precisely in the same place where they had first arrested him.

"This news gave me much uneasiness; the menaces of Pulauski frightened me much less on my own account than that of Lodoiska, who remained in his power; he might, in his wrath, go to the last extremities with her. I resolved to expose myself to everything, in order to discover the retreat of the father, and the prison of his daughter. The next day, I informed my sisters of my design, and quitted the capital. Boleslas alone accompanied me, and I treated him as a brother. We went all over Poland: I then saw that the events justified too much the fears of Pulauski. Under pretence of making people take the oath of fidelity to the new king, the Russians spread themselves in our provinces, committed a thousand exactions in our towns, and laid waste the fields. After having lost three months in vain researches, despairing of finding Lodoiska, most sensibly touched by the misfortunes of my country, lamenting at the same time both her fate and my own, I was about to return to Warsaw, to inform the new king what excesses the foreigners had committed in his states, when a rencontre, which threatened to be very unlucky for me, compelled me to take another direction.

"The Turks had declared war against Russia, and the Tartars of Budsiac and of Crimea, made frequent incursions in Volhymie, where I then found myself. Four of these brigands attacked us coming out of a wood near Ostropol. I had very imprudently neglected to charge my pistols, but I availed myself of my sabre, with so much dexterity and success, that presently two of them fell, grievously wounded. Boleslas occupied the third; the fourth combatted me with great vigour; he gave me a slight wound in my thigh, and received at the same time a terrible blow, which threw him from his horse. Boleslas saw himself at this moment disembarrassed of his enemy, who, at the noise of the fall of his comrade, took flight.

"The one whom I had last overthrown, said to me, in bad Polish: 'A man so brave as you ought to be generous. I beg my life of you. Friend, instead of finishing me, assist me; trust me, help me, and bind up my wounds.' He demanded quarter in a tone so noble and so singular, that I did not hesitate. I descended from my horse: Boleslas and myself relieved him and bound up his wounds. 'You do well, brave man,' said the Tartar; 'you do well.' As he spoke, there arose around us a cloud of dust; more than three hundred Tartars appeared in sight. 'Fear nothing,' he said, whom I had spared; 'I am the chief of this troop.' And, indeed, by a sign he stopped the soldiers,

who were ready to massacre me. He said to them, in their language, some words which I did not understand; they opened their ranks to let myself and Boleslas pass. 'Brave man,' said the captain again to me, 'had I not reason to tell you that you did well? Thou hast spared my life—I save thine: it is sometimes good to spare an enemy, and even a robber. Hear me, my friend: in attacking thee, I was following my trade: thou hast done thy duty in well thrashing me; I pardon thee: let us embrace.' He added: 'The day begins to close; I would not advise thee to travel in these cantons; those men are each going to their post, and I cannot answer for them. Thou seest that castle on the height to the right; it belongs to a certain Count Dourlinski, who owes us a great deal, because he is very rich; go and request of him an asylum; tell him thou hast wounded Titsikan, that Titsikan pursued thee; he knows me by name: I have already made him pass some disagreeable journeys. You may reckon on his house being respected while you are there; but be sure you do not leave it under three days, nor remain in it more than eight. Adieu!'

"It was with real pleasure that we took our leave of Titsikan and his company. The advice of a Tartar was an order. I said to Boleslas: 'Let us gain immediately the castle which he has shown us; I know this Dourlinski very well by name. Pulauski has sometimes spoken to me of him: he may not be ignorant where Pulauski has retired; it is not impossible but with a little address we may obtain some knowledge of him. I will say, at all hazards, that it is Pulauski who has sent us; his recommendation will be worth more than that of Titsikan: thou, Boleslas, forget not that I am thy brother, and do not discover me.'

"We arrived at the moat of the castle; the people of Dourlinski demanded of us who we were. I replied, that we came to speak with their master on the part of Pulauski; that robbers had attacked us, and we were pursued. The drawbridge was raised, and we entered: they told us that, for the present, we could not speak with Dourlinski, but that the next day, at ten o'clock, he could give us audience. They demanded our arms of us, and we gave them up without hesitation. Boleslas examined my wound; the flesh was scarcely entered. They lost no time in serving us with a frugal repast in the kitchen. We were afterwards conducted into a humble chamber, where a couple of indifferent beds were prepared for us; they left us without a light, and fastened us in.

"I could not shut my eyes all night: Titsikan had given me but a slight wound, but that in my heart was so deep! At daybreak, I was impatient of my prison; I wished to open the shutters, but they were locked. I shook them vigorously, and the bolts flew; I perceived a very beautiful park; the window was low; I jumped from it, and found myself in the gardens of Dourlinski. After I had walked there some minutes, I sat down on a stone bench, placed at the foot of a tower, the ancient architecture of which engaged my attention for some time. I remained absorbed in profound reflection, when a tile fell at my feet: I thought it had slipped from the roof of this old building; and to avoid a similar accident, I placed myself at the other end of the bench. Some moments after a second tile fell by my side; the circumstance appeared to me surprising. I rose with inquietude, and examined the tower attentively. I perceived, about twenty-five or thirty feet high, a narrow opening; I gathered up the tiles which were thrown at me; upon the first I deciphered, traced with some chalk, 'Lovinski, is it then you! Do you live!' And on the second, as follows: 'Deliver me! Save Lodoiska!'

"You cannot, my dear Faublas, figure to yourself the various feelings which agitated me at one time; my astonishment, my joy, my grief, my embarrassment, cannot be expressed. I examined the prison of Lodoiska; I sought how I could take her from it. She sent me yet another tile: I read, 'At midnight bring some paper, pens and ink; tomorrow, after sunrise, come and seek a letter. Go away.'

"I returned to my chamber; I called Boleslas, who assisted me in entering by the window, and we fastened the shutters as well as we could. I informed my faithful servant of the unhoped-for meeting, which put an end to my searches, but redoubled my anxiety. How was this tower to be penetrated? How extricate Lodoiska from her prison? How was she to be snatched from under the eyes of Dourlinski, from the midst of his people, in a fortified castle! Even supposing that so many obstacles were not insurmountable, could I attempt an enterprise so difficult, in the short time that Titsikan had given me? Titsikan had recommended me to remain but three days with Dourlinski, and at all events, not to stop longer than eight. To go out of this castle before the third day, or after the eighth, was it not to expose ourselves to the attacks of Tartars? To release my dear Lodoiska from prison to deliver her to robbers, was to be for ever separated from her by slavery or death! It was horrible to think of. But why was she in such a frightful prison? The letter which she has promised me will instruct me, without doubt. It was necessary to procure some paper: I charged Boleslas with their care, and prepared myself to sustain the delicate part of an emissary of Pulauski.

"It was broad day when they came to set us at liberty; they informed us that Dourlinski was now at leisure, and desired to see us. We presented ourselves with assurance: we beheld a man about sixty years of age, whose address was blunt, and whose manners were repulsive. He asked us who we were. 'My brother and myself, I said, belong to Seigneur Pulauski; my master has charged me with a secret commission to you; my brother has accompanied me for another purpose; I ought to be alone when I explain myself; I ought to speak but to yourself.' 'Well!' replied Dourlinski, 'let thy brother go; and do you also go away,' he said to his servants; 'but as for you,' (pointing to him who was his confidant,) 'you will do well to remain; you can say everything before him.' Pulauski has sent me—I see well that he has sent you—To inquire of you—' 'What?' (I took courage.) 'To inquire of you news regarding his daughter.' 'Pulauski said so?' 'Yes, my master told me Lodoiska was here.' I perceived that Dourlinski turned pale; he looked at his confidant, and fixed his eyes on me a long time in silence. 'You astonish me,' he replied, at last; 'to confide in you a secret of this importance, your master must be very imprudent.' 'Not more so than yourself, seigneur; have not you a confidant? The great would be much to be pitied, if they could not put confidence in someone. Pulauski has charged me to tell you that Lovinski has already run over a great part of Poland, and will, no doubt, visit your cantons.' 'If he dares come here,' he replied, immediately, with the greatest vivacity, 'I keep for him a lodging which he will occupy a long time. Do you know this Lovinski?' 'I have seen him often at my master's in Warsaw.' 'They say he's a fine man?' 'He is well made, and near about my height.' 'His countenance?' 'Is engaging: it is a—' 'He is an insolent fellow,' he interrupted, with anger; 'if ever he falls into my hands—' 'My lord, they say he is brave.' 'He! I'll wager that he knows nothing but the seduction of girls. Let him fall into my hands!' 'I was about to reply, when he added, in a more calm tone: 'It is a long time since Pulauski has written to me: where is he at present?' 'My lord, I have positive orders not to answer that question, all that I must tell you is, that he has many reasons for concealing his retreat, and not writing, which he will shortly come and explain to you himself.'

"Dourlinski appeared very much astonished; I thought I even perceived some signs of alarm; he looked at his confidant, who seems as much embarrassed as himself: 'You say that Pulauski will come shortly?' 'Yes, my lord, in a fortnight, or better.' He looked at his confidant, and then affecting as much *sang-froid* as he had evinced embarrassment: 'Return to thy master, I am sorry that I have nothing but bad news for him; tell him that Lodoiska is no longer here.' 'I was astonished in my turn: What! My lord, Lodoiska—' 'Is no longer here, I tell thee. To oblige Pulauski, whom I esteem, I undertook with repugnance, to keep his daughter in my castle. No one but him and myself (pointing to the confidant) knew that she was here. About a month since, we went, as usual, to take her daily refreshments, and there was no one in her apartment—I am ignorant how she accomplished it, but I know well that she has escaped, and I have not heard of her since: she is, without doubt, gone to join Lovinski, at Warsaw, if the Tartars seized her not on the road.'

"My astonishment became extreme; how was what I had seen in the garden, to be reconciled with what Dourlinski told me? There was some mystery in it which I was impatient to unravel, nevertheless I was cautious of appearing the least doubtful: 'My lord, this is very sad news for my master.' 'Undoubtedly it is, but I cannot help it.' 'My lord, I have a favour to ask of you.' 'What is it?' 'The Tartars are infesting the environs of your castle; they have attacked us, we have escaped them by a miracle; will you permit my brother and myself to rest here for two days?' 'Only two days; I consent.' 'Where have they lodged? Demanded he of his confidant.' 'On the ground floor, in a common chamber—' 'Which looks into my gardens!' interrupted Dorlinski, with anxiety. 'The shutters fasten with a lock, replied the other.' 'No matter, we must put them elsewhere.' I trembled at these words. The confidant replied: 'that is impossible,—but' (he said the rest in a whisper. 'Very well,' replied the master, 'and let it be done immediately;' and addressing himself to me: 'Thy brother and thou wilt go the day after tomorrow; before setting out, thou wilt speak to me; I will give thee a letter for Pulauski.'

"I went to join Boleslas in the kitchen, where he was taking his breakfast; he gave me a little bottle, full of ink, several pens, and some sheets of paper, which he had procured without trouble. I burnt with desire to write to Lodoiska, but I was embarrassed to find a convenient place where the curious might not disturb me. They had already informed Boleslas that we were not to enter the chamber where we slept, until bedtime. I thought of a stratagem which succeeded admirably. The servants of Dourlinski were drinking with my pretended brother, and invited me politely to join them. I drank freely, cup after cup, several glasses of a very bad wine; presently, my limbs tottered; I told the merry throng a hundred stories, as droll as they were unreasonable; in a word, I acted drunkenness so well, that Boleslas himself was deceived by it. He trembled, lest in a moment when I appeared disposed to tell everything, my secret should escape me. 'Gentlemen, he said to the astonished topers, my brother is not very strong in the head to-day; perhaps it is the effects of his wound; we must not suffer him either to talk or drink any more; I fear it would do him harm, and if you would oblige me, you will help me to carry him to his bed.' 'To his bed? No, that cannot be,' replied one of them; 'but I will cheerfully lend you my chamber.' They carried me up into a garret, of which the only furniture consisted of a bed, a chair, and a table. They shut me up in this place; it was everything that I wished. The moment I was left alone, I wrote to Lodoiska a letter of several sheets. I began by justifying myself fully from the crimes which Pulauski had imputed to me, and then related to her everything which had happened to me from the period of our separation

unto that when I arrived at Dourlinski's; I detailed the conversation I had with him, and finished by assuring her of the most tender and respectful love; I pledged myself, that as soon as she had given me the necessary explanations, I would risk everything to deliver her from such horrible slavery.

"As soon as my letter was finished, I gave myself up to reflections which greatly perplexed me. Was it, indeed, Lodoiska who had thrown me the tiles in the garden? Could Pulauski have the injustice to punish his daughter for a love he had approved? Had he the inhumanity to plunge her in this frightful dungeon? And even if the hatred which he had sworn towards me had blinded him to this pitch, how was it that Dourlinski could resolve thus to aid his vengeance? But, on the other side, I had worn, the better to disguise myself, the most humble garb; the fatigues of a long journey, and my own cares, had greatly changed me—who, then, but a lover, could have recognized Lovinski in the garden of Dourlinski? Had I not, moreover, seen the name of Lodoiska traced upon the tile? And had not even Dourlinski himself confessed that she had been a prisoner under him? He added, it is true, that she had escaped; but was that credible? And wherefore the hatred that Dourlinski had avowed towards me, without knowing me? Why that air of inquietude when they told him the servants of Pulauski had occupied a chamber that looked into the garden? Why, above all, that air of alarm when I announced to him the approaching visit of my pretended master? The whole of this was calculated to give me the most poignant anxiety. I could form nothing but the most frightful conjectures, which I could not explain. I continued, for a couple of hours, proposing to myself questions which I was very much embarrassed to solve, when at length Boleslas came to see if his brother had recovered his reason. I had no trouble in convincing him that my intoxication was feigned; we went down into the kitchen, where we passed the rest of the day. What an evening, my dear Faublas! None in my life appeared so long; not even those which followed it.

"At last they conducted us to our chamber, where they fastened us in, as on the night before, without leaving us a light: we had still to wait two hours before it struck twelve. At the first stroke of the clock, we gently opened the shutters of the window: I prepared myself to jump into the garden: ray embarrassment was equal to my despair when I found myself restrained by bars. 'There, I said to Boleslas, 'see what it was that the cursed confidant of Dourlinski whispered into his ear: this is what his odious master approved, when he replied: "It is well; let it be done immediately." See what they have executed during the day: it was on this account we were forbidden to come here.' 'My lord, they have worked outside,' said Boleslas, 'for they have not perceived that the shutter has been forced.' 'Ah! Whether they have seen it or not,' cried I, 'with violence, what matter? This fatal grating overturns all my hopes; it confirms the slavery of Lodoiska, and ensures my death!'

"'Yes, without doubt, it ensures your death,' said someone to me, on opening my door. Dourlinski, preceded by armed men, and followed by others who carried torches, entered with his sabre in his hand. 'Traitor!' he said to me, glancing at me a look sufficiently expressive of his fury, 'I have overheard all: I'll know what thou art; thou shalt tell me thy name; thy pretended brother shall tell it. Tremble! I am of all the enemies of Lovinski, the most implacable! Let them be searched,' he said to his people. They seized me; I was without arms; I made a vain resistance: they took from me my papers, and the letter I had prepared for Lodoiska. Dourlinski betrayed, while reading it, a thousand signs of impatience; he could ill conceal it. 'Lovinski,' he said, suppressing his rage, 'I merit already thy hatred; presently I shall merit it more. In the

meantime thou shalt remain with thy worthy confidant in this chamber, which thou lovest.' At these words, he went out, double-locked the door, placed a sentinel without, and another opposite the window in the garden.

"You will imagine the overwhelming situation Boleslas and myself were placed in. My misfortunes had reached their height; those of Lodoiska affected me more intensely. Unfortunate creature! What must be her anxiety! She expected Lovinski, and Lovinski abandoned her! But no; Lodoiska knows me too well; she will never suspect me of so base a perfidy. Lodoiska will judge of her lover by herself! She will feel that Lovinski participated her fate, since he did not relieve her! Alas! The certainty of my fate will aggravate her own.

"Such were my painful reflections in the first moments: they left me time enough to make many others, not less gloomy. The next day, they gave us, through the bars, our allowance of provisions. From the quality of the food which they furnished us, Boleslas judged that they did not intend to render our prison very agreeeable. Boleslas, less wretched than myself, supported his lot more courageously; he offered me my portion of the slender repast he was about to make. I would not eat; he pressed me, but in vain; my existence had become an insupportable burden. 'Oh! Live,' he said to me, bursting into tears: 'live, if not for Boleslas, let it be for Lodoiska!' These words made a more lively impression upon me; they re-animated my courage, and cheered my heart with hope: I embraced my faithful servant. 'O! My friend!' cried I, with transport: 'Oh! My true friend! I have sacrificed thee, and my own cares touch me more than thine! Yes, Boleslas, I will live for Lodoiska, I will live for thee: would heaven this moment restore my fortune and my rank, thou shouldst see that thy master was not ungrateful.' We embraced again: Ah! My dear Faublas! If you knew how misfortune links us together! How delightful it is, when one is suffering, to hear another unfortunate being address to us a word of consolation!

"We had groaned twelve days in this prison, when they came to conduct me to Dourlinski. Boleslas wished to follow me, but was repulsed in a brutal manner; they nevertheless permitted me to speak to him for a moment. I drew from my hand a ring, which I had worn from the age of ten years. I said to Boleslas, 'This ring was given me by M. de P***, when we studied together at Warsaw: take it, my friend, and keep it for my sake. If Dourlinski consummates his treason by causing me to be assassinated, and thou art permitted to leave this castle, go to thy king, show him this jewel, remind him of our long friendship, and relate to him my misfortunes; he will recompense thee, Boleslas, he will send succour to Lodoiska. Adieu, my friend.'

"They conducted me to the apartment of Dourlinski. As soon as the door was opened, I perceived a female, fainting on an armchair; I approached; it was Lodoiska. Oh, God! How changed I found her! But what beauty she still possessed! 'Barbarian!' I said to Dourlinski. At the voice of her lover, Lodoiska recovered her senses. 'Ah, my dear Lovinski! Knowest thou what the wretch proposes? Knowest thou at what price he offers me thy liberty?' 'Yes,' replied the furious Dourlinski; 'yes, I will; thou seest it is in my power: if within three days I obtain nothing, he shall die.' I would have thrown myself on my knees to Lodoiska, but my guards prevented me. 'I see thee again; all my tortures are forgotten. Lodoiska, death has nothing in it to terrify me. Thou coward, remember that Pulauski will revenge his daughter, and that the king will revenge his friend.' 'Take him away!' cried Dourlinski. 'Ah!' said Lodoiska, 'my love has sacrificed you!' I would have replied, but they dragged me out, and

reconducted me to my prison. Boleslas received me with inexpressible transports of joy: he confessed that he thought me lost. I related to him how my death had been deferred. The scene of which I had been witness confirmed all my suspicions; it was clear that Pulauski knew not the unworthy treatment his daughter was experiencing; it was clear that Dourlinski, amorous and jealous, would satisfy his passion at any price he could.

"In the meantime, of the three days which Dourlinski had given Lodoiska to make up her mind, two had already passed; we were in the middle of the night which preceded the third day; I could not sleep, I was pacing up and down my chamber; all at once I heard a cry, 'To arms!' The most frightful howling arose from every quarter without the castle; it made a great bustle in the interior; the sentinel placed before our window quitted his post; Boleslas and myself distinguished the voice of Dourlinski; he called—he rallied his people; we heard distinctly, the clash of arms, the cries of the wounded, and the groans of the dying. The noise, at first very great, seemed to diminish; presently it began again; it continued and redoubled; they cried 'Victory!—numbers ran in and shut the doors after them with violence; the night became less dark; the trees in the garden began to assume a yellow and reddish tint; we flew to the window: the castle of Dourlinski was wrapped in flames; they spread on every side of the chamber we were in; and, to complete the horror, the most piercing shrieks came from the tower where I knew Lodoiska was confined."

IV.

Here M. du Portail was interrupted by the Marquis de B***, who having found no servant in the antechamber, entered without being announced. He started two paces on seeing me, "Ah! Ah!" he said, saluting M. du Portail, "have you a son also?" Then addressing himself to me: Monsieur is apparently the brother?"

"Of my sister, yes, sir."

"Ah! You have a very amiable sister; she is a charming girl!"

"You are as polite as you are indulgent," interrupted M. du Portail. "Indulgent! Oh, I am not always so; for example, I am come to reproach you, sir."

"Me? Have I had the misfortune?"

"Yes, you played us a cruel trick the day before yesterday."

"How, sir!"

"You charged that little Rosambert to take Mademoiselle du Portail from us; the Marchioness had made sure that her dear daughter would pass the night with her."

"I fear, sir, that my daughter has caused you a great deal of trouble."

"None; none, sir: Mademoiselle du Portail is very agreeable; my wife is passionately fond of her, as I have told you before; indeed," he added, "tittering, I believe the Marchioness loves that child more than she loves myself. I am, notwithstanding, her husband! If you had come yourself to fetch her—"

"Pardon me, sir, I was unwell; I am still very—"

"I know that I owe Madame de B*** many thanks—."

"It is not for that—"

During this dialogue, I was not much at my ease. The Marquis observed me with an attention which made me very uncomfortable. "Do you know," he said at last, "that you resemble your sister very much?"

"You flatter me, sir."

"But it is very striking; I know it well; all my friends agree that I am a skilful physiognomist at the first sight: I have never seen you before, and I recognise you immediately." M. du Portail could not help laughing with me at the simplicity of the Marquis. "Monsieur," he said to him, "it is as you have very justly remarked; my son and my daughter are very much alike, we must agree that there is a family resemblance."

"Yes," replied the Marquis, continuing to look at me, "this young man is well, very well, but his sister is still better, much better. [He took me by the arm.] She is a little taller, has a more serious air; although she is a little wag, her manner is somewhat grave, but there is a something in your features more bold; you have less grace in your action, and in all the motions of your body something more vigorous and robust. Do not be angry; all this is very natural; it would not do for a boy to be made like a girl! [Phlegmatic as M. du Portail was, he could not keep his countenance at these last remarks; the Marquis saw us laugh, and began to laugh heartily himself.] "Oh!" he replied, "I have told you that I am a great physiognomist; but I have not the pleasure to see the dear sister.—"

M. du Portail hastened to reply: "No, sir, she is gone to take her leave."

"To take her leave!"

"Yes, sir, she sets out to morrow for her convent."

"For her convent in Paris?"

"No, at Soissons."

"To Soissons tomorrow morning? That dear child to leave us?"

"It is for the best, sir."

"And is actually taking farewell?"

"Yes, sir"

"And, without doubt, she will come and bid farewell to her mamma?"

"Most assuredly, sir; she ought even to be at your house at this moment."

"Ah! How sorry I am! The Marchioness was still unwell this morning; she wished to go out this evening; I represented to her that the air was sharp, and would give her cold; but the women will have their way—she is gone out: Well, so much the worse for her, she will not see her dear girl, and I shall see her, for she certainly will not be long before she comes home."

"She has several visits to make," I said to the Marquis.

"Yes, added M. du Portail, "we only expect her to supper."

"You eat suppers then? You are right; it is all the mania now, not to eat of an evening; for my part, I love not to die of hunger, because it is the fashion: I'll stop and sup with you. You'll say, perhaps, that I make free, but 'tis my way; I wish people to do the same with me: When you know me better, you will find that I am a good devil."

There was no means of receding from what we had said. M. du Portail instantly took the necessary measures. "I am very happy, sir, that you will be free with us. You will excuse my son quitting us for an hour or two, as he has some urgent business."

"Monsieur must not hinder himself on my account."

"Let him leave us by all means, that he may see us again the sooner, for your son is very amiable, sir."

"You'll excuse me also a few minutes as I have something to say to him."

"Do the same, sir, as if I was not here." I bowed to the Marquis, he rose precipitately, took me by the hand, and said to M. du Portail: "Stop, sir, you may say what you will, but this young man is as like his sister as two drops of water. I am skilled in countenance; I will sustain it before the Abbé Pernetti.<3>"

"Yes, sir," said M. du Portail, "he has a family likeness."

Having said this, he went with me into another apartment. "Zounds," he said to me, "what a singular man this Marquis is; he does not constrain himself with those he loves."

"It is very true, my dear father, that the Marquis comes, without ceremony, to make free with us—but, as for myself, I have no right to complain, for I was happy when at his house."

"As to yourself, you say true; but let us drop this pleasantry, and see how we are to get out of the scrape we are in. If I only looked to him it would be soon settled; but, my friend, you have to manage matters properly, on account of his wife. Hear me; go home, make your servant take another dress, and come here to announce that Mademoiselle du Portail sups with Madame de ***, the first name that comes into your head."

"Well! What next? The Marquis will sup with you, and wait tranquilly the return of your daughter: this is what he will do; he has told you so himself."

"What, then, is to be done?"

"Why, my dear father, I can play the girl so well, I will go and change myself, and your daughter shall in reality come and sup with you. It shall be your son, on the contrary, who is detained, and cannot come. It is now six o'clock; I need not be home until ten: I shall have plenty of time."

"With all my heart. But you must agree, nevertheless, that Lovinski will have to play rather a singular part. You have embarked me in a curious adventure; but it is too late to find fault: go and effect it as soon as possible."

I ran home. Jasmin told me my father was gone out, and that a pretty girl had been waiting for me above an hour. A pretty girl, Jasmin? I flew to my apartment. Ah! Justine, is it thee! Jasmin was right when he told me it was a pretty girl: I embraced her. "Keep that for my mistress," she said, pretending to be sullen. "For thy mistress, Justine? Thou art as good as her."

"Who told you so?"

"I think so; it rests with thee to make me certain of it." I embraced her again, and she suffered me to do so, still repeating, "Keep that for my mistress."

"My God! How well you look in your own dress," she added; "and will you ever quit it again, to disguise yourself as a woman?"

"To-night, for the last time, Justine: after that I shall always be a man; at thy service, sweet girl."

"At my service? Oh, no; at the service of Madame."

"At hers and thine at the same time, Justine."

"Hey dey, so you must have two at a time!"

"I feel, my dear, that it is not too much." I embraced Justine, and my hands strayed upon her snowy hills, which she scarcely defended. "How impudent he is," said Justine. "What has become of the modesty of Mademoiselle du Portail?"

"Ah, Justine, thou knowest not how one night has changed me!"

"That night also made an alteration in my mistress; the next day she was pale and fatigued. My God! When I saw her, I was not at a loss in guessing that Mademoiselle du Portail was a very nice young man."

I was going to embrace her again. For this time, she prevented it by recoiling a few paces: my bed was behind her; she fell on her back; and by an accident which might, perhaps, be expected, I lost my equilibrium at the same moment.

Some minutes after, Justine, who was in no haste to repair her disorder, asked, with a smile, what I thought of the little piece of waggery she had played the Marquis. "What about, my dear?"

"The placard stuck on his back. What say you of the trick?"

"Charming, delightful; almost as good as that which we are now playing the Marchioness."

"I am glad you mentioned her, I had forgot my commission. My mistress expects you."

"She expects me? I'll go directly."

"There, he's going: and where are you going?"

"I do not know."

"See how bluntly he leaves me!"

"Justine, it is—You know—"

"I know you are a careless libertine."

"Stop, Justine, let us be friends; a Louis d'or and a kiss."

"I take," she said, "the one very willingly, and give you the other with all my heart. Oh, what a charming young man! Handsome, lively and generous! Oh, I am sure you will rise in the world! But let us go; follow me at a little distance, and take no notice. You will see me go into a shop; close by is a great gate, which you will find partly open; enter it quickly. A porter will demand of you who you are; you will answer, Love. You will go up to the first floor. Upon a little white door you will read the word, Paphos. Open it with this key, and you'll not be there long without a companion."

Before going out, I called Jasmin, and ordered him to change his dress, and go on the part of M. de Saint-Luc, to announce to M. du Portail that his son would not come home to supper.

Justine was impatient: I followed her. She went into a milliner's shop. I brushed hastily through the gate. "Love," I said to the porter, and in an instant I was at Paphos. I opened it, and entered. The place appeared to be worthy of the god they adored there. A few wax candles were burning. It was hung with the most luxurious and fascinating pictures; the furniture was as elegant as convenient: I observed above all, at the back of a gilt alcove, lined with looking-glass, a spring bed, the clothes of which, being black satin, were calculated to afford an agreeable contrast to a fine white skin: I then recollected I had promised M. du Portail never again to see the Marchioness, but it may easily be guessed that my recollection came too late.

A door, which I had not observed, opened all at once. The Marchioness entered. To fly into her arms—to give her twenty kisses—to carry her to the alcove—to place her on the springing couch—and to plunge with her into a delightful ecstasy, was the affair of a moment. The Marchioness recovered her senses at the same time with myself. I asked her how she did. "What say you?" she replied, with an astonished air. I repeated:" My dear little mamma, how do you do?" She burst into a fit of

laughter: "I thought I had misunderstood you; the *how do you do* is excellent; but if I was unwell, it would have been a very queer time to ask me such a question. Do you think that this exercise would agree with a sick person? My dear Faublas," she added, embracing me tenderly, "you are very lively."

"My dear little mamma, it is because I now know several things of which I was ignorant three days since."

"Are you afraid that you'll forget them?"

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, no!" repeated she, counterfeiting my voice; "I believe it indeed, Mr. Libertine." She embraced me again. "Promise that you will never remember those things but with me."

"I promise it, my dear mamma."

"You swear to be faithful?"

"I swear it."

"Always?"

"Yes, always."

"But you delayed a long while in coming to me."

"I was not at home; I dined with M. du Portail."

"With M. du Portail! Did he speak to you of me?"

"Yes."

"You have not told him anything?"

"No, mamma."

She continued, in a very serious tone: "You told him that I was, like the Marquis, deceived by appearances?"

"Yes, mamma."

"And that I am still so?" she continued, with a trembling voice, and at the same time giving me a most tender kiss.

"Yes, mamma."

"Charming child!" she cried, "I must then adore you! If you will not be ungrateful I shall."

I valued this reply more than all the caresses; but a degree of uneasiness still remaining: "So you assured M. du Portail that I think you—a girl?" added the Marchioness, blushing.

"Yes."

"You know, then, how to lie?"

"Have I lied?"

"I think the rogue is mocking his mamma!"

I pretended that I wished to go, but she detained me. "Beg my pardon directly, sir." I begged it as a man would do who was sure of obtaining it; the badinage pleased her, and the peace was signed.

"You are no longer angry," I said, to the Marechioness.

"Good!" she replied, "laughing; does the anger of a lover last long about such matters?"

"My dear mamma, I am spending some delightful moments with you; do you know to whom I am obliged for them?"

"It is very singular that you should think you are indebted for them to anyone but myself."

"It is singular, I agree; but it is so."

"Explain yourself, my friend."

"I was ignorant of the happiness you intended me; I should still have been with M. du Portail, if your dear husband had not paid us a visit."

"To M. du Portail?"

"And to me, Madame."

"He has seen you at M. du Portail's?"

Here I related to my beautiful mistress everything that had passed in the Marquis's visit to M. du Portail. She had great difficulty to restrain herself from laughing. "The poor Marquis," she said, "was born under an unfortunate star. It seems as if he went to seek for ridicule! A wife is very unhappy, my dear Faueblas; from the moment she loves anyone, her husband is no more than a fool."

"My dear mamma has not much to complain of: it seems, in this case, that the misfortune is on the husband."

"Ah! But," she replied, assuming a serious air, "one always feels the humiliations that a husband receives."

"They feel them sometimes I admit; but do they never profit by them?"

"Faublas, you are cutting at yourself. But tell me; must you sup with the Marquis? You have no gown: and then, do you reckon to quit me so soon?"

"As late as possible, my dear mamma."

"But you can dress yourself here." At these words, she rung for Justine: "Go," she said, "and get one of my gowns; we want to dress Mademoiselle." I shut the door upon Justine, who gave me a box on the ear; the Marchioness did not perceive it, and I returned near her.

"My dear mamma, are you quite sure your *femme de chambre* will not talk?"

"Yes, my friend; I give her, to hold her tongue, a great deal more money than any will give her for tattling. I could not receive you at home; I must either renounce the pleasure of seeing you, or decide upon doing what is imprudent. My dear Faublas, I have not hesitated; it is not the first folly thou hast made me commit." She took my hand, which she kissed, and then covered her eyes with it.

"My dear mamma, will you not look at me any more?"

"Ah! At all times, and in all places," she cried, "or it had been better I had never seen thee."

My hand, which lately concealed her eyes, was now pressing against her heart; her heart palpitated; her long eye-lashes were filled with tears; and her charming lips, approaching mine, demanded a kiss: she received a thousand!—a devouring flame burnt throughout me; I felt that it was reciprocated, and I wished to allay it; but my mistress, entirely absorbed and intoxicated by an overflow of tender sensations, tasted the inexpressible sweets of those pleasures which come from the soul, and she refused enjoyments less ravishing, although delightful.

"Never to see thee more," she replied, "would be to exist no more, and I have only existed since—an imprudence," she added quickly, rolling her eyes on all the objects which surrounded us: "Ah! Have I committed but one? How many must I yet risk, if I judge by those which, in so short a time, thou hast obliged me to commit!"

"My dear mamma, permit me to ask a question, which is perhaps very indiscreet, but you excite my most anxious curiosity; at whose house, then, are we now?" This question awoke the Marchioness from the ecstasy she was in:

"At whose house are we? At at one of my friends."

"This friend loves—"

Madame de B***, entirely recovered, hastened to interrupt me:

"Yes, Faublas, she loves; you have said right; she loves. It is love that has made this charming place; it is for her lover."

"And for yours, my dear mamma."

"Yes, my good friend, she was very willing to lend me this boudoir for the evening. That door, by which you entered, goes into her apartments."

"One more question, mamma."

"Well?

"How do you do?" She looked at me with an air of surprise, and laughed. "Yes," continued I, "joking apart: you were ill the day before yesterday: M. de Rosambert."

"Do not speak to me of him: M. de Rosambert is an unworthy man, capable of playing me a thousand dirty tricks, and of telling you a thousand stories. If he found you disposed to believe him, he would confidently assert that he had known all the women in the world. Still, if he were nothing but a coxcomb, I could pardon him; but his odious proceedings towards me, even if I had merited them, would be inexcusable."

"It is true that he greatly tormented us the day before yesterday—"

"I did not close my eyes all night! Let us drop that nevertheless. When I see thee, my dear friend, I think no more of what I have suffered for thee. How well you look in your male attire! How handsome! How charming you are! But what a pity," she added, rising with an air of gaiety, "that they must be laid aside. Come on, make way for Mademoiselle du Portail." At these words she undid, with a single stroke of her hand, all the buttons of my waistcoat. I revenged myself on her neck-handkerchief, which I had already considerably deranged, and which I now took entirely away. She continued the attack, and I was pleased with her vengeance; we

took off all without replacing anything. I showed to the half-naked Marchioness the alcove, and once more she let me conduct her there.

Someone gently knocked at the door. We must do her justice, for this once she has executed her commission promptly. Though not very decently covered, I was going, unthinkingly, to open the door to the *femme de chambre*; the Marchioness pulled a string, some curtains closed around us, and the door opened.

"Madame, here is everything that's necessary, shall I help you to dress?"

"No, Justine, I can do that; but thou shalt dress my head: I will ring for thee." Justine went out; we amused ourselves some time in contemplating the laughable and multiplied pictures which were presented by the glass which surrounded us. "Come," said the Marchioness, embracing me, "I must dress my daughter:"

I would have marked the moment of my retreat by a final victory. "No, my good friend," she added, "we must not abuse anything."

The duties of my toilette commenced. While the Marchioness was seriously occupied, I amused myself in a very different manner. "We shall soon finish you," said my beautiful mistress; "come on, recollect that you must be prudent now you are a girl."

I was muffled up with stays and petticoats. "My dear mamma, Justine must now dress my head; after which she can finish me."

"I was going to ring. How thoughtless he is! Do you not see the condition in which you have put me? I must dress also."

I offered my services to the Marchioness; I did everything wrong. "It requires more time to repair you than to pull you in pieces, my dear mamma."

"Oh, yes, I see it will. What a fine *femme de chambre* I have; she is still more curious than unskilful."

At last we rang for Justine. "We must dress this child's head."

"Yes, Madame. But must I not arrange your hair also?"

"Why so? Is my head out of order?"

"Yes, Madame, it seems so."

The Marchioness opened a closet, where they thrust my male garments. "Tomorrow morning," she said, "a discreet agent will carry them home for you." In another, but deeper closet, there was a toilette table which they drew towards me, and Justine began to exercise her little active fingers.

The Marchioness, placing herself near me, said: "Mademoiselle du Portail, permit me to make my court to you."

"Yes, yes," interrupted Justine; "in expectation that M. de Faublas will still make his to you."

"What says that hare-brained girl?" replied the Marchioness

"She says that I love you well."

"Does she say true, Faublas?"

"Do you doubt it, mamma?" and I kissed her hand. That apparently displeased Justine.

"The devil's in the hair," she said, giving a vigorous stroke of the comb, "how it is entangled!"

"Ha! Justine, you hurt me!"

"Never mind, sir; think of your own business: Madame speaks to you."

"Justine, I am saying nothing; I am looking at Mademoiselle du Portail; thou makest her very pretty!"

"It is that she may please Madame the more."

"I think, at the bottom, it amuses yourself. Mademoiselle du Portail, does it displease thee?"

"Madame, I prefer M. de Faublas."

"She is candid, at least."

"Very candid, Madame; inquire of himself."

"Me, Justine? I know nothing about it."

"You tell stories, sir."

"How tell stories?"

"Yes, sir, you must know that when I must do anything for you, I am always ready. When Madame sends me to you, I go with alacrity."

"But," interrupted the Marchioness, "you do not come back."

Illustration: Here Justine tickled me gently in the neck in turning a curl

"Madame, it wnas not my fault to-day, he made me wait." (Here Justine tickled me gently in the neck, in turning a curl.) "It is because he is not in a hurry when he comes to see me."

"Ah! My dear mamma, I am never happy but when I am near you." I embraced the Marchioness, who affected to prevent it. Justine found this badinage too long; she pinched me rudely, the pain forced me to cry out.

"Take care what you do," said the Marchioness to Justine, with a little anger.

"But, Madame, he cannot hold himself still for a moment."

We had a few moments' silence. My fair mistress had one of my hands within her own: the waggish Abigail occupied the other, by making me hold an end of ribbon, which she was plaiting in my hair; and seizing the moment, she dabbed a little pomatum on my face.

"Justine!" I said.

"Justine!" said the Marchioness.

"Madame, I employ but one hand, could he not defend himself with the other?" And then, pretending that the puff had slipped from her hand, she threw some of the powder in my eyes.

"Justine, you are very foolish! I will send you no more to his house!"

"Good! Very good! Madame, is it because he is dangerous? I have no fear of him."

"But, Justine, it is because you do not know how mischievous he is."

"Oh, yes, I do, Madame."

"Thou knowest it?"

"Yes, Madame, Madame remembers the night that this sweet miss slept at our house!"

"Well?"

"I offered to undress her; Madame would not let me."

"Certainly; she appeared so modest and timid! Who might not have been deceived? I know not how I could pardon her."

"It is because Madame is so good? Madame, I said, then, that you did not wish it. Mademoiselle du Portail undressed herself behind the curtains. I passed, by chance, near her, at the moment when, having pulled off her last petticoat, she leaped into bed."

"And what then?"

"To conclude, this droll young lady jumped so quick, and so singularly, that—"

"Well! Finish, then," I said to Justine."

"Ah! But I dare not."

"Finish, then," said the Marchioness, hiding her face with her fan.

"She jumped so singularly, and with so little precaution, that I perceived—"

"What, Justine," interrupted the Marchioness, in a tone almost serious, "did you perceive?"

"That it was a young man, Madame."

"What! And you did not tell me of it?"

"Good Madame, how could I? Your women were in the apartment! The Marquis about to enter! That would have made a fine confusion! And perhaps, Madame knew of it."

At these last words, the Marchioness turned pale. "You are mocking me, miss; know, that if I choose to forget myself, I would not have other people forget their manners!" The tone in which these words were pronounced made poor Justine tremble; she excused herself as well as she could.

"Madame, I was only joking."

"I believe it, miss; if you had spoken seriously, I would discharge you this evening."

Justine began to cry. I tried to appease the Marchioness.

"You must agree," she said, "that she has been impertinent. How! Dare to suppose; dare tell me to my face, before you, that I knew!"

She took me by the hand, and squeezed it gently.

"My dear Faublas, my good friend, you know all that came to pass; you know if my weakness is excusable! Your disguise deceived all the world. I saw a young lady at the ball, whose beauty and wit made me attached to her; she supped with me; she slept with me; everyone has retired, the amiable girl is in my bed, at my side; I find that he is a charming young man! So far, chance, or rather love, did everything! After that, I have, without doubt, been very weak; but what woman, in my place, could have resisted? The next day I applauded the accident, which caused my happiness, and ensured it. Faublas, you know the Marquis; they married me against my consent; they sacrificed me; what woman would they excuse if they judge me with rigour?"

I observed that the Marchioness was ready to cry, and I endeavoured to console her by a most tender kiss; I was going to speak.

"A moment," she said to me, "a moment, my friend. The next day I confided to Justine my astonishing adventure; I told the whole—everything! Faublas, She has the secret of my life, my dearest secret! She appeared to pity me, and to love me; but her appearance was deceitful, for she has abused my confidence; she supposes what is horrible; she tells me to my face—"

Justine burst into tears; she fell upon her knees before her mistress, and begged her pardon twenty times. I joined my entreaty to hers, for I was sensibly affected. The Marchioness was softened: "Go," she said; "I pardon you, Justine; yes, I pardon you."

Justine kissed her mistress' hand, and begged her pardon. "It is sufficient," said the Marchioness to her, "it is sufficient, I am easy, I am satisfied; rise, Justine, and remember, that if your mistress has weaknesses, they are not to be magnified into vices; that, instead of making her out more culpable than she is, you ought to excuse or pity her; and, finally, that you render yourself unworthy of her goodness when you are wanting in fidelity and respect. Come," she added with much sweetness, "leave off crying; get up, I tell you that I pardon you; finish this headdress, and drop the subject."

Justine went on with her work, leering at me in great confusion. The Marchioness looked at me in a very languishing manner. We all three kept silence, and the business of my toilette proceeded the quicker, as I had two *femmes de chambre* instead of one. It was nine o'clock, and time for us to separate: we took a parting kiss. "Go, you little rogue," said the Marchioness, "and amuse my husband; tomorrow, you can tell me what occurs."

I went down; a hackney-coach was at the door. As I got in, two young men passed; they looked very hard at me, and cracked some jokes, which were more gross than gallant. I was surprised at it: could the house from which I came be of a suspicious character? it belonged to one of the Marchioness' friends. My appearance was not that of a courtesan; why, then, did these gents cast their jeers at me? Perhaps it appeared strange to them, that a young woman of respectable appearance, and without a servant, should go alone in a hackney-coach at nine o'clock at night.

As the vehicle advanced, my reflections took another turn, and changed their object. I was alone; I thought of my Sophia. I had made her but a short visit in the forenoon, and during the evening I gave myself but a moment to think of her; but, if the reader would excuse me, let him think of the sweet enticements which were thrown in my way by the handsome and voluptuous *femme de chambre*; that Justine possessed very fascinating and luxurious charms; and, above all, let him remember that Faublas was scarcely sixteen when he commenced his novitiate.

I arrived at M. du Portail's. The Marquis made the most profound respects, and asked me if I had seen his wife. To say no, was to tell a lie; I must, nevertheless, resolve to do it. "No, sir;" I said.

"I knew it well, I was sure of it—"

M. du Portail interrupted: "You made us wait a long time for you, my dear; we are going to sit down to supper,"

"Without my brother?"

"He has sent word that he sups in the city."

"What! On the eve of my departure?"

"Mademoiselle, you never told me you had a brother," said the Marquis.

"I thought, Monsieur, that I had informed the Marchioness of it."

"She never mentioned it to me."

"Indeed!"

"I give you my word and honour that she has never told me of it."

"I believe you, sir."

"Your father thought that I played the connoisseur without being one."

"How?"

"How, mademoiselle! You will hardly believe what has taken place! When I arrived here, I recognised your brother whom I had never seen."

"Ha! Ha!"

"Ask your father."

"It is very true, sir, that you recognised him; but Madame the Marchioness—"

"She has never told me of it, I swear to you."

"Indeed!"

"I give you my word and honour of it."

"It was M. de Rosambert, then?"

"Neither"

"I think, nevertheless, I have heard you say something to that effect."

"Not a word of it, I protest." (The Marquis was almost angry.)

"It is I, then, who am mistaken! In that case you must be a very great physiognomist."

"Oh, that is true!" he replied in ecstasy; "No one is so well skilled in physiognomy as I am."

M. du Portail was amused with this conversation, and fearing it would conclude too soon, "We must agree also," he said to the Marquis, "that there is a great family likeness."

"I agree to it," he replied, "I agree to it; but it is precisely this likeness we must catch, that we must distinguish in the features; it is that which constitutes real judges! Between father, mother, brothers, and sisters, there is always a family resemblance."

"Always!"I cried, "always! Do you believe—?"

"If I believe! But I am sure of it. Sometimes it is enveloped in the deportment, in the manners, in the looks: enveloped, I tell you, and concealed in such a manner as 'tis not easy to perceive it. Well, then! An expert man seeks for it—analyses it—do you conceive me?"

"In short, if, after having seen me, but not having seen my father, you had, by chance, met him in the midst of twenty persons—"

"Him! Amongst a thousand I should have known him."

M. du Portail and myself burst into laughter. The Marquis rose, left the table, went to M. au Portail, took his head with one hand, and with a finger of the other traced the face of my pretended father, saying, "Do not laugh, sir, do not laugh. Here, mademoiselle, do you not see this line which rises here, passes along there, and comes back here? Does it come back? No, it does not come back; it stops there. Well! See—" (he came towards me.)

"Sir," I said, "I do not like to be touched." (He stopped, and pointed with his finger, but without putting it on my face.)

"Well! Mademoiselle, behold this same line, there, here, and again there. There, do you not see it!"

"How, sir, how can I see it!"

"You laugh! You must not laugh; it is serious. You see it well, do you not, sir?"

"Very well."

"Besides that, there is in the *tout ensemble*, in the configuration of the body, certain shadows of resemblance; certain secret affinities—occult—"

"Occult!" I replied, "occult!"

"Yes, yes, occult! You do not know, perhaps, what is meant by occult? That is not astonishing for a girl! I say, then, Monsieur, that there are certain secret resemblances—No, it was not resemblances I said—it was another word—more—better—By our Lady! I know not where I was, they have interrupted me so."

"You said, sir, secret affinities."

"Ah! Yes, affinities! Affinities! And I will explain it to you, sir, who are reasonable."

"How! Sir, do you mean to insult me!"

"No, my sweet girl, you cannot know everything your father knows."

"Ah! In that sense—"

"Yes, in that sense, my sweet lady; but let me beg that I may explain it to you, Monsieur?—Monsieur, the fathers and mothers, in the procreation of individuals, make beings who resemble—who have secret affinities to the beings who have generated them, because the mother, on her side, and the father on his—"

"Hush! Hush!" interrupted M. du Portail.

"Oh! She does not comprehend that," said the Marquis; "she is too young. It is, nevertheless, clear, and you can understand me. Those things, sir, are physical, and they have been philosophically proved by—by great physicians who understand such matters."

"Why, then, speak so low?" I said to the Marquis.

"I have done, mademoiselle, I have done; your father understands it."

"You are well skilled in physiognomy, Monsieur, but are you not also a judge of stuffs? What do you say to this gown? It is very pretty; very pretty. I think the Marchioness has one like it. Yes, exactly like it."

"Of the same stuff, and the same colour?"

"Of the same stuff I cannot say, but as to the colour, it is precisely the same. It is very pretty; it becomes you very much."

He then began to pay many compliments in his peculiar manner, and M. du Portail, who had guessed to whom the gown belonged, regarded me with a look of displeasure, and seemed to reproach me for having so soon forgot the promise I had made him.

We were rising from the table when my real father, M. de Faublas, who had promised to fetch me, arrived. His astonishment was very great at finding his son a second time disguised, and in company with the Marquis de B***. "Again!" he said, looking at me with much severity; "and you, M. du Portail, you have the goodness—"

"Ah! Good evening to you, my friend; do you not recognise Monsieur the Marquis de B***? He has done me the honour to sup with me, in order to take farewell of my daughter, who sets off tomorrow."

"Who goes tomorrow?" replied the Baron, coldly saluting the Marquis.

"Yes, my friend, she returns to her convent; did you not know it? Indeed, my friend, I tell you she goes tomorrow."

"Yes," interrupted the Marquis, "She is going; I am very sorry for it, and my wife will be much grieved about it."

"And I," replied my father, "am very glad of it; it is time it was finished," he added, looking at me. M. du Portail, fearing he might get into a passion, drew him on one side.

"Who, then, is that man?" said the Marquis to me: "did I not see him here the other day?"

"Certainly."

"I knew him at first sight; when once I have seen a countenance, I know it again. But this man displeases me; he always looks angry. Is he a relation of yours?"

"Not at all."

"Oh! I could have wagered he was not of the family! There is not in your countenances the slightest resemblance; yours is always gay, his ever gloomy; at least, but a Platonic smile; no, sartonic—is it *sartonic* or *sardonic*?—In short—you understand me. I would say, that if he did not look sideways at you, he would laugh in your face."

"Never mind that, he is a philosopher."

"A philosopher!" replied the Marquis, "with an air of alarm; I am no longer astonished. A philosopher! Ah! I must go."

M. du Portail and the Baron were conversing together, and turned their backs towards us. The Marquis bade adieu to M. du Portail. "Do not disturb yourself," he said to the Baron, who was turning round to salute him; "do not disturb yourself, sir; I do not like philosophers, not I, and am very happy you do not belong to this family. A philosopher! A philosopher!" repeated he, and flew out of the room.

When he was gone, my father and M. du Portail began to chat in a low tone. I went to sleep by the fireside. I had a delightful dream; the image of my lovely Sophia was presented to my dormant senses.

"Faublas!" cried my father, "let us go."

"To see my pretty cousin?" I said, in my stupor.

"His pretty cousin! See, he has been sleeping as he sat there."

M. du Portail smiled. He said, "Go home, my friend, go and sleep, I think you have need of it; we will see each other again: I owe you some reproaches, and the continuation of my story: we will meet again."

When I got home, I asked for the Abbé Person. He was gone to bed. I did the same, and did right. Never did any one sleep sounder under the fraternal harangues of our freemasons; at the public lectures of the modern museum; under the precious pleadings of D***, of C***, of D'L***, and of many other great orators represented in the famous picture.

V.

When I rose, I rang for Jasmin, to inform him that they would bring home my clothes, which I had left the night before with a friend in the city. Afterwards, I bade him call M. Person. I asked him after Adelaide and Mademoiselle du Ponits.

"You saw them yesterday, he replied."

"And you also, M. Person, you have seen them, and even told them that I had made an acquaintance at the ball."

"Well, sir, and what evil was there in that?"

"And what necessity, sir? Tell my sister your own secrets, if you please; but for mine, I beg you will respect them."

"Indeed, sir, you speak in a very high tone. For some days past you are quite altered. I shall complain to your father, sir."

"And I, sir, to my sister;" (I saw him turn pale.) "Believe me, let us be friends; my father desires me to go out with you."

"Well, finish dressing yourself, and let us go to the convent."

We were going, when Rosambert arrived. As soon as he knew where we were going, he begged me to let him accompany us. "For these four months past," he said, "you have promised to introduce me to your amiable sister."

"I am going to keep my word, Rosambert, and you will see a girl whom you will be compelled to esteem."

"I am well convinced, my friend, that Mademoiselle de Faublas is, in this case, an exception; but I retort upon you the formidable argument with which you have armed yourself against me: an exception does not destroy the rule, but proves it."

"Just as you please. I warn you that you are going to see a lass of fourteen years and a half, innocent and ingenuous, even to simplicity; nevertheless, she is as tall as one can be at her age, and she wants neither understanding nor education."

No one could be more unhappy than I was: my sister came to the conference room; my Sophia did not come. After the first salutations and a few moments general conversation, I could no longer dissemble my uneasiness. "Where, Adelaide, is my pretty cousin?"

"Oh, my dear brother, her illness must be very serious, for she confines herself all day. I no longer recognise her: formerly, she was as thoughtless, gay and lively as myself; now I behold her gloomy, thoughtful and unhappy. We find her, it is true, nearly as mild and affectionate when we go to her, but she rarely comes to us. During our hours of recreation, she used to play and run in the gardens with our companions; at present, she seeks some retired corner, and walks by herself. Oh! She is ill; she is ill, indeed: she eats little, sleeps less, and never smiles; and I, whom she loved so much, am now shunned, as if she feared me! Yes, indeed, I have remarked it; she flies from everybody, but avoids me above all. Yesterday, I saw her enter a little shaded walk at the bottom of the garden; I approached her unperceived, and found her wiping her eyes: 'My dear friend, what is the matter with you?' I said. She gave me such a look; such a look as I never saw any one have before. At last, she replied, 'Adelaide, dost thou not guess? Ah! How happy thou art! But I am to be pitied.' And then she blushed, she sighed and wept. I tried to comfort her. The more I spoke to her, the

more she grieved. I embraced her; she held me a long time, and appeared tranquil: all at once, she put her hand on my eyes, and said, 'Adelaide, hide thy face! Oh! Hide it! It is too much; it makes me ill. Leave me; go in a moment; leave me alone:' and she began to weep again. Perceiving that her illness increased, I said: 'Sophia!'"

At the name of Sophia, Rosambert whispered into my ear: "Sophia is the pretty cousin; it is this Sophia that I have blasphemed. Ah, pardon me." My sister continued:

"I said to her: 'Wait a moment, Sophia; I will go and fetch thy *gouvernante*.' She then recovered herself, dried her eyes, and begged me to say nothing. I was obliged to promise her that I would not. But still it was very unreasonable of her, to be ill, and not wish her *gouvernante* to know it!"

"Why did she not come here with you to-day, my dear Adelaide?"

"It is because she is so distracted, so absorbed! She loved you almost as much as me, formerly."

"And now?"

"I think she loves you no more. Just now I told her that you were here." 'My young cousin!" she cried, with an air of satisfaction; she was coming; but she stopped. 'No, I will not go, she said; I will not, I cannot! Tell him from me, that—'"

She appeared as if thinking what to say, and I waited her explanation. 'Do you not know what to say to him?' To which she added, with a little anger: 'What they say in similar cases, the customary compliments!' and she quitted me abruptly.

I was intoxicated with pleasure to hear my ingenuous sister describe, with the innocence of a child, the tender agitations and sweet anxieties of Sophia. Rosambert seemed struck with astonishment, and lent an attentive ear; and the little Abbé, looking at us all three, appeared at the same time both restless and delighted.

"You think then, Adelaide, that Sophia loves me no more?"

"I am almost sure of it, brother. Everything which relates to you puts her out of temper, and I am sometimes the victim of her ill humour."

"How?"

"Yes, the other day, Monsieur the Abbé Person informed us that you had passed the whole night at a ball with Madame the Marchioness de B***. Well! When he was gone, as soon as we were alone, Sophia said to me, in a very serious tone: 'Your brother did not sleep at home. That is not right.'"

"*Your* brother!"

"In general she said thee, thou, and thy. *Your* brother! If you have done anything wrong, Faublas, why should she be angry with me? Your brother! The next day, I believe you had been to a masked ball. The Abbé came to tell us, for he tells us everything. As soon as we were alone, Sophia said: 'Your brother amuses himself at the ball, whilst we pass our weary hours here.'"

"'Not at all,' I replied; 'one is never tired in the company of a dear friend.'"

"'Ah! Yes,' she added: 'Ah! Yes, with one's dear friend; that is true.' Nevertheless, Faublas, behold her singularity: a moment after, she repeats, in a melancholy manner: 'He amuses himself at the ball, while we weary ourselves here!'"

"We weary ourselves! And even if it was true, it was not polite; she ought not to say so. Oh! If she were not ill, I would not excuse her. I recollect also another trait. Yesterday, you told us that Madame de B*** was pretty. In the evening I followed Sophia, and made her walk with me. 'Your brother,' she said, (for at present it is always *your brother*), finds this Marchioness pretty, and he is, no doubt, in love with her.' I replied: 'That cannot be, my friend; this Madame de B*** is married.' She took my hand, and said: 'Ah! Adelaide, how happy thou art?' and there was something of disdain and pity in her look and smile. Is that polite? 'Ah! How happy thou art!' "Well, it is true, I am happy when I am in good health."

"But, Adelaide, all that you have told me is no proof that Sophia has ceased to love me. She may be a little angry; but it is common to behave thus towards those they love."

"Oh! No doubt, if that was all!"

"And what else is there, then?"

"Oh! Formerly she talked of you unceasingly; she was delighted to see you: at present, she but rarely mentions you, and always in a very serious tone. Did you not observe it yesterday? She never said a word, not a single word, while you were here. Do not deceive yourself, my dear brother; when we love people, we always speak to them. I assure you that my friend loves you no more."

Here Rosambert joined in the conversation, the subject of which was changed. We spoke of dancing, music, history, and geography. My sister, who had been prattling like a child of six years, now reasoned like a woman of twenty. The Count, each moment more surprised, did not seem aware how the time glided by, although several times warned of it by the Abbé Person. At last, the sound of a bell, which summoned the boarders to the refectory, obliged us to retire.

"I confess to you," said the Count, "that I can scarcely believe what I have seen. How can they connect ignorance and knowledge; modesty and beauty; the simplicity of childhood and the reason of maturity; in short, permit me to say, such extreme innocence with such precocious faculties and acquirements? I thought this union impossible, my friend. Your sister is the masterpiece of nature and education."

"This masterpiece, Rosambert, is the fruit of fourteen years of cares and of pleasure; it was produced by a rare concourse of fortunate events. The Baron de Faublas knew that the education of a daughter was a heavy burden for a military man: my mother, whom we shall always regret, my amiable and virtuous mother, was found worthy to be charged with it. Chance also has seconded her efforts, she met with servants for her daughter, who obeyed without disputing; a *gouvernante,* who neither related amorous stories nor read romances; with masters, who were only occupied with their pupil while going through her lessons; a society of attentive persons, who were not guilty of a suspicious gesture, or an equivocal word; and, which is by no means the least essential, a director who, in his confessional, listened, but put no questions. In short, my friend, it is only six months that Adelaide has been at the convent."

"Six months! Ah! How many young ladies, whom we call well educated, have acquired great intelligence in a much shorter time; yes, and even received certain lessons, which wonderfully advance young girls."

"It is in this respect, Rosambert, that we must still more admire the happiness of Adelaide! Lively, playful, cheerful with her companions, she has selected but one, as delicate, as well -bred, as prudent as herself. One, somewhat more enlightened, perhaps, because within a little time, love—"

"I understand you, it is the pretty cousin."

"Yes, my friend, Sophia, not less virtuous than Adelaide, though susceptible a little sooner of certain impressions, is become the only friend of my sister. Their two hearts, so pure, are, as we may suppose, attracted and blended together. Adelaide, deprived of her mother, has not thought nor lived but in Sophia. Their friendship, as delicate as lively, saves them from the dangers of which you speak, and to which I can conceive they must be exposed in such a society, surrounded by so many ardent, restless and curious young girls, with whom the nature of the place is calculated to lead them into intimate connections. The close union of these two friends has lately been interrupted by myself: I flatter myself that I am become the happy object of my pretty cousin's most tender affections. Adelaide, on whom love" (I looked at the Abbé Person) "has not yet exercised his power, has devoted towards Sophia entire friendship, and the bitterness of her complaints proves to us the excess of her affection. And you assure yourself, in the meantime, of your happiness. Indeed, Faublas, I congratulate you, if Sophia is as amiable and as beautiful as Adelaide."

"More handsome, my friend, still more handsome! Imagine—"

"Hush! Hush! Gently! How warm he gets! Tell me then, my sentimental friend, since you have so charming a mistress, why have you choused<4> me out of mine? Since M. de Faublas loves the conversation room so much, why has Mademoiselle du Portail slept with the Marchioness? How do you reconcile this?"

"That is not difficult, Rosambert."

"Nor disagreeable, I conceive."

"You laugh: hear me then, my friend: You know how things have gone between the Marchioness and me?"

"Yes, yes; near the matter."

"Nay, you eternal sneerer, listen to me. Educated nearly in the same manner as my sister, I was scarcely less ignorant than her, eight days since. I have not taken Madame de B***, it is she who ensnared me. I am excusable."

"Go on; come to the masked ball: but, at least, you were not obliged to return to the house. The masked ball! Hem! What say you?"

"I say, that they drew me there; I am scarcely sixteen years, and my sensations are new to me."

"Ah, Sophia! Poor Sophia!"

"Do not pity her, I adore her! But I am sure, Rosambert, nothing but the lawful rites can ensure me possession of her."

"That may be, at least—"

"Well! Trusting that Hymen will unite us, I shall always respect my Sophia."

"That is to be seen hereafter."

"In the meantime, my celibacy will seem hard."

"I believe it."

"My high spirits will sometimes carry me too far."

"Without doubt."

"I shall, perhaps, be guilty of an occasional infidelity to my pretty cousin."

"That is more than probable."

"But as soon as a happy marriage—"

"Ah, yes!"

"Then, my Sophia, I will love none but thee!"

"That is not certain."

"I will love her all my life."

"That appears to me rash."

Rosambert left me. Jasmin, of whom I enquired if anyone had brought home my clothes, he said had not seen anyone. I waited until the evening, in expectation of a messenger, but none came. I was uneasy, because I had left a pocketbook in my pocket, which contained two letters; one had been sent me from the country by an old domestic of my father, in which the good man wished me a happy new year, and the customary compliments on such occasions. I was sorry to lose the other, it was that which the Marchioness had written to me some days before; it was addressed to Mademoiselle du Portail, and I wished to preserve it.

The clothes were brought me in the morning after, but I searched in vain in the pockets, for the pocket-book was not there. At this moment Madame Dutour arrived, and caused me to forget my uneasiness by delivering me a letter from the Marchioness. I opened it with eagerness, and read:"

"MY DEAR FRIEND,
"Be at the door of my house by seven precisely, this evening. You may follow with confidence, the person, who, after having lifted up your hat with which you will cover your eyes, will call you 'Adonis.' I cannot write more to you, I have been beset ever since the morning, and fatigued with the details of physiognomical science, and it is not that in which I am anxious to become profound. Oh, my friend! You are so well skilled in the art of pleasing, that to know you is to love you—I wish to know nothing more."

This letter was so flattering, and the invitation it contained so seducing, that I could not hesitate in complying with its commands.

I assured Dutour that I would not fail to be at the appointed place. Nevertheless, when she was gone, I felt some degree of irresolution. Ought I not, in future, to be entirely occupied with Sophia, and to avoid all occasions of seeing so dangerous a rival? But why shall I impose upon myself this cruel restriction, without necessity? Have I declared my love to Sophia? Has Sophia avowed hers to me? Has she acquired the right of demanding this sacrifice of me? Besides, might not my refusing to indulge the Marchioness be called an infidelity? It is not embarking in a new intrigue! Since I have passed a night with the Marchioness—since I have seen her again in that agreeable boudoir, what harm can there be in my paying her one more visit? And then, my pretty cousin will know nothing of it. In short, my word was

engaged, and the reader will agree that I could not dispense with going to the rendezvous.

I did not make them wait for me; neither did Justine suffer me to wait at the door; she lifted up my hat: "Come charming Adonis!" she said. I followed her with gentle steps. Nevertheless, the porter, although half drunk, heard some noise, and demanded who it was."

"It is me! It is me!" replied Justine."

"Yes, replied the other, it is you! But who is that young spark?"

"Who is it? Why, my cousin!"

"The porter was in good humour, and we passed without any trouble.

Justine conducted me to the bottom of the court, and we slipped up a private staircase. It may easily be conceived that the pretty soubrette was embraced several times before we arrived at the first landing-place. She then made a sign for me to be more prudent, and took me through a little door, which conducted me into the Marchioness' boudoir. "Go," said Justine, "go into the bedroom; you will be safer there."

She went out, and shut the door after her.

I went into the bedchamber, and my charming mistress came to me.

"Ah! My dear mamma, I am then here for the second time."

She interrupted me; "My God! I think I hear the Marquis! And here he is, sure enough, come home for the evening; save yourself! Go!"

I flew in an instant to the boudoir, but I did not think of shutting the bedroom door after me; it remained ajar; and, to heighten my misfortune, Justine had double-locked the other door, which led to the private staircase. The Marchioness, who could not guess that my retreat was cut off, seated herself tranquilly. The Marquis had already entered her apartment, and appeared somewhat disconcerted. I trembled lest he should see me in the boudoir, as there was no means of getting out. What was I to do? I crept under the sofa, and, in a very uncomfortable position, I heard a very singular conversation, which terminated in a manner still more singular.

"You are returned in good time, Monsieur."

"Yes, Madame."

"I did not expect you so soon."

Illustration: I crept under the sofa, and, in a very uncomfortable position, I heard a very singular conversation.

"That is very possible, Madame."

"You appear agitated; what is the matter with you?"

"It is, Madame—it is—I am furious."

"Calm yourself, Monsieur; may I know what it is?"

"It is—there is no longer any morality in the world—the women!"

"The remark, Monsieur, is polite, and the application happy!"

"Madame, I like not to be trifled with! And, when I am tricked, I perceive it very soon!"

"What do you mean, Monsieur, by these reproaches; these insults! To whom are they addressed? You will explain yourself, without doubt?"

"Yes, Madame, I will explain myself, and then you will be convinced!"

"Convinced of what?"

"Of what! In a moment Madame; you do not let me have time to breathe! You have received into your house, lodged with you, and had to sleep with you, Mademoiselle du Portail!"

[The Marchioness, with great firmness:] "Well! Monsieur."

"Well! Madame; and do you know who this Mademoiselle du Portail is?"

"I know the same as you, Monsieur; she was introduced by M. de Rosambert; her father is a respectable gentleman, with whom you supped the night before last."

"That is not the question, Madame; do you know who this Mademoiselle du Portail is?"

"I repeat it to you, Monsieur, that I know, as you do, that Mademoiselle du Portail is a young lady of good birth and education, and extremely amiable."

"That is not the question, Madame."

"Well, Monsieur, and pray what is the question, then? Have you sworn to put my patience to the test?"

"In a moment, then, Madame, Mademoiselle du Portail is not a girl."

[The Marchioness, in a very lively manner:] "Is not a girl!"

"Is not a girl well born, Madame; she is a girl of a certain description; like those girls who—there—you understand me?"

"I assure you I do not, Monsieur."

"I have, nevertheless, sufficiently explained myself; she is a girl who—that—in short, you know what I mean."

"Oh! Not at all, Monsieur, I assure you."

"She is, what I would have told you without naming it; Madame, she is a wh—; do you understand me now?"

"Mademoiselle du Portail a wh—! Pardon me, sir, I cannot contain myself, I must laugh." (And the Marchioness did indeed laugh with all her strength.)

"You may laugh, Madame; but stop! Do you know this letter?"

"Yes, it was what I wrote to Mademoiselle du Portail the day after she slept with me."

"Truly, Madame, and do you know this?"

"No, Monsieur."

"Look at it, Madame, you see the address: *A Monsieur, le Chevalier Fabulas*: and read its contents:"

"My DEAR MASTER,
"May I take the liberty of intruding upon you, to wish that the year now commenced may be happy and prosperous for you, etc., etc.
"I have the honour to be, with profound respect,
"My dear Master, etc., etc."

"It is a new-year's letter from a domestic to his master, who is a Monsieur de Faublas."

"Well, Madame, these letters were in the pocket-book which you see here."

"What then, Monsieur?"

"You cannot guess where I found it?"

"Tell me; tell me, Monsieur."

"I found it in a place where—

Well, Monsieur, tell me the rest, you delight in being mysterious."

"Well, then, Madame, I found it in a bad place."

"In a bad place?"

"Yes, Madame, where curiosity led me; stop! I am going to explain that to you. A woman has lately circulated some printed letters, by which she informs lovers that she can accommodate them with some charming boudoirs, which she will let at so much an hour; as for myself, I only went to see them out of curiosity, sheer curiosity, as I told you just now."

"What day were you there, Monsieur?"

"Yesterday, After dinner, Madame; and the boudoirs were, indeed, charming! There is one on the first floor which is very pretty! There are paintings, prints, mirrors, an alcove, a bed, ah, such a bed! Imagine to yourself a bed with springs! Ah, 'tis very pleasant! One of these days I must show it to you."

"A husband and his wife go to such a place!" replied the Marchioness, "that would be very fine!"

I heard some noise; the Marquis was embracing his wife, and she was preventing him. Their conversation, which in the commencement rendered me very uneasy, now amused me so much, that it lessened the restraint of my situation. The Marquis continued as follows:

"But that nothing may be wanting, there is, in the boudoir on the first floor, a door which communicates with the house of a milliner, who lives adjoining: it is admirably contrived. You might suppose a lady of quality going to her milliner: no such thing; she steps upstairs, and the head of a poor husband is cornuted.<5> In this boudoir I opened a little closet, and there it was I found the pocket-book. Therefore, it is clear that Mademoiselle du Portail has been there with this M. de Faublas; and that it is very scandalous of her, and it is very bad conduct of M. de Rosambert, who knew it, to introduce her to us, and very imprudent of her father to let her come out accompanied only by a *femme de chambre*. But I was not their dupe! There is in her countenance—You know what a physiognomist—Her countenance is pretty! But there is a something in her features which indicates a blood—She has a warm temperament; I observed it particularly. Do you not recollect the evening that Rosambert said there were circumstances—Hem! Circumstances—did you not remark that? Ah! They cannot deceive me! And mind you, the same day—Come, come, Madame."

The Marchioness, who thought me gone, suffered him to conduct her into her boudoir. The Marquis continued:

"She was here, in this boudoir, there; you were reclining yourself on this sofa; and I arrived, Madame; she had a most animated and glowing complexion; her eyes sparkled, her looks were peculiar. Oh! I tell you this girl has a temperament of fire. You know I am a judge; but leave it to me, I'll set the matter right."

"How, Monsieur, will you put it right?"

"Yes, Madame; I shall tell Rosambert what I think of his proceedings. Rosambert has, perhaps, been connected with her. Afterwards I will see M. du Portail, and will inform him of the conduct of his daughter."

"What! Monsieur, will you plunge Rosambert in a disagreeable quarrel?"

"Madame, Madame, Rosambert knew what she was; he was jealous as a tiger of me."

"Of you, Monsieur?"

"Yes, Madame, of me; because the girl appeared to prefer me. She even made advances to me; and 'tis in that she has trifled with me, for she had at the same time this M. de Faublas. I will know who this M. de Faublas is, and I will see M. du Portail."

"What! Monsieur, could you go to tell a father?"

"Yes, Madame, it would be doing him a service; I'll go and acquaint him with everything."

"I hope, Monsieur, you'll do no such thing"

"I shall do it, Madame."

"If you have any consideration for me, you will leave it to take its chance."

"No, no, I cannot."

"I beg it as a favour of you, Monsieur."

"No, no, Madame."

"I see through you now, Monsieur; I discover the motive which interests you so much in what regards Mademoiselle du Portail. I know you too well to be the dupe of this austerity of morals which you put on today; you are angry, not because Mademoiselle du Portail has been in a suspicious place, but because she has been there with any other than yourself."

"Oh! Madame."

"And when I invited home a young lady, whom I thought virtuous, you had designs upon her."

"Madame!"

"And you dare come and complain to me of having been tricked! It is I, it is I alone who have been the dupe!

She threw herself upon the sofa. Her husband cried out, and then embraced her, saying, "If you knew how I loved you!"

"If you loved me, Monsieur, you would have had more consideration for me, more respect for yourself, more tenderness for a child who is, perhaps, more to be pitied than blamed. What are you doing, Monsieur? Leave me. If you love me, you

will not go to inform an unhappy father of the errors of his child; you will not go and relate this adventure to M. de Rosambert, who will laugh at it, make a jest of you, and spread a report that I have received in my house a girl of intrigue! But, Monsieur, have done; what you would do is nothing to the purpose."

"Madame, I love you."

"It is not sufficient to say so; it must be proved."

"But for these three or four days, my love, you would not let me prove it."

"It is not such proofs as these which I demand of you, Monsieur. But Monsieur; have done then, I say."

"Come on, Madame, my love."

"Indeed, Monsieur, that is very ridiculous!"

"We are alone."

"It would be better if there were other persons here; that would be decent. Have done then, I say; have we not always time to do those things! Leave me alone. What! Married people! At your age? In a boudoir! On a sofa! Like lovers! And when I have something else to request of you."

"Well, my angel, I'll say nothing to Rosambert, nothing to M. du Portail."

"You can promise well."

"I'll give you my word."

"Well then! Stop a moment; give me the pocket-book; leave it with me."

"With all my heart; there it is."

(There was a short silence.) "Indeed, Monsieur," said the Marchioness, "in a voice almost extinct, you desired it; but it is very ridiculous."

I heard them stammer, sigh, and die away both together. One may imagine what I suffered under the sofa during this strange scene.

I could have strangled the actors with my own hands; and in the excess of my spite I was tempted to discover myself, to reproach the Marchioness for this new species of infidelity, and to repay the Marquis for the bitter mortification he had made me undergo, without knowing it.

Justine came to terminate my irresolution; she opened all at once, the door of the private staircase. The Marchioness shrieked out. The Marquis fled into the bedroom, to put himself in order. Justine, perceiving a husband instead of a lover, was struck with astonishment; nor was the Marchioness less surprised when she saw me come from under the sofa. I whispered my thanks to the *femme de chambre*.

"Many thanks Justine; you have rendered me as essential service. I was very uncomfortable beneath, while Madame was so much at her ease above."

The Marchioness, alarmed and trembling, dared neither to reply to me nor to retain me, as her husband was so near, and probably would enter as soon as he was decently dressed. Justine stood on one side, to let me pass. I descended the private staircase without a light, at the risk of breaking my neck. I flew across the court and got out of the house, cursing its owners.

The next morning I was still in bed when Jasmin announced the arrival of Justine, and retired discreetly.

"My dear girl, I dreamt of you!"

"Ah, Monsieur! Let me alone; you must not do so this time. I will commence by executing my commission. Do you know that I got a fine scolding yesterday? You put us into a terrible alarm! You had not reached the bottom of the staircase, when the Marquis entered the boudoir. 'See this fool,' she said to him, 'who entered here like a shot from a pistol.' As soon as he had quitted us, my mistress, distracted at the adventure, told me she could not conceive why you hid yourself under the sofa. I was forced to acknowledge that I had, without knowing it, double-locked the door. She flew into a violent passion with me, and this morning she sent me with this letter for you."

"Very well, my dear Justine; now your commission is done, for I shall not open the letter."

"You will not open it, Monsieur?"

"No, I am angry with the Marchioness."

"You are wrong."

"But I cannot be angry with thee, Justine."

"You are right."

"Well, make haste then."

"But, stop; I will, on condition that you read the letter."

"Oh! How happy a mistress is to have a girl like thee! Well; I'll read it."

Justine so cheerfully fulfilled the conditions of the treaty that it would have been perfidious on my part not to have kept my word. I opened the letter.

> My Dear Friend,
> I am greatly distressed at our adventure yesterday. That scene, which would only have been strange had you not been a witness of it, has become, by your presence, as disagreeable to me as mortifying to you. What an expression you made use of at parting! You are ungrateful! You know not the pain you gave me! Let me see you again, my dear friend; come to her who loves you! Come at noon to the place you will be told of. There I shall have no trouble in defending myself; there, when my lover shall be well convinced of his injustice, he will find me ready to pardon his hasty remark.

"Monsieur," said Justine, as soon as I had finished the letter, "Madame expects you by noon at the boudoir, where you met the other day. You know it well, where we dressed you."

"Yes, Justine, and where you cried so much! If thou knew how I suffered for thee! But thou wert not content with playing her queer tricks, but must also say spiteful things to her."

"Do not speak to me of that, I am still ashamed of it. Have done then. Give me your answer for my mistress."

"My answer is, Justine, that I will not go to the rendezvous."

"You will not go?"

"No, Justine."

"What! Will you give this mortification to my mistress?"

"Yes, my dear girl."

"But you will get me scolded at."

"I'll comfort thee for that beforehand."

"Are you indeed decided, then?"

"Fully decided, Justine."

"Well, in that case there is an end of the letter." (She embraced me.) "Write a word for my mistress."

"No, my dear, I will not write."

"Leave me alone! But I will again, on condition that you write."

"Ah Justine! I repeat it, how happy a mistress is to have such a girl as thee. Well, I will write." I wrote as follows:

> I know not, Madame, whether the adventure of yesterday gave you much pain; but, from the manner in which you fulfilled your employment on the sofa, I have reason to believe you did not think it very painful. When one has a husband who is amiable, gallant, and tenderly beloved, Madame, one ought to keep him.
> I am, with the most lively regret, etc., etc.

Oh, my pretty cousin! How much, when I think of you, do I applaud the generous effort I am about to make! Oh, how sweet it was to think that at length I had sacrificed an agreeable assignation on your account, and at the very hour even when the Marchioness thought of seeing me again at the house of her friend, I should enjoy the happiness of seeing and admiring you!

Alas! She did not come to the conversation-room!

"Why is your friend not with you, my dear sister?"

"I told you truly, that she was ill! Yesterday, she was crying again all day; in the night, she never closed her eyes, and she is declared to be in a fever this morning."

"A fever! Sophia in a fever! Sophia in danger!"

"Do not speak so loud, brother; I know not that she is in danger, but she suffers a great deal. Her complexion is pale, her eyes are red, her head droops, she breathes slow, her speech short and stammering; I have even thought her delirious at times. This morning, her face was inflamed all at once, her eyes became lively and brilliant; she spoke very quick, and very softly, some words which I did not understand: but presently, she relapsed into a lethargy: 'No, no,' she said, 'that is not possible; I cannot; I ought not to do it; he will never know it!' I saw the tears flow from her eyes. She added, in a piteous tone: 'How I am deceived! It will kill me! It will kill me! The cruel! The ungrateful!' I took her hand, she pressed mine, and then she said the same again, and repeated, without ceasing: 'Adelaide! Adelaide! Oh, how happy thou art!' Her *gouvernante* entered; Sophia again conjured me to say nothing. Nevertheless, my dear brother, it was necessary that I should inform Madame Munich (which was the name of Sophia's *gouvernante,*) for I am alarmed for my dear friend. What think you?"

"Have you told her, Adelaide, that I was here?"

"Yes, but I had good reason, yesterday, to tell you she loved you no more, she has told me so herself."

"Sophia has told you?"

"Yes, she said so, and charged me to tell you of it. Last night, before supper time, I told her you brought with you a very amiable young gentleman. She inquired his name. I replied that it was the Count de Rosambert. 'Rosambert! said Sophia. 'It was he that introduced your brother to the Marchioness de B***. He is not a good young man! Your brother has made a friend of him: he will entirely spoil your brother! He has already begun to render your brother unsteady.'"

"'Ah, my dear friend! I have been reproaching him; I have even told him that you did not love him any more. Yes, my dear friend, but he would not believe me; he only laughed at me; and M. de Rosambert laughed also.'"

"'These gentlemen laughed, did they!' said Sophia, in an angry tone: 'Your brother laughed, and would not believe you! When will your brother come again, Adelaide?'"

"'Tomorrow.'"

"'Tell him, it is true I felt a friendship for him, but that I feel it no longer; and, to convince him of it, tell him I will not see him again as long as I live.' She left me; and, a moment after, she came back, and told me, laughing: 'Yes, my dear Adelaide, you were right; I love not your brother; I do not love him; do not fail to tell him so tomorrow.' She smiled; nevertheless, I assure you, Faublas, that she has been weeping ever since."

During this relation, my heart was alternately elevated with joy, and depressed with sorrow.

"I must tell you," continued my sister, "a singular notion which has occurred to me, I know not how, or why. When I saw my dear friend laugh and cry at the same time, I could not help concluding that she was a little deranged; nevertheless, there is a mystery about her which I cannot penetrate; surely someone must have done something to grieve her; I am much afraid that it is you, my brother. 'Why can she hate him?' I said to myself. 'Why will she see him no more? Can it be him she called ungrateful and cruel?' You may judge, Faublas, that when I reflect a little, this idea cannot appear reasoneable. My brother ungrateful? Cruel? That cannot be. And then what harm can he have done to my dear friend? What evil could he possibly do to her?"

"Adelaide!" I exclaimed; "my dear Adelaide!"

"Why do you weep?" she said, "are you angry with me? I assure you I thought all that in spite of myself, and I did not tell it you to offend you."

"I know it well, my dear sister, I know it well; it is the malady of your dear friend that I weep for."

"Do you think, brother, that it will become serious? Do you think that I ought to inform her *gouvernante*?"

"No, Adelaide, no; do not inform her. Your fair friend has a fever, as you have observed; and I know a remedy which will cure her. I will bring you, Adelaide, the recipe tomorrow morning, written upon a piece of paper, and carefully sealed. You

must not show the paper to anyone; you will give it to Sophia when Madame Munich is not with her. It is important that Madame Munich does not see the paper. You understand me well!"

"Yes, yes, make yourself easy: ah, what obligations I shall owe you if you cure my dear friend!"

"Adelaide, tell my pretty cousin that I think I know her malady; that I participate in it, and hope to restore her to tranquility. Be sure you tell her so, Adelaide."

"Ah, word for word: You know her malady, you participate in it, and will cure it. I will tell her even that you have wept. But do not fail to come tomorrow, to bring the recipe; and, in the meantime, neglect nothing that can render her cure certain. Be careful not to act from your judgment alone, as you know, brother, you are not a physician: go to-day among the most celebrated of them, see them, inform them, and consult them; the disorder is not common, for I have never seen the like, and I tremble lest it become more dangerous. Good God! If, in endeavouring to remove the complaint, you should render it incurable! It must be a radical cure, my brother; and expeditious also. Hasten then, Faublas, for Sophia, who is suffering and dying; and for my sake, who am unhappy on her account; and likewise for yourself, my dear brother; for my dear friend, as soon as she is well, will love you, without doubt, as much as she did before."

When I reached home, my mind was entirely occupied with the conversation of Adelaide, and the sufferings of Sophia. Unfortunately, my father had a party to dinner, and I was obliged to sit down at table, and afterwards to play a cursed game of cards, which detained me until midnight. How tormenting it is, when one loves, and believes oneself beloved, and wishes to write to one's mistress—how tormenting it is to be obliged to play! I could not hate my most cruel enemy more than I did the cards.

It may be guessed that I slept little during the night. The next day, I went into a little closet, which joined my bedroom; I had there some books for study, with which my accommodating tutor did not often tire me. The first letter I wrote did not please, and was torn up; a second, which was full of raptures, shared the same fate; and I beg the reader not to say that I ought to have begun again this third, which follows:

> My Pretty Cousin,
> The long wished for moment is at last arrived, when I can freely open to you my heart, to solicit from your tenderness a kind of confession; and thus, perhaps, ensure our mutual happiness.
> Ah, Sophia! Sophia! If you knew what I experienced the first day that I saw you! How my eyes were confounded! How my heart was agitated! Since then, my love has increased daily, and at this moment a devouring flame circulates throughout my veins. Sophia, I exist but in you!

I had got thus far, when Jasmin entered abruptly, and announced the Viscomte de Florville. "The Viscomte de Florville! I know him not. Tell him I am not at home."

"He is already in your bedroom, Monsieur."

"What! Do you let all the world come there!"

"He forced the door, Monsieur."

"The devil take the Viscomte de Florville!"

Fearing that this unknown, so little ceremonious, might come even to my closet, and with an eye profane glance at the depository of my secret sentiments, I hastened into my bedroom. I uttered, involuntarily, an exclamation of joy and surprise. The pretended Viscomte was the Marchioness de B***. My first idea was to push Jasmin out; the second, to bolt the door; the third, to embrace the charming cavalier; the fourth, those who have penetration, have already guessed.

The Marchioness, already astonished at my vivacity, as soon as she had recovered her spirits, said: "You are a very singular young man! There is no one but yourself in the world capable of commencing a reconciliation, where it should finish!"

"Well, indeed; mamma takes it as if there was nothing amiss. Let us see; what do we dispute about?"

"To the end that we may be reconciled again: is it not true, you little libertine?"

"Ah! My dear mamma."

"I have not an idea, but you comprehend it immediately."

"Yesterday, though, you did not comprehend me, ungrateful as you are."

"Yesterday I was still sulky."

"And for what, if you please? Could I suspect that you were under the sofa? Was it not essential both for you and myself, to get the pocket-book out of the hands of the Marquis?"

"That is true, mamma; but the vexation!"

"The vexation! For whom I forget my duty, for whom I forget decorum, and the care of my reputation: and in what a tone did you reply to my most tender letter. (She drew mine out of her pocket.) There, ungrateful boy! Read over your letter again; read with *sang-froid* if you can. What cruel irony! What bitter jeering! And, notwithstanding, I pardon you; and come to seek you! I conduct myself with as much weakness and imprudence as a child of twelve years. Faublas! Faublas! The charm must be very great, it must; how have you bewitched me!"

"My dear mamma!"

"Well?"

"Scold me well, because we will make it up."

"What! You little wag, you merely confess that you were wrong, you do not ask for pardon."

"It is done."

"Oh, how lovely you are!"

"Oh! I beg your pardon."

Those who have understanding, and even those who have not, will guess that the Marchioness and myself were reconciled. The most delightful caresses and tender compliments passed between us.

My God, Florville, how fascinating you are in this pretty dishabille! How well this English frock becomes you!"

"I had it made yesterday on purpose."

"It is, if I am not deceived, of the same cloth and same colour as the charming Amazonian habit in which love, who was determined to ensnare me, caused you to appear before my eyes for the first time. Having become the chevalier of Mademoiselle du Portail, I thought it became me to wear her colours."

I clasped her in my arms: and said, "And I, in future the slave of the Viscomte de Florville, shall always be pleased to wear his bonds. What delightful reciprocity is this, mamma!"

"Love, my friend, is an infant, who amuses himself with these metamorphoses; he made Mademoiselle du Portail a thoughtless virgin; he makes the Marchioness de B*** an imprudent young man. Ah! Could the Viscomte de Florville appear to thee as amiable as Mademoiselle du Portail seems pretty in my eyes!"

"As amiable? Much more so."

"Oh, no," she replied, admiring herself with complaisance, and looking at me with tenderness: "Oh, no; you are better, my friend; taller, more easy. There is something in your manner very bold and spirited; you have a martial air."

"Yes, Madame, and if I believed a great physiognomist, something more vigorous and robust."

"Faublas, do pray, leave the Marquis alone. Do we not already play him bad tricks enough? In short, I am not come here to occupy myself with him. Now, my friend, tell me, without flattery, how you find me."

"Charming! Whether dressed as man or woman, I defy anyone to be so pretty as you."

"That's the language for a lover, always enthusiastical, always exaggerated! What woman will be more happy than myself, if you always view me with the same eyes!"

"Oh, mamma, as long as I live!

I held her in my arms: she slipped from me, to take up a sword, which she perceived on an armchair. In adjusting the belt she said: I have a fine English horse, which I ride sometimes. The spring is coming on, and I am very fond of riding in the environs of Paris. Will you accompany me sometimes, Faublas? Wilt thou, my friend, ramble, from time to time, in the woods of the Viscomte de Florville?"

"But they will see us."

"No, the Marquis is often obliged to go to court."

"Well, mamma, what day?"

"Let the spring put forth its verdure first."

While speaking, she had drawn my sword, and was fencing before me: "Be on your guard, chevalier," she said.

"I know not if the Viscomte is redoubtable, but I know well it is not in that; it is not thus that I ought to combat with the Marchioness. Dare she accept another kind of encounter?" (She flew to my arms.)

"Ah, Faublas!" she said, laughing; "Ah! If there were no greater murderers!"

"It is not, mamma, among men that they seek for heroes."

I then placed the Marchioness in a situation which rendered her unable to combat with me, and she took it kindly.

My beautiful mistress stayed with me two hours, which we employed very agreeably. "If I listened to nothing but the dictates of my own heart," she said at last, "I should remain here all day, but the time is now come for me to meet Justine in one place, and my servants in another." We bade adieu; I was conducting the Viscomte de Florville to the door. We had already left my apartment, and were descending the stairs, when I distinguished Rosambert in the vestibule, about to come up. I warned the Marchioness. "Let us go back instantly," she said, "I'll hide myself in some corner of your apartment; you'll come back quickly." Having said this, and without giving me time for reflection, she re-entered, and crossing my bed-room, shut herself in the closet.

Rosambert came up. "Good day, my friend; how is Adelaide? How does the pretty cousin?"

"Hush! Hush! Do not speak of that, my father is there."

"Where?"

"In that closet."

"In that closet! Your father?"

"Yes."

"And what does he there?"

"He examines my books."

"How! Your books?"

"No; he is not in the closet; for see, he comes here."

"There is something of the Marchioness in all this; and why not tell me at once that you were engaged? Adieu, Faublas, until tomorrow."

"He passed before my father, and saluted him: You have something to say to your son, Monsieur, and I'll leave you."

In the meantime, the Baron regarded me with much severity, and walked up and down with long strides. Impatient to know what this suspicious commencement announced, I asked him respectfully why he had done me the honour to come up to me.

"You will know it presently Monsieur."

A servant appeared. Tell him to come" said the Baron.

"Here he is, Monsieur."

"And my dear tutor entered. The Baron said to him: Have I not, sir, charged you with the conduct and education of my son?"

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"The one is very much neglected, and the other very bad."

"It is not my fault, Monsieur; your son does not love study."

"That is the least evil, interrupted the Baron; but how is it that I am not informed of what passes in my own house? Why have you not warned me of my son's disorderly conduct?"

"As to what passes here, sir, I can only speak of what I see; and as to what passes elsewhere, I can say nothing. Your son, when he goes out, rarely suffers me to accompany him; and—" (a look which I gave M. Person convinced him he had said enough.)

The Baron replied: "Monsieur, I have but one word to say to you; if this young man continues to conduct himself so badly, I shall be forced to choose another tutor. I would thank you to leave us."

When the Abbé was gone, the Baron sat down in an armchair, and motioned me to do the same.

"Excuse me, father, I have business."

"I know it, Monsieur, it is precisely because that business should not be finished that I come to speak to you."

"Excuse me this time, father, I must go out."

"No, Monsieur, you will remain; sit you down."

I was obliged to sit; I was upon thorns all the time. The Baron continued: "Is it possible that Faublas can meditate such horrors? Can he wish to abuse innocence and simplicity, and lay snares for virtue."

"Me, father?"

"Yes, you! I come from the convent; I know everything. If my son is still too young to see that the more easy a conquest is, the less it is flattering; he must take care not to confound an intrigue with a passion, and do not mistake a love of pleasure for the passion of love."

"Pray, father, speak a little lower."

"If my son, too much intoxicated with what they call good fortune—"

"Not so loud, I beg, father"

"Too much delighted in the discovery of a new sense, and the possession of a woman who is certainly not without attractions; if my son, in the arms of the Marchioness de B*** —"

"It is too much! I beg, father—"

"Had forgot his father, his rank, and his duty, I should have complained of it, but I should have excused it; I should have given him the advice of a friend, I should have said to him, 'The more handsome the—'"

"Father, if you knew—"

"The more handsome the Marchioness is, the more dangerous she is. Examine with me the conduct of this woman with whom thou art so much taken. At the first glance, your countenance decided her; she takes you for a night—"

"I conjure you to drop this at present."

"To satisfy her wild passion, she exposes both your life and her own. How lively, ardent, and passionate she must be to sacrifice her tranquillity, her honour, and public estimation to a thirst for pleasure!"

"Oh, father! Oh, sir!"

"I repeat it, my friend, the more handsome the Marchioness is, the more dangerous she is! Thou thinkest, that in her arms, the resources of nature will be inexhaustible."

Mortified at not being able to explain myself, and well convinced that the Baron would not hold his tongue, I determined to wait patiently the end of this remonstrance, which, on another occasion, I might not have found too long. I sat with my left elbow on the arm of my chair, biting my hand out of vexation, and my right foot always in motion, kept beating time upon the floor. My father, in the meantime, continued: "Thou wilt become enervated; nature, at the critical period when youths arrive at the age of puberty, is working for the development of the organs, and requires all their strength, in order to finish her work. I am well aware that excess of pleasure will produce satiety, but the disgust, perhaps, will come too late, and thou wilt have to lament thy health destroyed, thy memory lost, thy imagination faded, and all thy faculties impaired. Thou wilt become a prey to the most bitter mortifications and repulsing infirmities even in the very flower of youth; and, in the horrors of a premature old age, thou wilt groan to be obliged to support the burden of life. Oh, my friend! Have a care of these evils, which are more common than you are aware of; enjoy the present, but think of the future; enjoy thy youth, but preserve some consolation for thy riper years."

"Nevertheless," added the Baron, "my son, little affected by my paternal representations, listens to me with a thousand signs of impatience, and sits fidgetting on his chair, and interrupts me continually. More alarmed at his danger than sensible of my own injuries, I have borne it tranquilly; I would tell him; the Marchioness de B*** —"

It may be conceived what I suffered during a quarter of an hour; I could no longer constrain my impatience: "Well, father," cried I, "could you not have told me all this another day?"

The Baron was naturally violent: he rose with fury. Fearing the effort of his first transport, I fled into the closet, and shut the door after me.

I found the Marchioness in a very painful situation. Her arms resting on my desk, stopping her ears with her hands, and reading and sobbing over a paper placed before her. I approached my lovely mistress.

"Oh, Madame! How I am distressed on your account!" The Marchioness looked at me in a wild manner. "Cruel child! What faults hast thou made me commit!"

"Speak lower."

"But what punishment do I receive!"

"Do pray speak lower."

"Thy father; thy unworthy father; he dares—"

"My dear Madame, will you expose yourself?"

"But thou art a hundred times more cruel than he is. Here, look at this unfortunate writing! Behold these perfidious characters! My tears have effaced them!" (She showed me the letter commenced for Sophia.

"Faublas," cried the Baron, "open the door; you are not alone in this closet."

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur."

"I hear someone speak; open the door."

"I cannot, father."

"I will have it open; do not suffer me to call the servants."

"The Marchioness rose briskly: "Faublas, tell him that you are with one of your friends, who wishes to go out."

"To go out!"

"Oh, yes!" She replied in despair; "whatever shame there is in. going out, there will not be less in remaining."

"I am with one of my friends, father, who wishes to go out"

"With one of your friends?"

"Yes, father."

"And why did you not tell me sooner that you had someone in the closet? Open it, open it; fear nothing; I am tranquil; your friend can go."

"Conduct me," said the Marchioness. She covered her face with her hands: I opened the door, which led to the stairs. My father, astonished at the precautions the unknown took to conceal himself, threw himself in our way, and said to my unfortunate friend: "Monsieur, I do not ask you who you are, but let me at least have the pleasure of seeing you."

"I conjure you father, not to require it."

"What means this mystery then?" interrupted the Baron. "Who is this young man, who conceals himself with you, and who fears to show his face? I must know immediately."

"I will tell you, father, I give you my word of honour, I will tell you."

"No, no, the gentleman shall not go out until I know."

The Marchioness threw herself on a chair, keeping her face still covered with her hands: "You have, Monsieur, a right over your son, but, I believe, not over me."

The Baron, hearing the soft sound of a feminine voice, at length suspected the truth: "What, he cried, can it be? Oh! How sorry I am; how I regret!—You ought, my son, to feel that your father, anxious to restore you to your duty, has dropped some expressions concerning the Marchioness de B***, which are too strong, and which the Baron de Faublas disavows. See your friend down, my son."

As soon as we were on the staircase, the Marchioness gave free course to her tears. "How cruelly I am punished for my imprudence," she said. I was endeavouring to console her.

"Leave me! Leave me! Your barbarous father is less cruel than you."

We reached the vestibule. I ordered them instantly to get a hackney coach; and while waiting for it, I made the Marchioness step into the porter's lodge. We had not been there a moment, when a man, looking into the porter's window, which was half open, asked if the Baron was at home. The marchioness concealed her face with her hands, and I stood before her to hide her with my body; but all this was not done soon enough. M. du Portail (for it was him) had time to cast a glance at the Marchioness.

"The Baron is in my room; if you will take the trouble to go up, I will join you in a moment."

"Yes, yes," replied M. du Portail, smiling.

They came to tell us that the coach was at the door. The Marchioness got in immediately; I wished to sit by her for a moment: "No, no, Monsieur, I will not suffer it."

The grief with which I perceived her heart was oppressed, affected mine. Some tears escaped me, and fell upon her hand, which I held within my own, and which she did not withdraw: "Ah! You think that you are near Sophia!"

I still wished to get into the coach; she withdrew her hand, and repulsed me. "If, Monsieur, in spite of the discourses of your father, you have still any esteem for me, I beg you will get down and leave me."

"Alas! Shall I then see you no more?"

She replied: "No more," but her tears began to flow in great abundance.

"My dear mamma, when shall I see you again? In what place will you permit me—"

"Ungrateful wretch! I am too sure you do not love, but you ought to pity me at least. Leave me. Go up stairs to the Baron, who expects you." She told the coachman to drive her to Madame Le Clerq's, the milliner, in **** street. I was compelled to leave her.

I found M. du Portail on the staircase, waiting for me: "Ah! My good friend," he said, "if I am as good a physiognomist as the Marquis de B***, this pretty youth who just left you is his beautiful half. But what is the matter with you? You have been crying?" I knew not where M. de Person had stuck himself, but we saw him all at once behind us. He said to me, in a tone sufficiently loud: "I was sure, Monsieur, that all this would terminate badly: you paid no attention to my advice."

"Thy advice! Do me the favour, Monsieur, to—"

"Indeed, he is precisely the schoolmaster of Fontaine: I get into the dirt, and he scolds me!"

"But what is this all about?" replied M. du Portail.

"Go up; go up into my room, and you will know all; my father is giving me a lecture."

On entering, M. du Portail asked my father what was the matter.

"What is the matter?" replied my father."

"I interrupted him: stop, M. du Portail; Madame de B*** was in this closet, my father entered here, he sat down there, and made some observations to me which were undoubtedly very just, and very paternal, but the Marchioness heard all, and my

father treated her—ah, you have no idea! I, for fear of exposing an amiable woman, did not explain myself; but my father knows the profound respect I have for him; I have never swerved from it. Well, he was witness how I suffered; that I was racked with impatience; that I could not attend to him; he did not perceive, Monsieur, that there was a something uncommon about me; he continued his discourse; and would not guess at anything!"

"Young man," replied the Baron, "your excuse is in your tears, I pardon the reproaches you make me, on acount of the grief with which you appear to be oppressed; but the more you seem to love the Marchioness."

"My father—"

"Monsieur, Madame de B*** is no longer there, why then interrupt me? The more you seem to love the Marchioness, the more I am displeased with you. If your heart is preoccupied with this passion, it is in cold blood that you have meditated the ruin of a virtuous girl, of a respectable child."

"Of Sophia!"Between Sophia and me, father, there is no other seducer than love."

"You do not love the Marchioness, then?"

"Father!"

"Are you, or are you not, seriously attached to Madame de B***? You know I must have some care about it, but what concerns me most is, that my son should not be worthy of me."

"Ah, Baron!" interrupted M. du Portail.

"I say nothing too strong, my friend: I shall tell you things which will astonish you. I went to the convent this morning; I found Adelaide in tears; my daughter, my dear daughter, whose amiable candour you so well know, informed me her good friend was sick, and that her brother was very slow in bringing the infallible remedy he had promised for Sophia. I pressed her to explain herself to me; she gave me a most exact account of the symptoms and effects of this malady, which you can guess, and which my son knows that he has caused, has been pleased to nourish, and would willingly augment. My son abuses his natural gifts to seduce a too susceptible girl; he obtains an absolute empire over her mind; and prepares, by degrees, her dishonour."

"Her dishonour! The dishonour of Sophia!"

"Yes, young madman; I know the passions."

"If you know them, father, you know that you make my heart bleed."

"Moderate this impetuosity, my son, it only offends me. Yes, I know the passions; yes, this child, which you respect to-day, tomorrow, perhaps, you will dishonour, if she has the weakeness to consent."

He addressed himself to M. du Portail. "The recipe which my son destines for his pretty cousin will be enclosed in a paper, carefully sealed, and which Madame Munich must not see! You understand, my friend? Thus, all is ready; the correspondence will make the first impression; Sophia, poor Sophia! Already seduced through the eyes, will presently be so through the heart. She was deceived by a fine countenance, the common sign of a good heart, she is going to be still further deceived by the no less perfidious charms of a borrowed eloquence; he will, in his

studied letters, affect the language of feeling: Sophia, attacked on all sides at once, will fall, without defence, into the snares he will spread for her. And, nevertheless, her seducer is not seventeen! At an age still so tender, he evinces the most shocking propensities, he employs the odious talents of those men, who, as cowardly as depraved, shrink not from carrying discord and desolation into the bosom of families; who experience a barbarous pleasure in listening to the bewailings of unfortunate beauty; contemplating, with self-applause, the opprobrium and the anxieties of degrading innocence. This is the result of those natural gifts which I have been pleased to see him possess, and which, perhaps, I was secretly proud of; this is the manner in which the great expectations I had entertained of him have been realised!"

"I assure you, father, that I adore Sophia."

The Baron, without listening to me, and still adedressing himself to M. du Portail: "And who do you think was to convey these insidious letters? To whom did he intend to confide the execution of his detestable projects? To the most pure and unsuspecting virtue, to my daughter, and his sister, the innocent Adelaide!"

"Do not condemn me, father, without hearing me. Do you doubt my sentiments regarding Sophia? I am ready to marry her if you will deign to unite us."

"And is it thus that you would dispose of Sophia and yourself? Do the relations of Mademoiselle de Pontis know you? Are they known to you? Do you know if the marriage would be agreeable to them? Do you know if it would be agreeable to me? Do you think I would marry you at your age? You have scarcely left childhood, and you aspire to the honour of being the father of a family!"

"Yes I and I feel that it is as easy for you to consent to my marriage, as it is impossible for me to renounce my love for Sophia."

"You will renounce it, nevertheless: I forbid you to go to the convent without me, or without my express permission; and I declare, that if you do not change your conduct I will put you in a place of confinement."

"Ah, father! If instead of marrying the young persons who are attached to each other, they are put into prison! I shall not be in the world, and you will be in prison."

The Baron either did not, or pretended not to hear me answer. He went out; I detained M. du Portail, who was going to follow him; I begged him to be a mediator between my father and me; and, above all, to prevail on the Baron to revoke his cruel order which forbade me to visit the convent.

He observed, that the precautions which my father had taken were very reasonable.

"Reasonable! That is the way all those talk who are indifferent! Reason is their watchword! When you, Monsieur, adored Lodoiska, when the unjust Pulauski deprived you of the happiness of seeing her, you did not find his precautions very reasonable."

"But, my young friend, consider the difference."

"There is none, Monsieur; there is none: in France, as in Poland, a lover, who is worthy of the name, neither sees, feels, or breathes, but in the object of his love; the greatest evil he can imagine, is that of being separated from the idol of his affections. The precautions of my father appear to you reasonable; to me they seem cruel, and I shall do everything in my power to render them abortive. Sophia shall know my love;

she shall know it, in spite of my father; she will be glad of it; and in spite of him, in spite of you, and all the world, we will finish by being married. I declare this to you, Monsieur, and you can tell the Baron."

"I shall do no such thing, my friend; I will not irritate your father, nor would I mortify yourself. At present, your notions are too arbitrary; I will leave you to reflect seriously about it, and I have no doubt you will be more reasonable tomorrow."

"Reasonable!

"Yes, reasonable!

"I expected as much!"

I remained alone, and thought of nothing but the means of eluding the vigilance of the Baron's precautions, or of rendering them nugatory. Should some austere censor blame my ungovernable disposition, I pity him; and tell him, if his first or most cherished mistress never caused him to commit faults, it was because his love for her was not very strong.

VI.

Upon more mature reflection, I found that my situation, however painful, was not desperate. Rosambert, having compassion for the troubles of his friend, would no doubt assist me; Jasmin was entirely devoted to me, and I thought I knew enough of my little tutor to be certain that, by the aid of gold, I could do as I pleased with him. M. du Portail appeared desirous of remaining neuter, therefore I had only to combat with my father, who was much occupied with his pretty opera girl, and went out every evening, so that he could not be always watcheing me. These, then, are the serious reflections I made, though they were not such as M. du Portail recommended.

Nevertheless, it would not do for me openly to oppose the Baron, in the first instance; I ought, in prudence, to avoid going to the convent for some time; but how was I to get a letter to Sophia? This letter was so important and so necessary! Who would take it to my pretty cousin? I could think of no expedient to relieve me from this embarrassment. It never occurred to me what a resource I had in the friendship of Adelaide.

An old lady brought me a letter, which I opened immediately; it was signed "De Faublas." 'Twas from my dear sister! I kissed the writing, and read:

> My DEAR BROTHER,
> "I am greatly afraid that I have recently committed an indiscretion; I informed my father that you had promised me a remedy which would cure my dear friend; he was angry; he said it was poison that you would prepare for Sophia. Poison! Indeed, brother, I did not believe it, although it was the Baron who accused you.
> I related everything to my good friend, who was waiting impatiently for the recipe in question. "Adelaide," said she, "you have done wrong to mention it to the Baron. This remedy of your brother's may not, perhaps, be very good, but we might, at least, have seen what it was." Therefore, my dear brother, make yourself easy; she cannot believe, any more than myself, that you intended to poison her. As I see her dying with the desire to have this recipe, I advised her to send and request it. She again repeated those words with which I have already been so mortified: "Adelaide! Adelaide! Oh, how happy you are!" Nevertheless I am sure she will be very happy to have this recipe. Send it me immeditely, my brother, I will give it to her; and I will not mention it to anyone. Give the man who brings this letter three livres; she tells me she never tattles when they give her half-a-crown.
> Your sister, etc.,
> ADELAIDE DE FAUBLAS.
>
> P.S. Endeavour to come and see me.

Transported with joy, I went to the old woman. Here are six francs for you, Madame, because I will trouble you with an answer, which I beg you will wait for.

I went into my closet and sat down at my desk. The letter I had began for Sophia was before me; it was still wet with tears. Alas! It was the Marchioness that shed them! What a conversation she overheard! What a letter has she read! Poor Viscomte de Florville! What mortification my father and myself must have given you! In saying this, I kissed the paper over which the Marchioness had wept so much; and the feeling I then experienced, if less intense than that of love, was, nevertheless, more tender than pity.

I came to myself, and I thought of Sophia. The paper, stained and rendered illegible in several places, was not fit to send. I thought of beginning again the letter which I had written a third time. And why begin it again? At the name, the bare name

of my pretty cousin, the tears came into my eyes; I sobbed as I wrote! Would Sophia know that two persons had wept over the same paper? Could even I distinguish between the mingled tears, those of the Marchioness, from what belonged to myself? These reflections determined me not to commence again, but to continue what I had written:

> Sophia, I exist but for thee! Nevertheless, thou complainest, and accusest me of ingratitude and cruelty! Dost thou think, canst thou believe, that there exists in the world a woman that can be compared with thee?—a woman that one can love who knows Sophia?
> Oh, my pretty cousin, with what transport have I received the news of thy tenderness for me! But what grief have I felt on hearing that thy days are clouded with corroding cares, thy growing charms impaired, and thy life enedangered! Thy life! Ah, Sophia! If Faublas loses thee, he will follow thee to the tomb!
> My sister, who has disclosed to me, without thy consent, the most secret sentiment of thy soul, my sister has announced to me on thy part an eternal separation. She tells me that thou wilt not see me again. If this be true, Sophia, my life, which is become insupportable, will not last me long; and thyself—thyself!
> But let us indulge in more pleasant ideas; we shall certainly be more happy hereafter. Let me be permitted to hope that my pretty cousin will shortly be my wife, and that when united we shall not cease to be lovers.
> I am, with as much respect as love,
> Thy young cousin,
> THE CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS."

This letter being sealed, it was necessary that I should write another.

> My DEAR ADELAIDE.
> You have done well to write to me, for I am deprived of the happiness of seeing you. The Baron has forbidden me to go out; he has quarrelled with me, and I must not speak to him of Sophia.
> Let my pretty cousin have the enclosed letter as soon as possible; deliver it to her when alone, and, above all, be sure you tell no one of it.
> Adieu, my dear sister, etc."

I put these two letters under one envelope, and confided them to the discretion of the old woman.

From that evening, I laboured to form the grand confederation which I had meditated. My father went out. I enquired for the Abbé Person; he also was gone out. It was rather late when he came home, and entered my apartment with an air of triumph: "You heard, Monsieur, what your father said this morning: he has given me an absolute power over you."

"You see, Monsieur Person, that I am delighted at it. I am too happy in having a governor like you, a governor so complaisant, so honest, and, above all so indulgent."

"I knew, Monsieur, you would one day do me justice."

"A governor full of politeness and urbanity."

"You flatter me, Monsieur."

"A governor who feels that a youth of sixteen cannot be as reasonable as a man of thirty-five."

"Most assuredly."

"A governor who knows the human heart."

"That is true."

"And who excuses in his pupil a tender passion which he is susceptible of himself."

"I do not comprehend."

"Sit down, Monsieur Person; we must now discourse together upon a very delicate subject, which deserves your whole attention. Among the numerous brilliant qualities which are conspicuous in you, and of which I could make a long enumeration, if I did not fear to wound your modesty; among so many qualities, I must tell you frankly, that you want one, which some consider very important, but which I look upon as useless; I mean the art of drawing—"

"But, Monsieur—"

"I do not say this to mortify you. I am persuaded you do not want learning; but we see every day persons as unfortunate as clever, who teach very badly what they know very well. You are in this predicament, Monsieur Person, and on this point, to use the words of the celebrated Cardinal de Retz, in speaking of the great Condé, you do not make the most of your abilities."

"Oh, Monsieur, the quotation—is not quite correct; I know it well. You are not a conqueror; you have no armies to conduct. But to form the heart of a youth, to study his propensities, in order to oppose or direct them; to smother or to modify his passions, when one cannot eradicate them; to polish his awkward manners, and instruct his uncultivated mind; is that, think you, an easy task?"

"Most assuredly it is not."

"I am aware that my profession presents great difficulties."

"Well, Monsieur, the parents do not know that. They seek a tutor who possesses every talent and every virtue; and they think they have found him. He is a man whom they pay, and it is a god that they require! But let us come to what concerns ourselves: I have also remarked, Monsieur Person, that your attachment to all who bear the name of Faublas has carried you too far."

"How?"

"Yes; this extreme affection which you bear towards the family in general, has not been equally apportioned to each of its members."

"I do not understand."

"You have a certain predilection for my sister; the Baron will call it love. The difficulty you experience in teaching, he will call incapacity. What I tell you is fact: were I to inform the Baron of these little details, you would not remain here four-and-twenty hours. That would be a great misfortune for me, Monsieur Person, and a still greater for yourself. I am well aware that they would quickly procure me another tutor, but, as we said just now, a perfect man is not to be found. Suppose a new tutor arrives, who is found more capable of instructing me than yourself; at first, he will give me, with great pains, lessons which I shall receive with inquietude, and wish the books at the devil. Nevertheless, my new mentor will participate in the weakness of humanity; he will have faults or passions, which I shall speedily discover, because I shall be interested in studying them. Prompted by similar motives, he will develop my

propensities with the same discernment. In the course of a week we shall be observed like two friends, equally interested in pleasing each other. In the meantime, Monsieur Person, you will not, perhaps, find employ. I know a great many little Abbés, who have less merit than yourself, who obtain pupils, and even keep them; but I also know as many others who vegetate without occupation. You, perhaps, may be reduced to recommence the rudiments and the grammar with the spoiled children of a churchwarden, of a sheriff, or some such beings, who may be too proud to send their sons to the university. And be on your guard; for people of business, who know how to calculate, are always desirous of making their interest and their vanity agree, they will tell you that the whole of Restaut is not worth a single page of Barrême<6>; and if you teach your young citizen but to speak their own language; if you are unacquainted with the science of figures; the teacher of arithmetic will be much better paid than yourself. I would spare you these disagreeables, Monsieur. I feel that it would be hard for the governor of a nobleman's son to become tutor in the family of a cook. I do not pretend to change your condition, but to render it better: instead of diminishing your emoluments, I am about to augment them."

"I am very sensible, sir, I have always been right when I spoke of the qualities of your heart."

"Oh! The qualities of the heart! Yes, my dear governor, I have a very good heart, very feeling. You know that I adore Sophia! My father would prevent me from seeing her."

"But, all things considered, is he wrong in so doing?"

"How; Monsieur, if he is wrong? You ask me if he is wrong; but you have not understood what I said."

"Not very well."

"I will explain myself clearly. If you oppose me, I shall inform the Baron of all that I know concerning you; they will dismiss you, and give me a new governor. If you are inclined to serve me—You know, Monsieur Person, what sum the Baron allows me for pocket money; I shall divide with you, and here is some on account." (I presented him with six Louis d'or.)

"Money, Monsieur! Do you take me for a valet then?"

"Do not be angry; I did not mean to offend you; I thought—" (I put the money back into my purse.)

"I have a great friendship for you, Monsieur, but I am not interested. You are, then, I perceive, much attached to Mademoiselle de Pontis."

"More than I can describe to you."

"And what would you that I should do in this affair?"

"I only wish that you would take as much pains in diverting the attention of the Baron as you have taken in tormenting me."

"Your views, Monsieur, with regard to Mademoiselle de Pontis, are, I presume, honourable, legitimate?"

"I should be a monster if I had any others! Upon the word of a gentleman, Sophia shall be my wife."

"In that case, I see no inconvenience.

"There is none!"

"I see none. And yet for a thing so simple, Monsieur proposes to give me money!"

"I hope you will excuse me."

"I could not think of taking money; some presents will suffice. I lived two years with M. L***; he gave me, from time to time, some trinkets, jewels, etc.; and his children did the same on their part. All that was very well. A present is acceptable."

"And now, Monsieur Person, we understand each other, I shall depend upon you."

"Most assuredly."

"Listen then, my dear governor; I have an observation to make. If what you feel towards Adelaide is love, do not think that I can approve it. That with which I burn for Sophia is innocent and pure as herself. That which you feel for my sister—Be cautious of it, Monsieur Person! I am well convinced that the virtue of Adelaide will defend her against the enterprises of a seducer; but the attempt would, of itself, be an affront; an affront which the blood of the offender would scarcely expiate."

"Make yourself easy, Monsieur."

"I am so. You may depend upon me, Monsieur."

"My dear governor, I shall confide in you."

The Abbé went out; he came back to tell me that in the afternoon he had been to the conevent, by desire of the Baron.

"To the convent for what?"

"Expressly to forbid Mademoiselle Adelaide to come to the conversation room, when you came by yourself to see her."

"You have seen Adelaide?"

"Yes, Monsieur.

"Did she say nothing to you?"

"She was much hurt at this prohibition."

"Nothing more?"

"Not a word."

"And Sophia? Did you enquire after her health?"

"Much better since noon."

"And at what hour were you at the convent?

"About five o'clock."

"Good, very good." (The Abbé retired.)

Much better since noon: that was near about the time she received my letter. Sophia, my dear Sophia! Why dost thou not hasten to reply to me! Adelaide! Thou shouldst be happy, thy dear friend is already cured! And in the transport of joy, which the news of this speedy cure had given me, I made such leaps, and cut such capers,

that the noise brought Jasmin to my room. I had finished a sublime exclamation, when he opened the door: "I beg your pardon, Monsieur, but I heard a great confusion, and was alarmed."

"Go, Jasmin, immediately to the Count de Rosambert, and beg him to call on me tomorrow morning without fail."

Rosambert came as I wished. Of all the events of the preceding day, I only informed him of those which related to Sophia. He reminded me with a smile, that it was not the pretty cousin that was in my closet. I wished to elude this subject; the Count pressed me so closely, and in so lively a manner, that I was obliged to confess all.

"This Marchioness de B*** is a very astonishing woman," he said. "No one knows better than her, how to commence an intrigue agreeably, to carry it on with spirit, to hasten its consummation, which instead of displeasing her, seems necessary to her constitution. No one knows better than her the grand art of retaining a happy lover, and of supplanting a dangerous rival; or when that is impossible, at least to hold the balance uncertain. This woman knows how to vary the pleasures of love in such a manner, that with her, an amour of six months, is still a new amour. An amour of six months at court! You will say it must be decrepit with age; but no, the Marchioness gives it the freshness of youth; though she has quitted me abruptly, I will do her justice; she is not volatile: I think I have even discovered in her some flashes of sensibility. At bottom it is possible that she may have a tender heart. Her genius for intrigue is developed at court in every possible manner. Perhaps if she had been born a simple citizen, instead of a lady of quality, she might have been a steady, sensible woman. I repeat it to you, that she is not what they call volatile. I have had her for six months, I might perhaps have kept her three months longer; but your disguise has deranged everything. To instruct a novice: to correct a puppy, (pointing to himself and laughing;) to dupe an almost jealous husband so agreeably: to surmount all kinds of obstacles:—she could not resist the execution of things so flattering to her turn of mind. Yes! Although you have a striking countenance, I would wager that it was the difficulty of the enterprise, more than all, which determined Madame de B***. Besides the Marchioness has taken the pains not to follow a beaten track. To take this week with enthusiasm, a lover, who is received the next with indifference; to form and break engagements with equal facility, is the eternal occupation of our ladies of quality! The person changes, but not the conduct of the intrigue: they say, they do unceasingly the same things: there is always a declaration to receive, an avowal to make, some letters to write, two or three tête-à-têtes to arrange, and a rupture to be consummated. This is their dull monotonous circle. The Marchioness, on the contrary, is not displeased if the same cavalier continues, provided that the intrigue is varied in its conduct. It is not by the number of lovers that she is gratified, but by the singularity of her adventures. A scene does not appear piquant to her, except when it is uncommon, and she will venture anything to bring it about; she prides herself in braving dangers, and combatting with disagreeable events. Thus the idea of her own power sometimes carries her too far. Sometimes it happens that all her address will not shield her from the consequences of her rash enterprises. In her adventures with us, for instance, what mortifying scenes she underwent: In the first, it was I who tormented her, and in conscience I owed it her. Yesterday she came here to seek a second; and chance perhaps has a third ready for her. But what matters it. The Marchioness, always superior to little mortifications, and accustomed to treat the most

disagreeable events with indifference, will derive even from her misfortunes an advantage over her enemies, over her rival, over you."

"Over her rival! Ah! Rosambert, Sophia will always be preferred! But what say you of my pretty cousin, who has not answered my letter?"

"Do you think that she has slept? Do you not recollect that it is eight days since she has closed her eyes? Your letter has been sweetly cradled, but let it enjoy its happiness. Do you know with what we ought to occupy ourselves?"

"No."

"We must go and buy some presents for the dear governor. He told you that a present would be acceptable."

"That is true indeed; but if I go out, and a letter should come from Sophia in the meantime?"

"They can make the old woman who brings it wait for you."

"Well, let us go quickly then."

"You have forgot your hat."

"You are right," I replied, with an air of distraction, and went to sit down. Rosambert took me by the arm: "What the devil are you about? What are you dreaming of?" I said.

"I was thinking of the poor Viscount de Florville"

"How the Marchioness must be affected! Do you think, Rosambert, that she will write to me. Must we talk of the Marchioness at present?"

"Yes, my friend"

"Do not laugh, but answer me."

"Well then, my dear Faublas, I think she will not write to you."

"Do you think so."

"It is very probable. The Marchioness has already reflected on your situation and her own. As a well-informed woman, she has, I doubt not, already considered that you could not dispense with coming to her; she will not go to you; she expects you; be sure that she expects you."

I rang for Jasmin, and said, "Thou knowest the residence of the Marchioness de B***, and thou knowest Justine: put on the dress of a citizen, go and ask for Justine, tell her you come from me, to enquire after the health of the Marchioness."

Rosambert laughed with all his might, and said: "Ah! Do you think it will be impolite to make her wait too long? But answer me, do you not expect a letter from Sophia?"

"Without doubt. Jasmin, we are only stepping out for a few minutes; thou wilt not go until we return. Be discreet, for I put great confidence in thee: we are at war; the enemy is yonder, my friend, on the watch!"

"Oh! Monsieur, in all my places, I have always taken the side of the children against their fathers."

"That's right, my friend; rest assured that I shall recompense thee when I am married to her."

"Married to Madame the Marchioness!"

Rosambert laughed: "Come, come, my friend," he said, "you forget yourself."

I bought a very fine ring; but when it was time for us to return, I could not get Rosamhert from the shop, he was so much attracted with the beauty of the jewelry.

When I returned, Jasmin gave me a letter. The old woman merely wished to sit down, because they had forbidden her to wait for an answer.

One may judge my grief on reading what follows:

> MONSIEUR,
> If I had not seen my name repeated twenty times in your letter, I should not have thought it addressed to myself. How could I imagine that some words which escaped me without any meaning, and caught up by chance by my dear friend, could be interpreted by her brother in so astonishing a manner. I could not have conceived, that my young cousin, who always called me his friend, would have treated me so injuriously.
> Who told you that I loved you Monsieur? Adelaide? She knows nothing of it. Who told you that the words, *cruel—ungrateful—I will never see him again*, were addressed to you? Who told you that I was dying with mortification, because you did not love me? If that had been the case, no one but myself could have known it; and should I have told it, Monsieur?
> You write with an air of great confidence! You love someone, and you tell me you love me, because you think that I love you! You think then to do me a favour when you demand my heart and my hand! If I am so unhappy, Monsieur, as only to inspire compassion, I shall at least have prudence enough not to love, or discretion enough to conceal it; and certainly the lover of another, shall never be mine.
> At present, it is to you and for you that I say those words: "I will never see you again." My family is as good as yours, Monsieur, and you ought to know enough of me, not to push the resentment, which the outrage you have so fearlessly done me, deserves.

This fatal letter was not signed. The pain it gave me can more easily be imagined than described. Sophia loves me no more! Sophia will see me no more! I fell into a profound reverie, from which I was only recovered by a torrent of tears. If Rosambert had been with me, he would at least have assisted me with his advice, and have given me some consolation.

I rose abruptly, wiped my eyes, and flew to the jeweller's. The lady who had served us was no longer at the counter, and Rosambert was gone. I appeared so hurt at the disappointment, that a girl in the shop had compassion for me. She said, if I would step to the Cafe de la Regence, which she showed me at a little distance, she would go and tell the Count, who was not far off, and would not fail to be with me in half an hour, or a little more.

I entered this "Regency Coffee-House." I could see only gentlemen profoundly occupied at the game of chess. Alas, they were less reserved, less thoughtful and less gloomy than myself. I sat down immediately near to a table, but the agitation I felt, did not permit me to remain in one place; presently also one of the chess players, raising his voice, lifting up his head and rubbing his hands, said in an exulting tone: "Check to the King." "Great gods," cried the other, "the queen is forced! The game is lost!"

"Yes, yes, Monsieur, rub your hands! You think yourself a Turenne!<7> Do you know to whom you are indebted for this fine stroke." (He looked round at me,) "to that gentleman, yes, to that gentleman. Curse these love-sick blades!"

Astonished at the lively manner in which they apostrophised me, I observed to the disconetented player, that I did not comprehend him.

"You do not understand!"

"Look here! See that check-mate!"

"Well! Monsieur, and what is the matter with that check?"

"How! What is the matter! For this hour past, Monsieur, you have been turning about me: and 'My dear Sophia,' it was one time, 'My pretty cousin,' another. I could not help hearing this nonsense, and made the blunders of a learner. When people are in love, Monsieur, they do not come to the Cafe de la Regence." (I was going to reply, but he continued with violence) "a check-mate! I ought to have covered my king; there was no other means of saving him! He profited by the distraction which Monsieur occasioned! A wretched stroke of a novice! A man like me!" (He again looked towards me.) Once for all, Monsieur, remember that all the cousins in the world are not worth the queen which he forced from me! There is no resource! The devil take the jilt and her affected lover!"

Of all the exclamations the last was that which piqued me the most. Carried away by my vivacity, I was rushing hastily to the speaker, and ran against a chess player at an adjoining table; my buttons caught hold of him and he fell, and the pieces rolled on all sides. Here then were two new adversaries for me. One said to me, "Monsieur should take care what he does sometimes." The other cried out; "Monsieur, you have balked me of a game."

"You! You have lost, interrupted his adversary. I had gained, Monsieur. That game! I could have played it against Verdoni!"

"And I against Philidor!"<8>

"Well, messieurs, do not break my head, I will pay your loss.

"Pay it! You are not rich enough."

"What do you play for, then?"

"Honour! Yes, Monsieur, honour. I am come post expressly to take up the challenge of Monsieur—of Monsieur, who thinks he has no equal!"

"If it had not been for you, I should have given him a lesson!"

"A lesson! Why you may think yourself very happy that this gentleman's blunder has saved you; I had forced the queen eighteen times!"

"And you did not even the eleventh. In less than ten you were check-mate. It nevertheless, you, Monsieur, who are the cause of my discomfiture—learn, Monsieur, that in the Café de la Regence, one ought not to run." Then another player rose: "Gentlemen, gentlemen, in the Cafe de la Regence, they ought not to cry out, they ought not to talk. What a noise you are making."

There were others present, who also joined in the quarrel; and, as I was the author of all the evil, each of them grumbled at me in his turn; I could no longer tell

who to reply to, when Rosambert entered; he had much trouble to get me away; we retired to the Palais Royal.

I took Rosambert aside, and showed him Sophia's letter.

"And is this what you afflict yourself about?" he said, after having read it: "Why, you ought to kiss that letter a hundred times!"

"Ah, Rosambert! This is not a time to joke."

"I do not joke, my friend; you are adored!"

"But you have not read it then?"

"I have read it, and I repeat to you that you are adored."

"We are not comfortable here, Rosambert, come home with me."

On the road, the Count said: "Sophia discontinued her visits to the conversation-room from the epoch of your connection with Madame de B***. It was from this period also that her reveries commenced. It was from that time that she had what your sister calls a fever. She desires the recipe; she asked for it indirectly; and more than all this, the remedy has had the most excellent effect; since yesterday, at noon, Mademoiselle de Pontis has become better; we must then conclude, from all this, that in the afternoon of yesterday something extraordinary took place at the convent. There is no doubt, my friend, that this letter is the effect of a trick of the Baron, of the liveliness of your sister, or the indiscretion of M. Person. The tone of this letter proves that you are loved; she has even suffered a tacit avowal to escape her; she has made you terrible reproaches. You thought that she loved you. She cannot bear the idea; but in no part of her letter does she say that she loves you not."

All that Rosambert had said appeared to me very reasonable; nevertheless, my heart was oppressed; the hopes and fears of lovers are equally foolish.

"Are you aware," said the Count, "that this sweet letter of hers is very well framed? Oh! Thy pretty cousin will not have written to you ten times before you will find her style entirely formed!"

"You are rather cruel with your gaiety, Rosambert!

Jasmin arrived at the same time as ourselves. He told me he came from the house of the Marchioness.

"Well!"

"I have spoken with Justine, Monsieur; she made me wait a long time, at last she came to tell me that Madame was very sensible of your attention, that she felt very ill on returning home yesterday, and the doctor had found her a little feverish this morning."

"There, Rosambert, see how unfortunate I am. They have both a fever at the same time! She whom I adore will see me no more!

"And I shall not see to-day the one who amuses me," said the Count, mimicking me: "Poor young man! How I pity him! Be comforted, my dear Faublas; you alone are better capable of curing the ills you have caused than all the doctors of the faculty. But although the malady of thy pretty cousin is something like that of the amiable Marchioness, I foresee, nevertheless, that there will be some difference in the treatment; you will look in the eyes of the pretty damsel to see if there are not some

remains of emotion; you will take her by the hand, and feel her pulse, which may be rather high; perhaps it may be necessary to examine whether her mouth has lost any of its freshness. But for the fine lady; oh! The examination will be longer and more serious! You will be obliged to consider her more closely and more generally from the head to the feet! My friend. I even think the method of M. Mesmer<9>—yes, chevalier, yes, a little magnetism!"

"For God's sake drop your pleasantry, Rosambert, and talk to me of Sophia. Let us endeavour, in the first place, to ascertain the value of this cruel letter; and then let us consider by what means I can obtain an interview and an explanation with my pretty cousin."

"With all my heart, my dear Faublas; let us commence by calling the Abbé Person."

My father entered as Rosambert rang the bell. He replied coldly to the salutations of the Count, and announced to me, in a very abrupt manner, that I must go out with him. "The horses are to," he added; and, (turning to Rosambert) "excuse me, sir, but I am pressed for time."

"Tomorrow morning, early," said the Count to me as he left us. I followed the Baron with much dissatisfaction.

He conducted me to M. du Portail's. Lovinski expected me so that he might finish the recital of the most secret adventures of his life; and for fear the Marquis de B***, or anyone else, should again interrupt us, he ordered himself to be refused to everybody. As soon as we had dined, he continued with the narrative of his misfortunes.

VII.

M. du Portail continued with the narrative of his misfortunes.

"You must, my dear Faublas, be struck with horror at my situation. The fire became more violent, was now communicating with the chamber in which we were shut up, and already the flames had reached the foot of Lodoiska's tower. I heard the deep groans of Lodoiska, which were answered by my furious cries. Boleslas ran about our prison like a madman; he howled most frightfully, and endeavoured to break the door with his hands and feet; and I, leaning out of the window, shook the bars with all my might, but could not move them.

"Those who had mounted, descended all at once with precipitation, and we heard the gates open. Dourlinski himself demanded quarter; the victors threw themselves into the building, although in flames: attracted by our cries, they came and broke open our door with the blows of an axe. I recognised them to be Tartars, by their costume and their arms. Their chief arrived, and in him I beheld Titsikan.

"'Ah!' he said, 'it is my brave man!'

"I threw myself at his feet; 'Titsikan! Lodoiska! A woman! The most beautiful of women, is in that tower! She will be burnt alive.'

"The Tartar said a word to his soldiers, they flew to the tower, I flew with them, and Boleslas followed. They stormed the doors: beside an old pillar, we discovered a winding staircase, filled with thick smoke. The Tartars were alarmed at it, and stopped. I was determined to mount.

"'Alas! What are you going to do?' said Boleslas.

"'To live or die with Lodoiska,' cried I.

"'To live or die with my master!' replied my generous servant.

"I darted up, and he rushed after me. We ascended about forty steps, at the risk of being suffocated. By the glimmering of the flames we discovered Lodoiska in a corner of her prison. She groaned out feebly with her dying voice: 'Who comes to me? she said.'

"'It is Lovinski! It is thy lover!'

"Her joy gave her strength; she rose up, and flew into my arms: we carried her, and descended some steps: a thicker vapour of smoke than we had as yet encountered came up the staircase, and compelled us to remount with precipitation; at that moment, a part of the tower gave way: Boleslas uttered a terrible cry, and Lodoiska fainted. That which would have destroyed us, Faublas, was the means of saving us; the fire, which had previously been confined, now reached the exterior, and spread rapidly on every side, but the smoke was dissipated. Loaded with our precious burden, Boleslas and myself descended instantly. I do not exaggerate, my friend, when I tell you, that each step tottered under our feet, for the walls were burning! At length we arrived at the door of the tower; Titsikan, trembling for us, had ran there: 'Well done, brave men,' he said on seeing us appear. I laid Lodoiska at his feet, and fell insensible by her side.

"I remained in this state nearly an hour. They were alarmed for my life, and Boleslas wept. I recovered myself at the voice of Lodoiska, who, having come to herself, hailed me as her liberator. Everything was changed throughout the castle; the

tower had entirely fallen; the Tartars had arrested the progress of the flames, and had pulled down one part of the building in order to save the other; after which they conveyed us into a large hall, where we found Titsikan himself, with some of his soldiers. The rest, who had been occupied in plunder, brought to their chief the gold, silver, jewels, plate, and all the valuable effects which the flames had spared. Close by was Dourlinski, loaded with fetters, who groaned as he looked on the heap of riches which they had pillaged from him. Rage, terror, despair, and everything which can tear the heart of a wicked man, might be read in his wandering eyes. He stamped on the ground with wrath, raised his clenched fists to his forehead, poured forth the most horrid blasphemies, and reproached heaven for its just vengeance.

"In the meantime, my fair mistress pressed my hands within her own: 'Alas!' she said, sobbing, 'thou hast saved my life, and thine own is still in danger; and even should we escape death, slavery will be our lot.'

"'No, no, Lodoiska, be assured Titsikan is not my enemy; Titsikan will terminate our grievances.'

"'Without doubt, if I can,' interrupted the Tartar; 'thou speakest well, brave man! Oh! I see thou art not dead, and I am very happy; thou sayest and dost nothing but good things! And there,' he added, pointing to Boleslas, 'is a friend, by whom thou art well seconded.'

"I embraced Boleslas: 'Yes, Titsikan, yes, I have a friend, and he shall always bear that name.'

"The Tartar interrupted me: Tell me, he said, were you not both in a chamber on the ground floor, and she in a tower? Why was that? I would wager that you wags were desirous of bearing away this lass from that booby there, (pointing to Dourlinski:) and you were right; he is a villain, and she is pretty! Let us know: tell me how it is.

I informed Titsikan of my name and that of Lodoiska's father, and of everything which had happened to me up to that period. 'It is for Lodoiska,' I said afterwards, 'to tell what she has suffered from the infamous Dourlinski, since she has been shut up in his castle.'

"'You know,' replied Lodoiska, immediately, 'that my father made me leave Warsaw the very day on which the Diet was opened. He conducted me to the estate of the Palatine de G***, only twenty leagues from the capital, where he returned to assist at the deliberations.'

"'The day that M. de P*** was proclaimed king, Pulauski came and took me from the residence of the Palatine, and brought me here, that I should be more secure from all researches. He charged Dourlinski to keep me with care, and above all, to be careful that Lovinski did not discover my retreat. He left me, he said, to go and gather together the good citizens, and stimulate them to defend their country, and to punish traitors. Alas; these important cares have made him forget his daughter, for I have not seen him since.'

"'Some days after the departure of my father, I began to perceive that the visits of Dourlinski became longer and more frequent; and in a little time, he hardly left the apartment they had assigned me for a prison. He took from me, under some pretence, the only woman my father had left to serve me; and in order, he said, that no one

should know I was with him, he brought me himself what was necessary for my subsistence, and passed the day entirely near me.'

"'You know not, my dear Lovinski, how I suffered from the continual presence of a man who was so odious to me, and whom I suspected of infamous designs. One day he ventured to unfold them to me; I assured him that my hatred would always be the price of his tenderness, and that his unworthy conduct had excited my profound contempt. He answered coldly, that, in time, I should be accustomed to see him, to permit his attentions, and even to desire them. He did not change his general conduct. He came to me in the morning, and did not leave me until the evening. Separated from all that I loved, always under constraint from my tyrant, I had not even the little consolation of delivering myself up to reflections on past happiness. Dourlinski witnessed my uneasiness, and amused himself in augmenting it. Pulauski, he told me, commanded a corps of Poles; Lovinski, having betrayed his country, which he did not love, and a woman that he cared little about, had entered into the Russian service, and it was not doubted but there would shortly be a bloody combat between them. And, finally, that it was very certain nothing could hereafter reconcile my father to Lovinski. Some days after this, he came to announce to me that Pulauski had attacked the Russian camp in the middle of the night, and that in the affray my lover met his death, by wounds received from my father. The monster made me read these details in a kind of public paper, which, without doubt, he had procured to be printed on purpose; and from the barbarous joy which he affected, I thought the news too true. "Implacable tyrant!" cried I, "thou delightest in my tears and my despair! But cease to persecute, or thou presently shall find that the daughter of Pulauski can, even by herself, revenge her injuries."'

"'One evening, when he had quitted me sooner than usual, I heard him open my door gently about midnight. By the glare of a lamp which I always left burning, I saw my tyrant advance towards my bed. As there was no crime but I deemed him capable of, I had foreseen this, and well assured myself of preventing it. I armed myself with a knife, which I had the precaution to conceal under my pillow: I loaded the wretch with the reproaches he merited, and vowed that if he dared to approach me I would poinard him with my own hands. He stood aghast with surprise and fear. "I am tired of receiving nothing but contempt," he said, as he went out; "If I did not fear being heard, you should see what a female hand could do against me! But I have other means of overcoming your pride. Shortly you will think yourself too happy if you can obtain my favour by the most humble submissions."'

"'Some minutes after he was gone, his confidant entered with a pistol in his hand. I must do him the justice to say he wept when he announced his master's orders to me. "Dress yourself, Madame, you must follow me." This was all he could say. He conducted me into that tower, where, had it not been for you, I should have perished this day; it is there that I have languished for more than a month, without fire or light, and almost without clothes; with bread and water for my subsistence, and a straw mattress for my bed: such was the state to which the daughter of a Polish nobleman was reduced! You shudder, brave stranger, and well you may, but I have related only part of my grievances. One thing, at least, rendered my misery less insupportable, I no longer saw my tyrant. While he was quietly waiting for my solicitation of pardon, I passed the days in calling upon my father, and weeping for my lover. Lovinski, with what astonishment was I seized, with what joy was my soul penetrated, the day that I recognised you in the gardens of Dourlinski!'

"Titsikan listened with attention to the history of our misfortunes, which appeared to affect him greatly, when his advanced guard gave the alarm. He left us abruptly to run to the drawbridge. We heard a great tumult. 'Lovinski! Lovinski! You base and perfidious couple!' cried Dourlinski, who could not contain his joy; 'so you thought you had escaped me! Tremble! For you will fall again into my power; the news of my misfortune has, no doubt, roused the neighbouring gentlemen, and they are coming to succour me.'

"'They will but bring vengeance on thee, thou wicked wretch!' interrupted Boleslas, seizing a bar of iron, with which he was going to knock him down. Titsikan re-entered at this moment. 'It was only a false alarm,' he said; 'it is a little troop which I detached yesterday to forage the country: it was to join me here; it brings me some prisoners; everything else is tranquil, and nothing appears as yet in the neighbourhood.'

"While Titsikan spoke to me, they brought before him the unfortunate persons whose hard fate had delivered them up to the Tartars. Five of them at first came before us. 'They say that this one had given them a great deal of trouble, and that is why they have thus bound him,' said Titsikan, pointing to a sixth. 'Oh, God! It is my father!' cried Lodoiska, running to him. I threw myself at the feet of Pulauski. 'Thou art Pulauski, art thou?' continued the Tartar; 'Well, the rencontre is not unlucky. Stay, my friend, it is not more than a quarter of an hour since I have known thee; I know that thou art fierce and obstinate; but never mind, I esteem thee, thou hast courage and head-piece; thy daughter is handsome, and does not want wit: Lovinski is brave; more brave, I think, than myself.' Pulauski, rendered motionless with astonishment, scarcely listened to the Tartar; and struck with the strange spectacle which was presented before his eyes, conceived the most frightful suspicions. He repulsed me with horror. 'Unhappy wretch! Thou hast betrayed thy country, a woman who loved thee, and a man who would have been pleased to call thee a kinsman; there was nothing wanting to you but an alliance with robbers.' Titsikan interrupted him. 'With robbers, if you will have it so; but robbers are, occasionally, good for something: without me, your daughter, from tomorrow, would no longer have been a maid. Be not afraid,' he added, turning to me; 'I know he is fierce, and I will not offend him.'

"We had placed Pulauski in an armchair; his daughter and myself were bathing his bound hands with our tears, but he continued to repulse me and load me with reproaches. 'What the devil is the matter with him?' replied Titsikan. 'I tell thee myself that Lovinski is a brave man, and I wish to marry him and your daughter. Dourlinski is a scoundrel whom I mean to hang. I repeat it to thee, that thou alone art more obstinate than all three of us. Listen to me, then, and let us conclude, for I must go. Thou belongest to me by the most incontestible right—that of the sword. Well, if thou givest me thy word to be sincerely reconciled to Lovinski, and to give him thy daughter, I will set thee at liberty."

"'We who can brave death, know how to endure slavery; my daughter shall never be the wife of a traitor.'

"'Wouldst thou prefer that she were the mistress of a Tartar? If thou dost not promise me to marry her within eight days to this brave man, I marry her this night myself. When I shall be tired of thee and her, I will sell you to the Turks; thy daughter is handsome enough for the seraglio of a bashaw; and as for thee, thou canst be cook to some janisary.'

"'My life is in thy hands; do as thou pleasest with it. If Pulauski falls by the blows of a Tartar, he will be pitied; they will say that he merited a better fate; but I cannot consent. No; I had rather die!'

"'Ah! I do not wish you to die! I wish that Lovinski may espouse Lodoiska. But is it for my prisoner to lay down the law for me? What a dog of a man! It is nothing but obstinacy! He reasons badly.'

"I saw the anger kindle in the eyes of the Tartar, and I reminded him that he had promised me not to be passionate.

"'Certainly: but this man would tire the patience of one of the prophet's favourites! I am nothing but a robber, aye! Pulauski, I repeat it to you, I wish that Lovinski may marry your daughter. By my sword, he has well earned her: if it had not been for him, she would have been burnt this evening.

"'How?'

"'Ah! Yes: look at these ruins: there was a tower, this tower was in flames, no one dared to enter; he and Boleslas ascended; they have saved thy daughter.'

"'My daughter has been in that tower?'

"'Yes, she was there; this scoundrel had placed her there, and wished to violate her. Come on, tell him the whole, and make haste, that he may decide; I have business elsewhere; I do not wish the quartuaires<10> to surprise me here: in fact, I have something else to do, for I laugh at them.'

"Whilst Titsikan was superintending some carriages, which were loaded with the considerable booty he had made, Lodoiska informed her father of the treachery of Dourlinski, and mingled so adroitly the recital of our tenderness with the history of her misfortunes, that nature and gratitude appealed at the same time to the heart of Pulauski. Most sensibly affected with the sufferings of his daughter, conscious of the important service I had rendered him, he embraced Lodoiska; and looking at me without animosity, seemed to wait with patience for me to finish, by deciding him in my favour.

"'Oh, Pulauski!' I said; Oh, thou whom heaven hath left to console me for the loss of the best of fathers! Oh! Thou for whom I feel a friendship equal to my respect, why hast thou condemned thy children without hearing them? Why hast thou suspected a man who adores thy daughter, of the most horrible treason? When my voice placed on the throne the man who now fills it, I swear, Pulauski, by her whom I love, that I thought I was doing good for my country. The evils which my youth did not foresee, thy experience foresaw; but because I have failed in prudence, dost thou accuse me of perfidy? Canst thou reproach me for having esteemed my friend? Canst thou consider it a crime in me still to esteem him? For three months I have seen, like thee, the misery of my country; like thee I have bemoaned it; but I am sure that the king is ignorant of it; I will go and inform him at Warsaw.'

"Pulauski interrupted me: 'It is not there that thou must go. Thou sayst that M. du P*** is ignorant of the sufferings of his country, I am willing to believe it; but whether he knows them or not it is of little consequence now. Insolent strangers cantoned in our provinces will endeavour to establish themselves there, even in spite of the king whom they elected. It is not a weak or bad-intentioned monarch who will drive the Russians from my country. Let us expect nothing but from ourselves Lovinski; let us avenge our country or die for her. I have assembled in the Palatinate

of Lublin, a band of gentlemen, who wait but the return of their general to march against the Russians. Follow me, come into my camp—on this condition: I am free, and my daughter is thine.'

"'Pulauski, I am ready, I swear to follow thy fortune and to partake of thy dangers. And think not that 'tis Lodoiska alone for whom I make these oaths! I love my country as much as I adore thy daughter: I swear by her, and before thee, that the enemies of the state have always been and will never cease to be mine: I swear that I will shed even the last drop of my blood, to drive from Poland the strangers who govern it under the name of its king. Embrace me, Lovinski, I acknowledge thee, I acknowledge my kinsman. Come on, my children, all our griefs are at an end.'

Pulauski told me to unite my hands with those of Lodoiska. We were embracing our father as Titsikan re-entered. 'Good! Good!' he cried, 'that is right; that is what I wished. Come, father, I will have thee unbound. By my sword!' continued the Tartar, while the soldiers cut the cords with which Pulauski had been tied, 'I am here doing a fine action, when I think of it! But it will cost me a great deal of money.'

"'Great Gods of Poland! That beautiful girl would have paid me a large ransom.'

"'Titsikan, that will not matter,' interrupted Pulauski.

"'Ah! No, no,' replied the Tartar; 'it was but a simple reflection, and one of those ideas of which a robber is not the master! My brave fellows, I want nothing from you, and what is more, you shall not go on foot, for I have got horses at your service. And for this lady, if you will have it, I will give you a litter, in which they have carried me for ten or twelve days. That youth there thrashed me so well, that I could not sit on my horse. The litter is very homely, being made of the branches of trees; I have but that, or a little covered carriage, to offer you; you will therefore make your choice.'

"In the mean time Dourlinski had not dared to speak a single word, but held down his head in consternation; 'Unworthy friend!' said Pulauski to him, 'could you abuse my confidence to such an extent, and are you not afraid of exposing yourself to my resentment! What demon has blinded you?'

"'Love,' replied Dourlinski, 'an insane love. Thou knowest not to what excess the passions may carry a man who is born violent and jealous! Let this frightful example teach thee, at least, that a daughter as charming and as beautiful as thine, is a rare treasure, the care of which you should not trust to anyone. Pulauski, I have merited thy hatred, yet you owe me notwithstanding some pity. I acknowledge myself highly culpable; but you see me cruelly punished. I lose, in a single day, my rank, my riches, my honour and my liberty; nay, I lose more than all that, I lose thy daughter! Oh! Lodoiska, whom I have so much outraged, will you condescend to forget my persecutions, your dangers and your misfortunes; will you condescend to grant me a generous pardon? Ah! If there is not a crime which a true repentance cannot expiate, Lodoiska, I am no longer criminal. I wish I could at the price of my own blood, redeem the tears which you have shed. Shall Dourlinski, in the horrible slavery to which he will be reduced, carry the consoling remembrance of having heard you say, he was odious to you? Too amiable girl, and up to the present time, too unfortunate, how great soever my wrongs towards you, I can repair them by a single word. Come here, I have a secret of importance to reveal to you.'

Lodoiska approached without fear. At that moment I saw a poinard glitter in the hands of Dourlinski. I threw myself upon him. It was too late, I could only parry the second blow; my mistress, struck beneath her left breast, had already fallen at the feet of Titsikan.

"The furious Pulauski wished to revenge his child; 'No, no,' cried Titsikan, 'You will give this monster too soft a death.'

"'Well,' said the infamous assassin as he contemplated his victim with a malicious joy: 'Lovinski, thou appearest so anxious to be united to Lodoiska, why not follow her? Go, my happy rival, and join thy mistress in the tomb. They are preparing my punishment, which will appear to me mild, because I leave thee delivered up to torments, longer and more cruel than mine.'

"Dourlinski could not say more, the Tartars dragged him away and threw him among the flaming ruins of his castle.

"What a night, my dear Faublas, what various cares, what conflicting sensations agitated me in their turn! How often I experienced in succession, fear and hope, grief and joy! After so many anxieties and dangers, Lodoiska was restored to me by her father, I was intoxicated with the delightful thoughts of possessing her. Then a barbarian assassinates her before my eyes! This moment was the most cruel of my life!"

"But be assured, my friend, that my happiness so rapidly eclipsed was not long in reappearing. Among the soldiers of Titsikan, there was one who knew something of surgery; we went for him; he examined the wound, and asserted that it was but very slight: the wretch Dourlinski, confined by his chains, and blinded by his despair, had given but a badly aimed blow.

"As soon as Titsikan ascertained that there was nothing to fear for the life of Lodoiska, he bade us adieu. 'I leave you, he said, the five domestics which Pulauski brought, some provision for several days, six good horses, two close carriages, and all Dourlinski's people, well chained. Their villainous master is dead. The day begins to break, and I must go. Do not leave here until tomorrow; tomorrow I shall go to visit other cantons. Adieu, my brave fellows; you will tell your countrymen, that Titsikan is not always a mischievous devil; and that he gives sometimes with one hand what he takes with the other. Adieu.'

"He gave the signal for departure; the Tartars raised the drawbridge and galloped away.

"They were not gone two hours, when several neighbouring gentlemen, supported by some Quartuaires<10>, came to invest the castle of Dourlinski. Pulauski himself went to receive them. He gave them an account of all that had passed; and some of them brought over by his arguments, determined to follow us into the Palatinate of Lublin. They only asked two days to make the necessary preparations for their departure. They did indeed join us on the next day to the number of sixty. Lodoiska having assured us that she felt herself in a condition to sustain the fatigues of the journey, was placed in a convenient carriage, which we had time to procure. After having set the servants of Dourlinski at liberty, we left them the two carriages which Titsikan's singular generosity had left as a part of the booty, which they divided amongst them.

"We arrived without any accident at Polowisk, in the Palatinate of Lublin, which Pulauski had named as the general rendezvous. The news of his return being spread abroad, a crowd of the discontented came in the space of a month, to enlarge our army, which was then about ten thousand men. Lodoiska entirely cured of her wound, and perfectly recovered from her fatigues, had acquired her usual appearance, and all her charms shone forth with their former brilliance. Pulauski called me to his tent. He said to me: 'Three thousand Russians have appeared on the heights within three-quarters of a league hence, take this evening, four thousand chosen men, and drive the enemy from the advantageous post which they occupy: remember that on the success of the first combat almost always depends the success of the campaign; and remember that thou must revenge thy country. Tomorrow, my friend, when I hear of thy victory, tomorrow thou espousest Lodoiska.'

"I marched about ten o'clock in the evening: at midnight we surprised our enemy in their camp. Never was a defeat more complete: we killed seven hundred of their men, we made nine hundred prisoners, we took all their cannon, military chest, and camp equipage.

"At break of day, Pulauski came to join me with the rest of the troops. He brought Lodoiska with him. We were married in the tent of Pulauski. The whole camp rung with shouts of joy. Valour and beauty were celebrated in their verses; it was the fête of Love and of Mars; they have said, that every soldier had my soul, and partook of my happiness.

"After devoting to love, the first days of so cherished a union, I thought of recompensing the heroic fidelity of Boleslas. My father-in-law made him a present of one of his chateaux, situated some leagues from the capital. Lodoiska and myself added to that, a considerable sum of money, to secure him a tranquil independence. He would not leave us; we ordered him to go and take possession of his castle, and live peaceably and honourably in the retreat which he had merited. The day he left us, I took him aside: 'Thou wilt go to our monarch at Warsaw: thou wilt inform him that Hymen has united me to the daughter of Pulauski: thou wilt tell him, that I am armed to drive from his realm the foreigners who devastate it: thou wilt tell him, above all, Lovinski is the enemy of the Russians, but not the enemy of his king.'

"I will not fatigue you, my dear Faublas, with the recital of our operations, during eight years of a bloody war. Sometimes beaten, but more frequently the victor, as great in his defeats, as redoubtable after victories, and always superior to events, Pulauski excited the attention of Europe, and astonished it by his long resistance. Obliged to abandon one province, he went to fight fresh battles in another; and it was thus, that overrunning all the Palatinates he signalized in each of them, by sonic glorious exploits, the hatred he bore to the enemy of Poland.

"The wife of a warrior, and daughter of a hero, accustomed to the tumult of camps, Lodoiska followed us everywhere. Of five children that she bore me, one daughter only was left me, aged eighteen months. One day, after an obstinate battle, the Russians being victorious, rushed into my tent for plunder. Pulauski and myself, followed by some gentlemen, flew to the defence of Lodoiska, and saved her, but my daughter was carried away. The child, by a wise precaution which her mother had not neglected in those unsettled times, bears, marked under the arm-pit, the arms of our family, but I have hitherto sought her in vain. Alas! Dorliska, my dear Dorliska groans in slavery, or exists no more.

"This loss made me grieve excessively. Pulauski appeared almost insensible, either because already occupied with grand projects which he was not slow in communicating to me, or that the evils of his country alone had a right to touch his stoic heart. He gathered together the rest of his army, made an advantageous encampment, which he employed several days in fortifying, and maintained himself three months against all the efforts of the Russians. He was obliged, nevertheless, to think of abandoning it, for our provisions began to fail. Pulauski came to my tent, ordered those present to retire, and as soon as we were alone, 'Lovinski,' he said, 'I have reason to complain of thee. Formerly, thou supported with me the burden of command, and I could rest upon my kinsman a portion of my painful cares. For these three months past thou hast done nothing but weep; thou groanest like a woman! Thou abandonest me in the critical moment when thy aid is most necessary! Thou seest that I am pressed in all parts. I fear not for myself, it is not my life which renders me uneasy; but if we perish, the state has no more defenders. Rouse thyself, Lovinski. Thou hast partaken so nobly of my labours, do not now remain a useless looker-on. We have bathed ourselves in the blood of Russians; our fellow citizens are avenged, but they are not saved; presently perhaps we may not be in a condition to defend them.'

"'I am astonished, Pulauski, at what thou sayest; from whence came those gloomy presentiments!'

"'I do not alarm myself without reason; consider our actual position: I am forced to awaken in their hearts the love of country; I have found almost everywhere degraded men, born for slavery, or weak men sensible of their misfortunes, but contented with making useless complaints. A small number of true citizens are arranged under my banners; but eight campaigns have almost destroyed them. I am weakened by my victories, but our enemies appear more numerous after their defeats.'"

"'I repeat it to thee, Pulauski I am astonished! In circumstances equally pressing, I have seen thee sustain thyself with courage.'

"'Dost thou think it abandons me? Valour does not consist in being blind to danger, but in braving it when we meet it. Our enemies are preparing to defeat me; nevertheless, if thou art willing, Lovinski, the day which they have marked for their triumph shall, perhaps, be that of their loss, and the salvation of our fellow citizens.'

"'If I am willing! Dost thou doubt it? Speak; what wouldst thou say? What must I do?'

"'Strike a bolder stroke than I have even meditated. Forty chosen men are assembled at Czenstochow with Kaluvski, whose bravery is well known. They must have an adroit, firm, and intrepid chief: it is thee I have chosen.'

"'Pulauski, I am ready.

"'I will not dissemble from you the danger of the enterprise; the uncertainty of its success; and that if thou dost not succeed, thy loss is infallible.'

"'I tell thee I am ready; explain thyself.

"'Thou canst not be ignorant that I have now scarcely four thousand men. I can still, without doubt, harass the enemy a great deal; but ought I to hope, with such a small force, to drive them from our provinces? All our gentlemen would flock to my standard, if the king was in my camp.'

"'What sayest thou, Pulauski? Dost thou think the king will ever consent to come here?"

"'No, but we must bring him.'

"'By force?'

"'Yes: I know that an early friendship binds thee to M. de P***; but since thou sustainest with Pulauski the cause of liberty, thou knowest also that everything ought to be sacrificed to the good of thy country, that an interest as sacred—'

"'I know my duties, and I will fulfil them: but what dost thou propose to me? The king never leaves Warsaw.'

"'Well! It is at Warsaw we must go and seek him; it is from the bosom of the capital we must snatch him.'

"'What hast thou prepared for this grand enterprise?'

"'Thou seest this Russian army, three times as strong as mine, encamped for these three months before me. Its general, remaining tranquil in its entrenchments, expects that, compelled by famine, I shall surrender at discretion. At the back of my camp are some dangerous morasses; as soon as it is night we will cross them. I have disposed everything in such a manner, that the enemy, being deceived, will discover our retreat when too late. I hope to steal more than one march upon them. If fortune favours me, I can gain a day upon them. I will advance directly upon Warsaw, by the high road that leads to the capital, and through the little corps of Russians who hover in its environs. I reckon on beating them separately, or should they unite to stop me, I will at least occupy them sufficiently to prevent them incommoding thee. Thou, in the meantime, Lovinski, wilt push on. Thy forty men, disguised, armed only with sabres, pistols, and daggers, concealed under their clothes, will enter Warsaw by different roads. Thou wilt wait for the king coming out of his palaces; thou wilt seize him and bring him to my camp. The enterprise is rash and unheard of, I agree; the entrance is difficult, the stay dangerous, and the return of extreme peril. If thou sinkest under it, if they arrest thee, thou wilt perish, Lovinski; but thou wilt perish a martyr to liberty; Pulauski, jealous of a death so glorious, will mourn to be obliged to survive thee, and some Russians yet will follow thee to the tomb. If, on the contrary, Almighty God, the protector of Poland, inspires me with this bold project in order to terminate its troubles; if his goodness gives a success equal to thy courage, think what prosperity will be the fruit of thy noble temerity! M. de P*** will see in my camp none but soldiers, and citizens, inimical to foreigners, and faithful to their king. Under my patriotic tents he will breathe, as I may say, the air of liberty, the love of his country: the enemies of the state will become his; our brave nobility, roused from its langour, will fight under the banner of their king, for the common cause; the Russians will be cut in pieces, or will repass the frontiers; and then, my friend, thou wilt have saved thy country.'

"Pulauski had my word. As soon as it was night, we happily accomplished our retreat; the morass was crossed in silence. 'My friend,' said my father-in-law to me, 'it is time for us to part: I am well aware that my daughter has more courage than another woman; but she is a tender wife and an unhappy mother; her tears will weaken thee; thou wilt lose in her embraces that spirit, that fierceness of soul, which becomes more necessary for you at present than ever. I recommend you to leave without taking farewell.' Pulauski advised me in vain; I could not determine to do it. When Lodoiska knew that I set out alone, and found us decided not to tell where I was going, she shed

a torrent of tears, and endeavoured to detain me. I began to waver. 'Come on,' cried my father-in-law, 'thou must be gone; father, wife, children, and everything else must be sacrificed when our country is at stake.'

"I left immediately. I made such haste, that I arrived about the middle of the following day at Czenstochow. I found there forty gentlemen determined to act. 'Messieurs,' I said, 'we are required to seize a king in his capital. Men capable of attempting so daring an enterprise, are alone capable of accomplishing it: success or death awaits us.' After this short harangue, we prepared for our journey. Kaluvski had in readiness twelve wagons loaded with hay and straw, each drawn by four good horses; we disguised ourselves as countrymen, and concealed our clothes, our sabres, our pistols, and the saddles of our horses, in the hay with which our wagons were filled. We agreed upon several signs, and on a word for rallying. Twelve of our comrades, commanded by Kaluvski, were to go into Warsaw with the twelve wagons, which they would drive themselves. I divided the rest of my little troop into several brigades. To avoid all suspicion, each was to march at some distance, and to enter the capital by different gates.

"We set out; on Saturday, November 2, 1771, we arrived at Warsaw, and took up our lodgings among the Dominicans.

"The next day, Sunday, a day ever memorable in the annals of Poland, Stavinski, covered with rags, placed himself near the college, and begged alms from thence, even unto the door of the royal palace, and noticed everything that passed. Several of our comrades prowled about the city; and even in the six narrow streets which terminate at the great palace, where I walked with Kaluvski. We continued in ambuscade the whole of the morning and part of the afternoon. At six in the evening, the king came out of his palace; we followed him, and saw him enter that of his uncle P***, the arch-chancellor of Lithuania.

All the conspirators were informed; they stripped off their disguises, saddled their horses, and prepared their arms. In the extensive establishment of the Dominicans our motions were not noticed. We came out, one after the other, under the shelter of night. Being too well known in Warsaw to appear without disguise, I retained my rustic habits; I mounted an excellent charger, but it was covered with a common horse-cloth, and shabbily harnessed. Our comrades took the various posts I had assigned them in the suburbs, in order that all the avenues to the arch-chancellor's palace might be guarded.

"Between nine and ten o'clock the king came out, and we observed that his suite was but small. The carriage was preceded by two men who carried flambeaux, followed by some officers of artillery, two knights, and an esquire. I knew not the lord who was in the carriage with the king. He had two pages at each door, two Hungarian soldiers, and two valets on foot behind. The carriage moved slowly; our comrades assembled at a little distance; twelve of the most resolute detached themselves; I headed them, and we advanced at a gentle pace. As Warsaw was garrisoned by Russians, we affected to speak the language of these foreigners; that our troop might be taken for one of their patrols, we came up to the carriage about a hundred and fifty paces from the palace of the arch-chancellor, between those of the Bishop of Cracow and the late commander-in-chief of the Polish army. All at once, we placed ourselves before the horses of the carriage, and divided the retinue in such a manner, that those who preceded it found themselves separated from those who surrounded it.

"I gave the signal. Kaluvski came up with the rest of the conspirators: I presented a pistol to the postillion, who stopped. They fired on the coachman, and attacked the two pages. The two Hungarians defended themselves; one of then fell, pierced through by balls; the other was knocked down by a blow of a sabre on the head. The esquire's horse sunk with his wounds; one of the pages was dismounted and his horse taken; the balls were whistling on all sides. The attack was so hot, the firing so violent, that I trembled for the life of the king. He, however, having preserved the greatest tranquility during the danger, descended from his carriage, and sought to regain the palace of his uncle. Kaluvski arrested him, and seized him by the hair; seven or eight of the conspirators surrounded and disarmed him; they kept him running between their horses, who galloped on his right and his left to the end of the street. At this moment, I must confess that I thought Pulauski had unworthily deceived me, that the death of the king had been resolved on, and this scheme formed for his assassination. In an inestant I was decided how to act, and flew to join those who had advanced before me: I cried out to them to stop, and that I would kill him who disobeyed me. God, the protector of kings, watched over the safety of M. de P***. Kaluvski and his comrade recognised my voice, and halted. We put the king on a horse, and followed our course, at full speed up to the moat which surrounds the city, which the monarch was obliged to leap with us.

"After this a panic of terror ran through my troop. At fifty paces from the ditch there were but seven of us near the king. The night was dark, and the rain came down in torrents; we were obliged every minute to descend from our horses to feel our way over a miry morass. The king's horse fell twice, and broke a leg in the second fall. By these accidents, the king lost his pelisse and one of his boots. 'If you wish me to follow you,' he said, 'give me a horse and a boot.' We remounted him, and with a view to gain the road in which Pulauski had promised to meet me, we made for the village of Burakow. The king with great tranquility, said, 'Do not go this way, there are Russians.' I believed it, and changed the route. In proportion as we advanced in the Wood of Beliany, our number diminished. Presently, I could only perceive Kaluvski and Stravinski; and shortly well heard the call of a Russian sentinel. We stopped in great alarm. 'Kill the king,' said Kaluvski. I was struck with horror at such a proposition, and expressed it in an unguarded manner. 'Well then, said this ferocious man, you must take upon yourself the charge of conducting him!' He plunged into the wood, and Stravinski followed him, leaving me alone with the king.

"'Lovinski,' he said, 'it is you, I can no longer doubt it. It is you; I recognised your voice.' I answered not a word. He continued with mildness: 'It is you! Who would have thought this ten years back?' We found ourselves then near the Convent of Beliany, about one league distant from Warsaw. 'Lovinski,' said the king, 'let me enter this convent, and save yourself.' 'You must follow me,' was all my answer.

"'It is in vain,' said the monarch, 'that you are disguised; it is in vain that you now try to alter your voice: I have recognised you; I am sure that you are Lovinski. Ah! Who would have thought this ten years ago? Ten years since you would have risked your own life to preserve that of your friend.'

"He was silent. We advanced for a while without speaking. At length he said, 'I am overcome with fatigue: if you would take me alive, let me have a moment's rest.' I helped him to dismount. He sat down upon the grass, and making me sit down beside him, he took one of my hands within his own: 'Lovinski, you whom I have loved so much, you who know better than anyone the purity of my intentions, how is

it that you are armed against me? Oh, how ungrateful! Do I not find you with my most cruel enemies? Do you see me again but to sacrifice me?' He then, in a most affecting manner, recounted the pleasures of our youth, the tender friendship we had sworn, and the confidence which he had ever since reposed in me. He spoke of the honours he could have loaded me with during his reign, if I had been desirous of meriting them. He reproached me, above all, for the unworthy enterprise of which I appeared to be the chief, but of which he well knew I was only the principal instrument. He threw all the horror of the design on Pulauski, but nevertheless, he said, the author of such an outrage was not alone to be blamed, and that I was not without crime in undertaking its execution. That my compliance with such views, already so punishable in a subject, was still more inexcusable in a friend. He concluded by begging me to set him at liberty. 'Fly,' he said to me, 'and if they come to me for information, I shall direct them a contrary road to that which you shall take.'

"The king entreated me in so agreeable a manner, his natural eloquence, enforced by the danger, carried persuasion to my heart, and awakened in it the most tender sentiments. I was shaken: I began to waver; but Pulauski triumphed. I thought I heard the fierce republican reproach me for my weakness. My dear Faublas, the love of country may, perhaps, have its fanaticism and its superstition, but if I was culpable, I am so still. I am still more than ever persuaded, that in forcing the monarch to remount his horse, I did both a brave and a good action. 'So, he cried,' in a melancholy tone, 'you reject the prayer which a friend has addressed to you! You refuse the pardon which your king offers you! Well, let us go; I deliver myself to my evil destiny, or you abandon yourself to yours.'

"We recommenced our march; but the reproaches of the monarch, his entreaties, and even his menaces, and the internal struggles which I experienced, had so far affected me, that I could no longer see my road. Wandering in the country, I took no certain road. After proceeding half an hour, we found ourselves at Marimont.<11> I had gone astray, and we had to retrace our steps. A quarter of a league from there we fell among a party of Russians. The king made himself known to their commander; after which he added, 'I have lost my way this evening, while hunting; this good countryman whom you see, wished, before he guided me home, to give me a frugal repast in his cottage; but as I thought I had seen some of the soldiers of Pulauski roving about in the neighbourhood, I wished to return as quick as possible to Warsaw, and you will do me a pleasure to accompany me there. As for thee, my friend, I am sorry thou hast taken so useless a trouble, for I would rather return to my capital with these gentlemen, than go any further with thee. Nevertheless, it would be singular if I was to leave thee without some recompense. What wouldst thou? Speak; I will grant thee the favour thou demandest.'

"You may easily conceive, Faublas, how much I was embarrassed. I still doubted the intentions of the king, and endeavoured to penetrate the real meaning of an equivocal discourse, which was either full of the most bitter irony, or remarkable for its magnanimity. M. de P*** left me some time in this painful unceretainty.

"'I see thou art much embarrassed,' he replied at last, with an air of goodness which touched me to the heart; 'thou dost not know what to choose! Come, my friend, embrace me; there is more honour than profit in the embrace of a king,' he added, laughing: 'nevertheless, we must agree that at the present day few monarchs are so generous as myself.'

"Having said this, he went out, leaving me confounded at so much greatness of soul.

"In the meantime, the danger which the king was so generously going to save me from, began at every moment to threaten me. It was more than probable that a great number of couriers, dispatched from Warsaw, had spread in every quarter the astonishing news of the king being carried away. A warm pursuit had no doubt already commenced after the ravishers; my remarkable equipage might betray me in my flight; and if I fell again into the hands of the Russians, who might be better informed, all the efforts of the king could not save me. Supposing that Pulauski had obtained all the success he could wish, he would still be at some distance; ten leagues, at least, remained for me to get over, and my horse had given in. I endeavoured to spur him on; he had not run fifty paces before he dropped down under me. A well-mounted cavalier who passed on the road at this moment, saw the animal fall, and thinking he could amuse himself at the expense of a poor peasant, said to me: 'My friend, I can inform thee that thy good horse is no longer worth anything.'

"Piqued at the buffoonery, I immediately resolved to punish the joker, and at the same time ensure my flight. I very abruptly presented a pistol at him, and compelled him to deliver up his horse; and I will even confess that, pressed by circumstances, I plundered him of a good cloak, as large as it was light, under which I concealed my rustic habit, which might have led to my discovery. I threw my purse, full of gold, at the feet of the dismounted traveller, and left him as swiftly as my new horse could carry me.

"He was fresh and vigorous; I rode twelve leagues without stopping; at length I thought I heard the noise of cannon, by which I conjectured that my father-in-law was not far off, and was combatting the Russians. I was not deceived; I arrived on the field of battle at the moment when one of our regiments gave way. I reconnoitred them, and having rallied them behind a neighbouring hill, I came to attack the enemy in the flank, while Pulauski opposed them in front with the rest of his troop. We charged so *à propos*, and with so much vigour, that the Russians were put to the rout, after suffering a great slaughter among their men. Pulauski deigned to attribute to me the honour of the victory."

"'Ah,' he said, embracing me, after having heard the details of our expedition, 'if thy forty men had equalled thee in courage, the king would now be in my camp; but it was not the will of heaven; I am thankful that thou at least art saved to us; I return thee thanks for the important service thou hast rendered me, for without thee, Kaluvski would have assassinated the monarch, and my name would have been covered with eternal infamy. I could,' he added, 'have advanced two miles further, but I preferred fixing my camp in this respectable position. Yesterday, on the road, I surprised and cut in pieces a party of Russians; I beat, this morning, two of their detachments; another considerable corps having gathered the remains of the former, has taken advantage of the night to attack me. My soldiers, fatigued with a long march, and three successive combats, began to fail, when victory entered my camp with thee. Let us entrench ourselves here: let us here wait the Russian army, and let us fight while we have breath.'

In the meantime, the camp re-echoed with shouts of joy: our victorious soldiers mingled my praises with those of Pulauski. At the sound of my name, which a thousand voices repeated, Lodoiska ran to the tent of her father. She proved to me the excess of her tenderness by the excess of her joy. I was obliged to recommence the

recital of the dangers I had undergone. She could not withhold shedding tears, on hearing of our monarch's rare generosity. 'How great he is!' she cried with transport: 'How worthy is he to be king who has pardoned thee! What tears has he spared to a wife whom thou hadst forsaken, to a lover whom thou didst not fear to sacrifice! How cruel it was! Wert thou not exposed to sufficient dangers every day?'

"'Pulauski, interrupting his daughter with much severity, said: Thou weak and indiscreet woman! Is it before me that thou darest to hold such discourse?'

"'Alas! Must I be unceasingly trembling for the life of a father and a husband?'

"It was thus my Lodoiska addressed to me her affecting complaints, and sighed for a happier future, while fortune prepared for us a more frightful reverse.

"Our Cossacks came from all quarters to inform us that the Russian army approached. Pulauski reckoned that he should be attacked at break of day: he was not, but in the middle of the following night, we were informed that the Russians were preparing to force our entrenchments. Pulauski, always ready, had already defended them. He did, during this fatal night, all that could be expected from his experience and his valour. We repulsed the assailants, five times, but they always returned to the charge with fresh troops, and their last attack was so concerted, that they penetrated into our camp by three places at the same time. Zaremba was killed by my side: a crowd of nobles perished in this bloody action, for the enemies gave no quarter. Furious at seeing all my friends perish, I wished to throw myself among the Russian battalions: 'Madman!' said Pulauski, 'what blind fury carries thee away? My army is entirely destroyed, but my courage remains. Why should we die uselessly here? Come, I will conduct you into those climates where we can excite new enemies against the Russians. Let us live, since we can still serve our country: let us save ourselves, let us save Lodoiska.'

"Lodoiska! I was going to abandon her! We ran to her tent—we were in time—we carried her away, and plunged into the neighbouring wood, and early in the morning we ventured out of it, to present ourselves at the door of a castle, with which we thought we were acquainted. It was, indeed, that of a gentleman named Micislas, who had served sometime in our army. He recognised us, and offered us an asylum, which he advised us to accept but for a few hours. He told a very astonishing piece of news, which was circulated the night before, and appeared to be confirmed, that someone had dared to seize even the king in Warsaw, and carry him away; that the Russians had pursued the ravishers, brought the king back into his capital, and it was thought a price would be set upon the head of Pulauski, who was suspected to be the author of the conspiracy. 'Believe me,' he added, 'whether you have had a hand in this bold plot, or not, I would have you fly: leave here your uniforms, which will betray you, I will give you some clothes which are less remarkable; and as to Lodoiska, I will undertake to conduct her myself to the place you may choose for your retreat.'

"Lodoiska interrupted Micislas: 'The place of my retreat will be that of their flight! I will accompany them everywhere!'

"Pulauski represented to his daughter that she could not sustain the fatigues of a long route, and that moreover we should be perpetually exposed to danger."

"'The more danger there is,' she replied, 'the more I ought to partake it with you. You have repeat to me a hundred times that the daughter of Pulauski ought not to be a common woman! For the last eight years, I have lived in the midst of alarms. I have seen nothing but scenes of carnage and horror: death surrounded me everywhere,

and menaced me every instant: you would not permit me to brave it by your sides: does not the life of Lodoiska depend on that of her father? Lovinski! The shock you have given me will hurry me to the tomb! And since I am no longer worthy—'

"I interrupted Lodoiska, and joined her father in detailing the reasons which determined us to leave her in Poland. She listened to me with impatience: 'Ungrateful that you are! Will you go without me?'

"'Yes, replied Pulauski, you will remain with the sisters of Lovinski, and I forbid him—'

"His daughter, quite distracted, would not let him finish: 'I know thy rights, and I respect them; they have always been sacred to me; but thou hast not the right to take a wife away from her husband! Ah! Pardon me, I offend thee, I forget myself, but pity my sufferings, excuse my despair. Father! Lovinski! Listen both of you; I wish to accompany you everywhere'

"'Everywhere?'

"'Yes, I will follow you, cruel as you are, I will follow you in spite of you! Lovinski! If thy wife has lost all the right she had over thy heart, remember at least thy lover: recollect that frightful night when I was about to perish in the flames!—that terrible moment when you mounted the burning tower, crying, "To live or die with Lodoiska!" Well! What thou felt then, I feel at this moment. I know no greater evil than that of being separated from thee!"

"I said, in my turn, 'To live and die with my father and my wife!'

"'Wretch that I am! What is to become of me when thou quittest me? When I have to weep for you both, where can I find comfort in my affliction? Can my children console me? Alas! In two years, death has snatched four from me, and the Russians, implacable as death, have torn from me the last! I have none in the world but you, and you would abandon me! Oh, my father! Oh, my husband! Let not two names so dear find you insensible! Have pity on Lodoiska!

"Her grief stopped her utterance. Micislas wept, and my heart was torn in pieces.

"'Thou dost wish it, my child, well! I consent,' said Pulauski, 'but may heaven not punish me for my compliance!' Lodoiska embraced us both with as much joy as if our troubles were at an end.

"I left with Micislas two letters, which he undertook to forward; one was addressed to my sisters, the other to Boleslas.

"I bade them farewell, and entreated them to neglect nothing in order to find my dear Dorliska. It was necessary to disguise my wife, so she put on the dress of a man: we exchanged ours, and employed all possible means to alter our appearance. Thus disguised, armed with pistols and sabres, provided with a considerable sum of money in gold, some jewels, and all the diamonds of Lodoiska, we took our leave of Micislas, and hastened to regain the wood.

"Pulauski communicated to us the design he had formed of taking refuge in Turkey. He hoped to obtain some appointment in the armies of the Grand Seignior, who, for two years, had carried on an unsuccessful war against the Russians. Lodoiska did not seem dismayed at the long journey we had to make. As she could neither be recognised nor sought after, she undertook the charge of going before us, and

conducting our provisions. As soon as day appeared, we retired into the woods; concealed in the trunks of trees, or tufts of thorns, we waited the return of night to continue our march. It was thus that, during several days, we escaped the searches of the Russians, who were eagerly pursuing us.

"One evening, as Lodoiska, always disguised as a peasant, was coming from a neighbouring hamlet, where she had been to buy some provisions, two Russian marauders attacked her at the entrance of the forest in which we were hid. After having robbed her, they prepared to strip her of her clothes. At the cries which she made, we came out of our retreat; the two robbers fled as soon as they saw us, but we feared lest they might recount their adventure to the party they belonged to, and that this singular rencontre might excite their suspicions, and cause them to drag us from our asylum. We resolved to change our route, and that they might not suspect the one we had taken, it was determined that, instead of going direct for the frontiers of Turkey, we should proceed, by a circuitous route, for Polesia,<12> afterwards for the Crimea, from whence we could pass to Constantinople.

"After some very troublesome marches, we entered into Polesia. Pulauski wept on quitting his native land. 'I have, at least,' he said, 'done everything in my power to serve it, and I only leave it with a view of continuing my exertions in its cause.'

"So many trials and fatigues had exhausted the strength of Lodoiska, when we arrived at Novogorod, where we rested, on her account. Our design was to let her repose there for some days, but the country people, who were inquisitive and communicative, as is usual, happened to tell us that troops were scouring the neighbourhood, in search of one Pulauski, who had conspired against the King of Poland. Necessarily alarmed, we remained but a few hours in this town, where we bought horses. We passed the Desna, above Czernicove, and following the banks of the Sula, we crossed to Perevoloczua, where we learned that Pulauski had been recognised at Novogorod, had only left Nezin a few hours before they came after him, and that he was still closely pursued. We, therefore, found it necessary to fly, and change our route once more. We penetrated the immense forests which covered the country between the Sula and the Sem.

"We arrived at a cavern in which we wished to establish ourselves. Our entrance into this asylum, as frightful as it was solitary, was disputed by a bear. We killed it and ate its young ones. Pulauski was wounded; Lodoiska exhausted, supported herself with difficulty, and the cold was become severe. Pursued by the Russians in all places that were inhabited, and threatened by ferocious animals in this vast desert, without any arms but our swords, and shortly reduced to eat our horses, what was to become of us? The danger of my father-in-law and my wife was so pressing, that I thought of no other. I resolved to procure them, at whatever price, the assistance their situation reequired, as it was still more deplorable than my own, and left them, promising to come back speedily. I took with me some of Lodoiska's diamonds, and followed the banks of the Warsklo. You will observe, my dear Faublas, that a traveller, wandering in these extensive countries, and reduced to proceed without either guide or compass, is obliged to follow the rivers, because it is on their banks that he generally meets with habitations. I wished to reach, as soon as possible, some mercantile city; I followed then the course of the Warsklo, and walked day and night, I found myself at Pultawa at the end of the fourth day. I there passed for a merchant of Belgorod. I knew that they sought for Pulauski, that the Empress of Russia had sent his description into all quarters, with orders to take him, dead or alive,

wherever he might be found. I hastened to sell my diamonds, and to buy powder, arms, all kinds of provision, various tools, some necessary furniture, and everything which I thought we should stand in need of to alleviate our misery. I packed the whole into one wagon, drawn by four horses, of which I was the only conductor. My return was as difficult as fatiguing, and eight days passed before I arrived at the forest.

"It was there that my painful and dangerous journey terminated: I went to relieve my father-in-law and my wife: I went to see again what was most dear to me in the world, and nevertheless, my dear Faublas, I could not deliver myself up to joy. Your philosophers think nothing of presentiments; but I can assure you, my friend, that I experienced an involuntary uneasiness; my soul was dismayed: I felt a kind of warning that the most unhappy moment of my life was approaching.

"I had, at starting, placed some flints here and there, by which to recognise my road, but could not find them; I had notched with my sabre the bark of several trees, but I could not discover them. I entered the forest, and called out with all my strength; from time to time I discharged my musket, but no one replied to me. I dared not go too far, for fear of losing myself: I dared not go far from my wagon, the contents of which were so necessary to Pulauski, his daughter, and myself.

The night, which overtook me, obliged me to cease my researches. I passed that as the preceding ones, wrapped up in my cloak, under my wagon, with some of my heaviest commodities piled round me to protect me from beasts of prey. I could not sleep; I felt the cold very much, and the snow fell in abundance; at break of day the ground was covered with it. This greatly discouraged me; my flints, which would have directed my road, were all buried, and it appeared impossible for me to find Pulauski and my wife.

"Could the horse which I had left them at my departure have supported them till then? Might not hunger, dreadful hunger, have compelled them to leave their retreat? Were they still in these frightful deserts? If they were not, where could I find them? Where drag out my miserable existence? But could I think that Pulauski had abandoned his kinsman, that Lodoiska had consented to be separated from her husband? No, certainly not. They were then in this dreadful solitude, and if I abandoned them, they would die of hunger and of cold. This despairing reflection determined me: I no longer considered that in going a distance from my wagon I should run a risk of not finding it again; to take some provisions for my father-in-law and my wife, was the object which pressed most upon me.

"I took my musket and some powder; I loaded a horse with provisions, and went much further into the forest than I had gone the night before. I continued to cry out, and to discharge my gun. The most solemn silence reigned around me.

"I found myself in a part of the forest that was so very thick, that my horse could no longer pass; I tied him to a tree, and my despair, absorbing all other considerations, I advanced with my gun and a part of my provisions. I wandered for two hours longer, and my misery kept accumulating, when, at last, I perceived the steps of a human being imprinted on the snow.

"Hope inspired me with fresh vigour. I followed the traces, and presently I saw Pulauski, almost naked, emaciated by hunger, and scarcely recognisable by my own eyes. He was endeavouring to draw himself towards me, and to answer my calls. The moment I reached him, he seized with avidity the aliments which I offered him, and eagerly devoured them. I asked where was Lodoiska. 'Alas!' he said, 'thou shalt go and

see her. The tone in which he pronounced these words made me tremble. I arrived at the cavern, in some respect prepared for the spectacle which awaited me. Lodoiska, wrapped up in her clothes, and covered with those of her father, was stretched on a bed of leaves, which were half rotten. She made an effort to raise her head, which she could scarcely hold up, and refusing the food which I offered her: 'I am not hungry,' she said, 'the death of my children, the loss of Dorliska, the length and difficulty of our marches, and thy dangers continually increasing, have killed me. I have not been proof against fatigue and grief. I am dying, my dear Lovinski. I heard thy voice, and my soul was arrested in its progress. I see thee again! Lodoiska ought to die in the arms of the husband she adores! Support my father! Let him live! Live both of you! Cherish yourselves, and forget me! Search everywhere for my dear—' She could not pronounce the name of her daughter—she expired.

"Her father dug her a grave a few steps from the cavern, and I saw the earth receive all that I loved. What a moment! Pulauski watched over my despair: he compelled me to survive Lodoiska."

Lovinski would have continued, but his grief interrupted him. He begged to be excused for a moment, and went into his private closet; he returned presently with a miniature in his hand: "Behold," he said, "the portrait of my little Dorliska, see how handsome she was even at that age! In her features, which are scarcely developed, I recognise all the features of her mother. Ah! If at least—"

I interrupted Lovinski: "That charming countenance, cried I, resembles my pretty cousin!"

"That is just the speech of a lover," he replied, "the object which he adores is always in his imagination, and he thinks he sees her everywhere. Ah! My friend! If only Dorliska was restored to me! But I ought not to expect it."

His eyes were again filled with tears, which he endeavoured to restrain. He resumed, in a faltering tone, the history of his misfortunes.

"Pulauski, whose courage never abandoned him, and whose strength was reinforced, obliged me to assist him in looking after our subsistence. By following my own footsteps on the snow, we arrived at the place where I had left the wagon, which we immediately unloaded, and afterwards burnt, so that our enemies might have no index to our retreat. By the aid of our horses, for whom we found a passage by making several turnings, we conveyed to our cavern the provisions and other things, which would have enabled us, if we were willing, to continue a long time in this solitude. We killed our horses, as we could not support them, and lived upon their flesh, which, though the rigour of the season preserved for several days, became corrupted at last, and the chase procuring us but a slender support, we were obliged to begin upon our provisions, which were entirely consumed at the end of three months.

"We still had some pieces of gold, and the greater part of Lodoiska's diamonds. Was I to make a second journey to Pultawa, or were we to risk the quitting of our retreat? We had already suffered so cruelly in this solitude, that we determined on the latter.

"We left the forest, we passed the Sem, near to Rylks. We bought a boat, disguised ourselves as fishermen, and went down the Sem. Our boat was visited at Czernicova. Misfortune had so changed Pulauski, that it was impossible to recognise him. We entered the Dnieper, we passed Kiev to Krylow. There we were obliged to receive into our boat, and to carry to the other side, some Russian soldiers, who were

going to join a little army employed against Pugatchew. We learnt at Zaporizhzhia the taking of Bender and of Oczacow, the conquest of the Crimea, and the defeat and death of the Vizier Oglon. Pulauski in despair would have crossed the vast countries which separated him from Pugatchev, and have joined himself to that enemy of the Russians, but our fatigues compelled us to remain at Zaporizhzhia. The peace which was concluded shortly after, between the Porte and Russia, enabled us to enter Turkey.

"We crossed, (on foot, and always disguised) Budsiac, parts of Moldavia, and Walachia; and, after the most excessive fatigues, we arrived at Adrianople. We were arrested and accused before the Cadi, of having offered for sale, on our journey, some diamonds which we had apparently stolen. The humble garments in which we were clothed excited this suspicion. Pulauski discovered himself to the Cadi, who sent us, under a strong escort, to Constantinople.

"We were admitted to an audience of the Grand Seignior. He gave us a lodging, and ordered his treasurer to provide a suitable revenue for us. I then wrote to my sisters, and to Boleslas. We learned, by their answers, that all the property of Pulauski was confiscated; that he was degraded, and condemned to lose his head.

"My father-in-law was dismayed; he was indignant that they had accused him of being a regicide. He wrote in his justification. Always occupied by the love of his country, and stimulated by his mortal hatred to its enemies, he did not cease, during the four years we remained in Turkey, to make every exertion in order to embroil the Porte in a new war with the Russians. In 1774, he received, with transports of rage, the news of the triple invasion,<13> which plundered the republic of a third of her possessions.

"It was in the spring of 1776 that the [American] insurgents determined to take up arms in defence of their violated rights: 'My country has lost its liberty,' said Pulauski, 'let us at least fight for the liberty of a new country!'

"We passed into Spain, and embarked in a vessel about to sail for Havana, from whence we transported ourselves to Philadelphia. The Congress employed us in the army of General Washington. Pulauski, a prey to melancholy, exposed his life like a man to whom it had become insupportable: he was always to be found on the most dangerous post. Towards the end of the fourth campaign, he was wounded by my side. They carried him to his tent.

"'I feel that my end approaches,' he said; 'It is true, then, that I shall never see my country! What a cruel caprice of destiny! Pulauski falls a martyr for American liberty, and the Poles are slaves! My death would be horrible, Lovinski, if I did not cherish a ray of hope. Ah! Can I be mistaken? No, I do not deceive myself,' continued he in a stronger voice. 'A god of consolation has lifted the veil of a happy futurity to me before I close my eyes; I perceive one of the first nations in the world awaking out of a long sleep, and demanding its honour, its ancient privileges, and the sacred and imprescriptible rights of humanity from its oppressors. I see, in an immense capital, long degraded and dishonoured by every species of servitude, a crowd of soldiers prove themselves citizens, and thousands of citizens become soldiers. Under their redoubtable strokes the Bastille crumbles into dust; the signal is given from one extremity of the empire to the other; the reign of tyranny is finished; a neighbouring people, sometimes enemies, but always generous, always capable of great actions, applaud these unexpected efforts, crowned with such prompt success. Ah! May a

reciprocal esteem commence and strengthen between the two nations an unalterable friendship. May that horrible science of fraud and treachery which courts call policy present no obstacle to this fraternal union! Noble rivals in talent, and in philosophy! French, and English, cease at last, cease forever those bloody discords, the fury of which has too often extended itself over both hemispheres! Let the empires of the universe be no longer divided, but by the force of your example, and the asecendancy of your genius, instead of terrifying and enslaving mankind, dispute the glory of enlightening their ignorance, and of breaking their chains.'

"'Approach,' added Pulauski, 'and observe, at some paces from us, in the midst of the slaughter, among so many famous warriors, one celebrated by them all for his heroic courage, his truly republican virtues and his premature talents. He is the heir of a house long illustrious, but he has no need of the glory of ancestors to aggrandise his name: it is the young La Fayette, already honoured by France and dreaded by tyrants; nevertheless, he has scarcely comemenced his immortal labours. Envy his lot, Lovinski, and endeavour to imitate his virtues; tread, as near as thou canst, in the steps of this great man. The worthy pupil of Washington will presently be the Washington of his country. It is nearly at the same time, my friend, it is at this memorable epoch of the regeneration of the people, that eternal justice will also bring back the days of vengeance and liberty for our fellow citizens; then, Lovinski, in whatever place thou mayst be, let thy hatred awake! Thou hast fought so gloriously for Poland! Let the remembrance of our injuries and our exploits stimulate thy courage! Let thy sword, so often wet with the enemy's blood, be again turned upon the oppressors! Let them tremble in again recognising thee! Let them tremble at the remembrance of Pulauski! They have plundered us of our property, they have assassinated thy wife, they have torn away thy daughter, they have tarnished my name! The barbarians have divided our provinces amongst themselves! Lovinski, this is what thou must never forget. When our persecutors are those of our country, vengeance becomes indispensable and sacred. Thou owest the Russians an eternal hatred, thou owest to thy country the last drop of thy blood.'

"Having said this, he expired.<14> Death, striking him, snatched from me my last consolation.

"I fought for the United States up to the happy period which secured their independence. M. de C***, who had long served in America, in the corps commanded by the Marquis de la Fayette, gave me a letter of recommendation to the Baron de Faublas. He took a lively interest in my fate, and we soon became bound in the closest friendship. I only quitted his neighbourhood in the country to establish myself at Paris, where I knew he would not be long in following me. In the meantime, my sisters had collected some small relics of my fortune, formerly immense. They, informed of my arrival here, and of the name I have taken, write to me, that in a few months they will come and console, by their presence, the unfortunate du Portail."

VIII.

Lovinski, having concluded the recital of his eventful history, remained for some time absorbed in painful reflections. At length, he he said had placed his fondest hopes in me; that my father designed me to travel next year. I interrupted M. du Portail, to assure him that I should pass some months in Poland, and that I would neglect nothing that might throw a light on the fate of Dorliska.

It was late when I quitted M. du Portail. Nevertheless, my first care, when I got home, was to call the Abbé Person. He accepted, with gratitude, the ring I had bought him; and, without much pressing, he acknowledged that he had, the night before, informed Adelaide of the strange visit which Madame de B*** had made me. "I noticed that pretty gentleman," he said, "and, if you recollect, you found me on the staircase when M. du Portail said it was the Marchioness de B***." I begged the Abbé to be more reserved for the future, and he left me with fresh assurances of his disinterestedness and discretion. Rosambert was then right! Sophia loves me! An indiscretion of the Abbé had done all the mischief. Sophia was jealous; but how was I to appease her? How dissipate her fears? How contrive to see her? I could have dispensed with going to bed; my uneasiness drove sleep from my eyelids. I was occupied all night with my troubles about Sophia. It must be confessed, nevertheless, that I thought sometimes of the Vicomte de Florville; but the Marchioness was so unhappy! The moments which I gave myself to think of her were so few! The ideas arising from such thoughts were so different! Those must be very severe who could not excuse me. I had not yet determined what course to pursue, when daylight appeared. My counsellor at length arrived to decide me. "Monsieur l'Abbé has done all the mischief," said Rosambert; "and it is for him to repair it. Write a letter for Mademoiselle de Pontis; enclose it in one to Mademoiselle de Faublas, who will not fail to deliver it, and dispatch the Abbé with them immediately." I wrote them.<15> M. Person became the most complaisant of men, and accepted, without hesitation, the delicate commission which I entrusted to his zeal. He executed it with promptness, and brought me an answer from my pretty cousin. It was short, and soon read: Rosambert, leap for joy, kiss these two lines, and listen:

> You say that you do not love the Marchioness: ah! If I could be sure of that!

In the excess of my joy I sprung upon the neck of M. Person. "You are satisfied with this answer," he said: "Well! I have some still better news to inform you of."

"Tell it, my dear governor, tell it quickly."

"Mademoiselle your sister, in the first place, inquired after you with a great deal of interest. When I begged her to forward the enclosure to Mademoiselle de Pontis, she blushed: 'You will tell my brother that since yesterday Sophia, in her grief, has told me everything. You will tell him that I am now better acquainted than he is with his cousin's malady, and that I have even read the recipe he sent her. I am no longer astonished that the Baron was angry. Wait a moment, Monsieur, and I will fetch a letter. It is, perhaps, intruding too much on your goodness, but my brother is grieved my friend is unhappy, and I shall not stand upon ceremonies.'

"She returned a few moments after with this letter. In giving it me, she asked, with some degree of ebarrassment, if they were never to see you. I informed her that the Baron had expressly forbade it. She observed, blushing very much, that Madame Munich seldom rose before ten o'clock, nor was the Baron stirring before that time, and the door of the convent was open by eight precisely. 'Well, mademoiselle,' said. I, 'tomorrow morning your brother—'

"She interrupted me: 'Yes, tomorrow morning. Let him not fail.'"

How slowly did the day pass away! and what a tedious night followed! I was tempted a hundred times to stop my watch, and move on the hands. At length I heard the long-wished hour strike. I flew to the convent. Adelaide came to the conversation-room, accompanied by Sophia.

"Sister! Ah, mademoiselle!"

I pressed their pretty hands, and kissed them by turns. Sophia was so much affected as to be obliged to sit down. "You have given us much uneasiness," she said: and I observed her eyes filled with tears. I cannot express the tenderness of those which I shed!

"You are hurt," said Adelaide.

"No, my dear sister: I never experienced happier moments!"

"Except those which you pass with the Marchioness!" interrupted Sophia, and trembled as she spoke.

"My pretty cousin! My dear Sophia! Do you think that I can love her?"

"Why then see her so often?"

"I will see her no more! I promise you I will see her no more."

"Ah! If you deceive me!"

"Why should he deceive thee, my dear friend? Since he loves thee, it is clear he cannot love this Madame de B***."

"Adelaide, thou dost not know what I feel."

"Oh, yes! I know what jealousy is. Thou hast told me yesterday but it is a feeling which does mischief, and which is not reasonable. Why should my brother tell thee that he loves thee, if he does not?"

"And why did he tell the Marchioness so?"

"Sophia, I swear to you that I adored you from the first moment that I saw you. You alone have caused me to experience that tender and respectful sentiment which is inspired by innocence and beauty, that true love with which one must burn for Sophia. It is you, it is you alone, who have made me feel that I have a heart, and I shall never love any other than yourself.

"Oh, that you knew the pleasure I feel in believing you!" said my pretty cousin. Sophia reclined her head upon the bosom of Adelaide, whom she embraced. "How much thy brother resembles thee, she said, he has thy eyes, thy complexion, thy mouth, thy forehead!"

She embraced her a second time. "Indeed," replied Adelaide, pretending to look serious, you seem now to love me only on his account, and formerly you loved

me for myself. This, then, is what they call love! I confess, that though I found it very sad yesterday, it appears very seducing to-day when will you marry my dear friend, Faublas?"

"The Baron pretends that I am too young; but if mademoiselle is willing—"

"Why do you call me *mademoiselle*? Am I not *pretty cousin*."

"Ah, pretty! More pretty than ever! More than pretty! If you will permit me, I will go and speak to M. de Pontis, I will tell him that I adore his daughter, and that she has chosen me; I will tell him he must give me my wife, he must unite me to Sophia. My father is not at Paris—family affairs—I will tell you all about it—but I must leave you."

"What! Already?"

"Yes, I must go in before Madame Munich wakes."

"Shall I then have the pleasure of seeing you tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow? Every day?"

"No, that cannot be," said Adelaide, "they will observe us. Once a week, brother."

"Oh!" replied Sophia, but thou knowest that Madame Munich sleeps long when she has taken her cups, and you know she drinks very often.

"What! My pretty cousin, your *gouvernante—"*

"Loves wine and strong liquors, she is from Germany."

"Well in that case, I can come here."

"In three or four days," interrupted my sister again. "It will expose us if you come oftener. Sophia, I know, will sigh."

"Ah! yes," she said, "if they are going to separate us! Adieu! My dear cousin." (She retired, and then came back.) "Ah! I beg you will not go near the Marchioness."

"Do not go there, my dear brother," said Adelaide, "do not go there: do you hear me! And if she comes to you, send her away."

I would address myself to such of my readers as have reached their seventieth year, and are afflicted with gout. Age and its infirmities have not always stiffened your limbs and cooled your hearts. There was a time when you also had your appointments: you then started as light and swift as the winds, and came back the same. You remember it, without doubt; and consequently you can judge that my father was still asleep when I reached home. My good fortune occupied my mind the rest of the day, and the night was as short as the one before had appeared long; the most delightful dreams embellished my tranquil sleep; Sophia was present in them; and what perhaps may be difficult to believe, they were graced by Sophia alone, to the exclusion of all other objects. It was near noon when I rung for Jasmin: "You gave me no answer yesterday. How is Madame de B***?"

"Yesterday, Monsieur, you never told me to go."

"What, Jasmin, have you not been there? You know she is ill! Run then quickly."

To send to the Marchioness, was not to go there, it was not breaking my word with Sophia. Besides, there are duties to society, which a man of gallantry cannot dispense with fulfilling. Jasmin returned an hour after. "Mademoiselle Justine told me, Monsieur, that Madame was worse, and it was feared that her fever was more violent."

"They fear that her fever is more violent?"

"Yes, Monsieur, Mademoiselle Justine told me in a whisper, to inform you from her that the Marquis set out this morning for Versailles, where he will stay three days."

"That's good, Jasmin, you may go." The fever becomes more violent! Poor Vicomte de Florville! This is the Baron's doing; it is my ingratitude, for at the bottom she has reason to complain of me: I have deceived her, I should have told her that I loved another. She is getting worse! And if the danger becomes still greater, if the Marchioness perishes in the prime of her life, perishes by a slow and wasting malady, I shall eternally reproach myself with her death. This idea is insupportable! Oh, my Sophia! Thou art very dear to me; but must I, on thy account, leave the Marchioness to die of grief?

I called Jasmin: "Return to Justine, and ask her if I cannot see Madame de B*** in the absence of the Marquis, and soothe her and console her a little. If it can be done, Jasmin, thou wilt inform thyself of the hour, and of the door by which I must enter—in short, thou wilt arrange all that with Justine."

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Make haste."

He was soon back. Justine told him she did not believe the Marchioness was in a state to receive any one—that she knew not whether Madame would be pleased to see Monsieur, but she had only a scolding to risk. I knew the way. This evening, about nine o'clock, I had only to slip in at the great gate, go directly to the private staircase, and open the door of the boudoir with the key which she had given me. As to the rest, if Madame was angry, Justine need take nothing upon her, it should be my own affair. Precisely at nine o'clock I rapped at the door of the Marquis. "What do you want?" cried the porter. "Justine, "I said, and passed on with rapidity. I found Justine standing sentinel in the boudoir:

"How is she?"

"Speak gently."

"She is there then, in the bed-room?"

"Certainly, and in bed."

"Confined to her bed?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"That thoughtless Jasmin never told me of it."

"Is she alone? Her maids—"

"She is alone, Monsieur, but I dare not announce you," she added, putting on a sanctified and hypocritical countenance.

I embraced her: "Stay, do you see that cursed sofa? I shall never forget it while I live;" and I pushed Justine upon it. She appeared sincerely alarmed.

"My God! Madame will hear, she does not sleep." And, indeed, the Marchioness, exerting her faint voice, demanded who was there. Justine opened the chamber door. "It is, Madame—"

I approached the side of the bed I took hold of the charming hand which held the curtains apart. "It is I, it is your lover, who, full of uneasiness—"

"What! Monsieur, who opened the door to you? Who suffered you to come in?"

"I thought that you would excuse me."

"Well sir, and what do you want? To insult my misfortunes, to double my griefs, and to augment my sickness?"

"I come to relieve it."

"To relieve it! Monsieur, do you think I did not hear what your father said, and that I did not read what you had written?" (She made an effort to conceal her tears.)

"Ought you, Madame, to impute the Baron's faults to me? And as to the letter—"

"I do not ask for any explanation, Monsieur, I do not wish for any."

"At least tell me if you feel a little better since yesterday.

"Worse, Monsieur, worse. But what matters it to you? What kind of interest do you take in what concerns me?"

"Can you ask such a question?"

"Without doubt I am injured. I ought to be sufficiently convinced that you do not love me."

"My dear mamma—"

"Cease to use that name, which only reminds me of my faults, and my happiness, alas! Too short! That name which reminds me of a too amiable and much loved child! A child whose false candour seduced me, whose uncommon charms bewildered my reason! I flattered myself at least that his tenderness was the price of mine. Alas! He has coldly betrayed me! Oh, thou cruel one! Young as thou art, thou possessest such astonishing powers of deception!"

"No, I do not deceive you."

"Begone, ungrateful as thou art! Go to your Sophia, and make a merit of my sufferings, tell her that the Marchioness, unworthily sacrificed, curses the hour that she knew you, and that nothing may be wanting to my humiliation, go and find your father, your father, who dared to make a crime of my tenderness for you. Inform him how cruelly his worthy son has punished me. But, Faublas, remember, at least, that this woman, whom they have told you was lively, ardent, passionate, and completely absorbed by a thirst for pleasure, that this woman could not resist the mortification of having been so cruelly treated, and could never be consoled for the loss of you."

"My dear mamma, is it possible that you could mistake the feeling which brings me here?"

"Yes, the pity which you could not refuse to my sufferings—offensive pity!"

"No, love, the most tender love." I took one of her hands, which she no longer withdrew. No one can conceive how much I was affected by her complaints, or how much I suffered in the situation I found myself.

"Ah!" she said, "how well you know my weakness and my credulity. Come, Faublas, sit you down there." (I placed myself on the edge of her bed.) "But if any one should enter! If any one should see you! Be kind enough to call Justine, she is in the boudoir. Justine, let my door be shut to everyone. Tell my maids that I am asleep, and put them well on their guard in the antechamber to let no one in. You will sup here, my friend?"

"With all my heart."

"Order a fowl, Justine. You can tell them that I am drowsy and fatigued, but that before I give myself up to sleep, I wish to have the first cut of a wing; and, above all, I wish to be tranquil. Thou, Justine, wilt have an excessive appetite; thou understandest me well?"

"Yes, Madame," replied the Abigail, laughing, "yes, I must eat as much as two this evening."

As soon as Justine was gone, I pressed the Marchioness in my arms, and after having preluded by little caresses, I was about to push my enterprises still further. I was opposed with a resistance which I little expected; and Justine, who came in with a pullet, obliged me to suspend the attack. The Marchioness would not eat. While I was carving the fowl, I surveyed the apartment with an attention which my fair mistress observed.

"What are you looking at so?"

"This chamber, which I recognise with pleasure. I think it was here—"

The Marchioness comprehended me: "Yes, it was here that the countenance of Mademoiselle du Portail played me so villainous a turn."

"Why villainous?"

"Why? Because Faublas is a deceiver!"

"Ah, you are going to begin the quarrel again! Indeed, mamma, you are very odd this evening. You wish to dispute, and are unwilling that we should be reconciled."

"And justly so, you ungrateful libertine. You have good reason for wishing the contrary. It is to the reconciliation that you look, and for that you would avoid dispute. Since we are upon that subject, ask the Baron if you may—"

"What! Mamma, is it that which prevents it?"

"Whether it is that or anything else, it is certain, Monsieur, that this evening there will be no reconciliation in *that sense*."

"Ah, my dear mamma, it is precisely in *that sense* that there must be one."

"By no means, I assure you."

"I protest that it must be." The determined air in which I said this, appeared to frighten the Marchioness. I perceived her arrange herself in a manner which she

deemed most proper to oppose me. "Yes, yes, you may fortify yourself as much as you please but as soon as I have supped and Justine is gone, you shall see."

"Justine shall not go. Justine, do not leave the room. Chevalier, sit you down here; a little nearer to us; that will do, I have something to say to you." She put one of her arms round me, and rested her head on my shoulder, and after having given me a kiss: "Do you love me, Faublas?" she said, dropping her voice.

"Does my mamma any longer doubt it?"

"I demand a proof of it."

"What is that?" cried I, with great anxiety.

"Not to insist this evening upon an entire reconciliation."

"Why not?"

"I have a fever, my friend, and you will catch it."

"Well, and of what consequence is that?"

"Of what consequence?" she replied, embracing me, "I love that answer, though it is not so wise, as it is flattering to me. My good friend, my dear Faublas, I would not have a happiness which might cost you your health! What woman could be so indelicate as to buy, at such a price, a few moments of fleeting pleasure, which loses its zest in proportion as it is often repeated. What woman is so blind, so insensible, as to give herself up to thee, without yielding to the attractions of pleasure. What! I enervate thy youth! I exhaust thy strength! I impair one of the finest works of nature! Destroy one of its most fascinating master-pieces! No, my dear Faubals, no; to spare thy regrets, I will combat thy desires and my own weakness: thou shalt find me ever ready to sacrifice myself for thy happiness, and, far from preparing sadness and misery for you, I will yield, if it were necessary, my life, to prolong and embellish thine! Oh, most amiable and most valued of lovers! it is not for myself alone that I cherish thee; it is thyself that I adore in thee! My good friend, promise me that thou wilt not insist upon it this evening. I will send away Justine; thou shalt be there, I will see thee, I will hear thee, I will sleep perhaps on thy bosom: I shall be too happy. Give me thy word of honour, my dear friend. Answer me, Chevalier. See how he reflects about so simple a thing!"

The Marchioness was right, I did reflect. I thought of Sophia: I was dedicating to my pretty cousin the honour of the self-denial about to be imposed on me; and this idea, inspiring me with the courage to support the privation, I promised her rival to be prudent. Justine was immediately ordered to retire.

"Faublas, I am pleased with you," replied the Marchioness, with an air of satisfaction. "Let us have a tranquil conversation, it is a pleasure less intense than the other, but more durable. What do you laugh at?"

"At an idea which is perhaps rather singular"

"Tell me, my friend, tell me."

"If they should impose upon a lady who expects her lover, the condition of staying with him two hours, to be occupied in nothing but conversation, or to have him sent away at the end of five minutes, which she might employ according to her taste."

"Many fine ladies, my friend, would find the alternative embarrassing. It is said there are some with whom the pleasure of sentimental conversation is the *ne plus ultra* of love, and that all the other functions of a mistress are performed merely through their complaisance to their lovers. Upon my honour, I think if any such do exist, they are in very small numbers. On the contrary, I assure you, that there are a great many to whom these two hours' chat and inaction would appear very ridiculous. I know some who would rather remain silent all their lives."

"It is not you, mamma."

"Me, I should be of the party who agreed to the two hours."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, my friend. The two hours' conversation shall be for to-day, we will suppose, and the five minutes of rapture be kept for tomorrow."

"For tomorrow? Be sure you keep them in mind then."

"Remember, you have said it."

"Yes, but it was only a supposition."

The Marchioness entered heartily into the conversation which we had together; and I discovered a thousand perfections in her which I had not perceived before. She astonished me by her numerous satirical, ingenious, and brilliant remarks—some of them were even philosophical, but not encumbered by a single moral reflection. What I admired in her above all was, that easy and graceful elocution which is sometimes acquired by an intercourse with the higher orders and that natural wit and shrewdness which is never acquired; a purity of taste, which is much wanted by many of our literati, whom I shall not name, and more general knowledge than usually falls to the lot of a woman who is either pretty or handsome. I thought I had not been with her above a quarter of an hour when the clock struck twelve.

"That's a signal for retreat," she said: "Justine must conduct you herself to the gate, because my porter will not hear reason." (The attentive Abigail ran at the first sound of the bell.) "Justine, you will conduct your swain to the gate."

"How, her swain?"

"Certainly, do you not comprehend that Justine had a young man come to see her this evening, and let him out at midnight, as if he were her sweetheart? I am sure they will talk about it tomorrow in the hall, but Justine knows that I will amply recompense her for what she suffers on my account. Adieu! My dear Faublas, let me see you tomorrow evening about eight o'clock."

"At latest."

"I shall be sick to all the world. Go, Justine, see him down, for we must have some regard to thy reputation; the later he stays, the more they joke at thy expense. Go without a light, that they may not see you on the private staircase; and go gently, that you may not hurt yourselves."

Justine and I entered the boudoir. I took care to shut the door which communicated with the bed-room, whilst Justine was feeling for that which led to the private staircase. Instead of following my conductress, who held her hand out to me, I drew her gently towards myself. "You remember, my dear," I said, in a whisper, "the

scene which took place on the sofa, I wish to revenge myself, you must assist me, say not a word." Justine, at all times willing to serve me, seconded me so cordially on the sofa, that the Marchioness herself could not have done better, I never had a greater proof how right he was who first wrote, "Revenge is the pleasure of the gods."

If any one would penetrate my feelings on this occasion, let them consider my age, and the situation in which I was placed, and they will easily calculate that I could not fail of attending to the appointment for the next evening. The Marchioness expected me with impatience, she addressed me by the most tender appellations, and caressed me in a very flattering manner. She even satisfied my curiosity, always on the alert, by a complaisance from which I augured most favourably; but, as on the preceding night, she damped my transports at the moment I thought they would be crowned; and pretending still to have the cursed fever, she continued resolutely to refuse me the most certain proof of a mistress's tenderness, that proof so dear to all young persons, and so necessary to the most ardent of all! I supported my mortification very patiently, in hopes that the less fascinating Justine would have pity on me at the moment of my departure. But no; the Marchioness, who was no longer confined to her bed, conducted me herself to the private staircase. I could plainly perceive that Justine participated in my pain and disappointment, but the kind soul could give no consolation to me in the court-yard, and I went home very chaste and much vexed.

Rosambert, whom I informed of my fair mistress's rigour, did not appear at all astonished at it. He said: "I have already told you that Madame de B*** 's conduct is regulated according to circumstances and events. Whatever may be the physical qualities and moral faculties of Mademoiselle de Pontis, since the Chevalier loves her, she is, in his eyes, both witty and pretty. This passion is legitimate, honourable and virtuous; 'tis a first amour. It has sprung from sympathy, it lives by privations, it increases by obstacles, and is cherished by hope. Mademoiselle de Pontis is then, a dangerous rival. And such, without doubt, the Marchioness thinks her. But after having examined the means of her enemy, she calculates on her own strength, and the weakness of the young Adonis, whose irresolution is the object of contention."

"Irresolute, Rosambert?"

"Yes, I say irresolute, at present. You adore one, but you cannot resolve to give up the other. At your age the attractions of pleasure have an irresistible power: you know to what pleasure I allude. Sophia cannot yield it you: it is Madame B*** who is the interested dispensatrix of it. Well, my friend, her plan is to irritate unceasingly your desires, satisfying them sometimes, but never to exhaust them. It is to render her favours more precious that she will be hereafter more sparing of them. You must not think that she will suffer like you from the deprivations she is about to impose on you; but whatever it costs her, she has sworn to keep you."

It is now time to return to Sophia. The third day at length arrived, and I could go to the convent to see my pretty cousin. Oh! How much handsomer she had grown within the last three days. During two months I had the happiness of speaking with her regularly twice a week. Oh, the wonderful power of virtue and beauty united! Whenever I quitted Sophia, I always thought it was impossible for me to love her better than I did; and every time I saw her, I felt my love increased. It must be acknowledged, nevertheless, that in the course of these two months I often saw the beautiful Marchioness, who, still attached to the plan of reform which she had adopted, economised our pleasures to such a degree as to refuse me sometimes even

what was necessary. It must also be confessed that my good-natured Justine came to me sometimes, incognito, in order to secure the savings of her mistress. M. du Portail, impatient to recover his dear daughter, had set out, about six weeks past, for Russia, in hopes of procuring some information as to the fate of Dorliska. One evening, as I was with Rosambert at the opera, we met the Marquis de B*** there. His salutation to the Count was coldly polite, but he addressed himself to me in the most flattering manner. He complained that, for the last two months, he had not had the pleasure of meeting with me, and inquired after the health of my father.

"He is well, Monsieur, he is in Russia."

"Ah! It is true, then?"

"Most assuredly. And how is Mademoiselle du Portail?"

"My sister retains her health wonderfully."

"Is she always at Soissons?"

"Always."

"And when will she come back here?"

"At the next carnival," replied Rosambert immediately. To turn aside this pleasantry, of which I feared the result, I assured the Marquis that my sister was coming to pass the winter at Paris.

"But, replied M. de B***, you will no longer reside at the Arsenal?"

"Always, Monsieur."

"In that case, recommend your servants to be a little more civil and attentive. They have indeed told me that your father was gone to Russia, but when I enquired after yourself and your sister, they answered me, abruptly, that M. du Portail had no children."

"It is because his father is very strict," interrupted Rosambert, "he does not suffer them to receive any one.

"Yes, Monsieur, the answer you received is no doubt the result of orders given by my father."

"Well, indeed, I thought your father had been more reasonable, a young man ought to have a little liberty. A young lady is very different, one cannot watch the girls too closely! And I know some young ladies, very well bred, who are not kept sufficiently, who have been suffered to form bad connections. (In saying this, he gave a malicious glance at M. de Rosambert.) But for you it is too rigorous. But, hear me! I wish to procure you some pleasure, some relaxation. The Marchioness is here: I will introduce you to her."

"I cannot, Monsieur."

"Come, come; she will receive you well."

"I do not doubt it, if presented by you, but, Monsieur—"

"But wherefore all these scruples," said Rosambert, "the Marchioness is very amiable."

"Is it not true?" replied the Marquis, addressing himself first to the Count, and afterwards to me, "is it not true that my wife is very amiable? She has a great deal of wit, or I should not have married her."

"It is true that the Marchioness possesses great wit, and Monsieur knows it well," cried Rosambert.

"Monsieur knows it well!" replied the Marquis.

"Yes, mademoiselle my sister has told me so."

"Ah, mademoiselle your sister! Yes, I assure you, Monsieur, that my wife is only wanting in a little more physiognomical knowledge. But that will come, that will come; I have already observed that she has a natural taste for fine countenances. Yours, Monsieur du Portail, is very prepossessing, and then you have a very singular resemblance to your sister, whom the Marchioness loves very much. Come, follow me; I will go and present you to the Marchioness."

"Indeed, Monsieur, I am much hurt that I cannot accept your polite offers; but I am come from home by stealth; I am going to hide myself, in the pit; I cannot appear in a box, if any of my father's friends should see me, they will surely write to him, and you can have no idea of the noise he will make about it on his return."

"Some parents are very ridiculous. I knew I had something to ask of you, Monsieur, do you know one M. de Faublas?"

"No," answered I drily.

"But the Count, perhaps, knows him," continued the Marquis.

"De Faublas?" replied Rosambert: "Yes, I think I have heard that name, I have seen it somewhere!" (He took the Marquis by the hand, and pretending to speak lower:) "Never speak of Faublas before the Du Portails, the two families are inimical to each other. There will be blood spilt the first opportunity."

"Everything is discovered, then," replied the Marquis in a low voice.

"What do you mean by everything?" replied Rosambert.

"Good! You understand the rest."

"No, the devil a bit."

"Oh yes!" but you are right; situated as you are, I should be equally discreet as yourself."

"Upon my honour I do not comprehend a word."

"Come, let us drop it," said the Marquis. (Then elevating his voice:) "But tell me, Rosambert, for I am a good devil, and know not how to bear malice, tell me why you have not been to see us for these six weeks?"

"Business."

"Good! Business! Mistresses! I am not to be caught; it won't do! I hope, at least, you are willing to come and say 'How d'ye do' to the Marchioness."

"Most assuredly."

"Chevalier, you will prefer waiting here a moment for me."

The Marquis, on leaving me, regretted very much that he could not have the pleasure of introducing me to his wife. Rosambert came to me, laughing, in about a quarter of an hour.

"Madame de B*** did not appear displeased at seeing me," he said, "she received me politely, and we behaved reciprocally as acquaintances who recollected to have met each other often in company. She was, nevertheles, much astonished when the Marquis told her I was here with M. du Portail, junior, who did not dare come and present his respects. You can conceive that all being finished between Madame de B*** and me, I did not try to augment the embarrassment of her situation; on the contrary, I have charitably aided her to deceive myself, and I entered into all her ideas as kindly as her dear husband. What is very singular, I have from time to time found great obscurities in this pleasant affair, which, in other respects, has greatly amused me. You will explain that to me, Faublas. For, although M. de B*** spoke in a low tone on those points, I have, nevertheless, heard all he said to the Marchioness: 'Madame, I told you truly that Mademoiselle du Portail was not a prudent girl. It is all discovered! The Du Portails are furious, and if they meet this M. de Faublas they will punish him. I am sure that the journey of the daughter to Soissons, and of M. du Portail to Russia, are only pretences. The father, however, has well merited it; he is horribly strict with his son, and lets his daughter do as she pleases.' This is as near as possible," continued the Count, "what the Marquis said. You must know what he means, Faublas, do me the honour to explain it." I recounted to Rosambert how the Marquis found my pocket book in a bad house, how he had proved to his wife that Mademoiselle du Portail was a w——, how the Marchioness made him give her the letters on the sofa when I was present. The Count gave free course to his gaiety, and concluded by wishing to know why I refused to be introduced to the Marchioness. "My friend, if I was foolishly smitten by Madame de B***, and had no other means of seeing her, I should have embraced that chance, but since we meet so easily, sometimes at one place and sometimes at another, and since we are never at a loss for a rendezvous, why should I again court danger under this new character?"

"Why, it would have produced some agreeable scenes. Had the Marchioness been in your place she would not have hesitated."

After the performance was over I followed Rosambert to the box of Mademoiselle —— with whom he was particularly acquainted. A female dancer was with the princess. "He is pretty, said one of them, after having measured me with her eye in a dignified manner. "It is Love", replied the other, "or it is the Chevalier de Faublas!" I returned my warmest thanks to the polite person who addressed, me so flattering a compliment.

"Chevalier," she said, "I have seen you somewhere before, and for some months past have heard you spoken of almost every day. You may make a very handsome girl, but, for my part, I prefer a pretty youth."

I turned towards the Count: "Rosambert, it seems that you have exposed me." He declared, upon his honour, he had not. In the meantime the ladies whispered in each others' ears, and Coralie (which was the name of the dancer) Coralie laughed as if she was mad. Need I say that a party of four was immediately formed, that we supped at the house of the goddess, that I saw the nymph home, and partook of her bed? Who knows not, that at the opera, the divinities are but weak mortals; that, of all places in the world, passions are managed in the most clever manner; that it is there,

above all, an affair of the heart commences and finishes on the same evening? Coralie was neither handsome nor pretty, but she had a vivacity which pleased, and graces which attracted; one listened with pleasure to somewhat impudent, provoked desire; as to the her agreeable jargon; gaiety was stamped upon her forward countenance; and her deportment, somewhat impudent, provoked desire, as to the rest, tall and well made, delicate hands, small feet, and a skin most beautifully fine.

Coralie was, besides, complete mistress of all the secrets in the art of Cyprian pleasure. She called into action, with great discernment, all the resources of her trade. In short, both Justine and Madame de B*** were forgotten in the arms of Coralie. But, by a singularity which I cannot explain, the image of the most pure virtue presented itself to my mind, while I was reclining on the bosom of libertinism; and, what is not less worthy of remark, that I endeavoured to speak in one of those moments when the most thoughtless men, who are exempt from all distractions, let but the shortest monosyllables or stifled sighs escape. "Ah, Sophia!" cried I; "I should have said, Ah, Coralie!"

"Sophia!" Repeated the nymph, "do you know her? She is a fool! A ninny! A stupid creature, who has never been pretty, but is now a wrinkled hag, and to whom it happened last week—"

She could say no more, but though she had spoken so prodigiously quick, she had so well employed her time, that I knew not whether most to admire the astonishing agility of her pliant body, or the extreme volubility of her nimble tongue. It was ten in the morning when I left Coralie. The Baron, informed of my absence, had waited impatiently for my return. He reminded me, in a severe tone, that he had begged I would never sleep from home. I went up into my own room; the Abbé was waiting for me, I was going to reproach him for betraying me, but he prevented me, by observing that it was impossible the Baron should remain ignorant of this nocturnal slip: that in such cases it was the duty of the governor to inform the father, and that to let the porter or some other servant anticipate him in his duty, would risk the discovery of our mutual understanding. I had no reply to make to such good reasons, and my mind was fully occupied with other matters. Jasmin came to bring me a letter, which had been left above an hour. I was surprised to see it addressed to Mademoiselle du Portail. I broke the seal immediately, and read:

> A person who starts this evening for Versailles assures me that Mademoiselle du Portail is not at Soissons, and that there is no doubt but she conceals herself in the environs of Paris. If that is the case, that charming girl, who ought to remember me, will put on her English riding-habit, and mount her horse tomorrow morning to meet me in the Wood of Boulogne, at eight o'clock precisely. She will come with only one servant, disguised as a citizen, to the Gate of Boulogne.
> I am, if it may be believed,
> Him whom she still loves, &c.
> Le Vicomte De Florville.

"Indeed," cried I, "I have promised the Vicomte de Florville this meeting a long time since. Jasmin, thou must go with me." I went to buy a fine set of china, and sent Jasmin with it as a present to Coralie, who resided in La Rue Melée, Port St. Martin. When my servant returned, I asked what Mademoiselle Coralie said: "She made me Monsieur, repeat your name several times. 'Is it from the Chevalier de Faublas? A young man? Quite young? Who is not above seventeen?' 'But, Mademoiselle,' I replied, 'do you not know him?' She answered: 'Yes, but he had

better explain himself. You will tell the Chevalier de Faublas I expect to sup with him tomorrow.'"

"To sup tomorrow, Jasmin? That is badly arranged: I shall pass the day with the Vicomte de Florville. Well, never mind, I will not disoblige Coralie."

Jasmin left me, and I became absorbed in reflection."Oh, my pretty cousin, how I wrong thee! How unfaithful I am to thee! Unfaithful! No. I yield to my mistress but an impure sacrifice, which my virtuous lover would reject, which would profane the charms of Sophia. But Madame de B***, Justine, Coralie, at the same time! Three at once! Well, if they were a hundred, what matters it? If Madame de B*** was beloved, should I give her rivals? Would the Marchioness occupy me if I had a serious attachment for Justine or Coralie? No, no. These three intrigues are of no consequence, they are but whims of the day, the effervescence of youth. The Marchioness, it is true, appears more amiable to me than the other two, but it is only my pretty cousin who inspires me with a pure and disinterested love. Yes, my Sophia, my dear Sophia, it is clear I love none but thee!"

The next morning, Jasmin and myself were at the gate of Boulogne by eight o'clock precisely. I had on my English Amazonian dress, and the white beaver hat. The country people stopped to look at me. Some cried out: "There is a pretty woman!" "That Englishwoman sits her horse well," said others, and my pride was flattered by these frequent exclamations. The Vicomte de Florville had not waited long for me: he was mounted on a very pretty horse, which he managed with more grace than strength.

"We will go, fair lady, if it is agreeable to you, and breakfast at St. Cloud."

"Most willingly, Monsieur: but where do we alight? At an inn?

"No, no, my good friend."

"How? Your good friend! Do you forget that you are speaking to Mademoiselle du Portail?"

"Yes, my friend, I forgot it, and I even forget that I am for to-day the Vicomte de Florville. Myself a rash young man, and you a mad-brained girl! Faublas, do you not think that is very singular? "

"Very singular. But I shall consider you all this day as the Vicomte de Florville, and myself Mademoiselle du Portail. Let us keep that well in mind. Whichever of the two makes a mistake, shall give a kiss to the other."

"I consent to that, Mademoiselle du Portail, with all my heart."

When we arrived at St. Cloud, we were mutually indebted, to the amount of fifty kisses at least. The Vicomte invited me to get down about a musket's shot from the bridge. We entered a pretty little house, but I saw no one in it. It was but one story high. The apartment which the Vicomte opened was more convenient than elegant. "Excuse me, mademoiselle, but I must go and put the horses in the stable." He returned immediately, and told me he had ordered Jasmin to get his breakfast where he pleased, and to come to us in an hour. He then showed me, in a closet, some cold meats, some dessert, and good wines.

"We shall have but poor cheer, mademoiselle, but we shall not be troubled with our servants."

"Very good, Vicomte; let us begin by paying our debts."

"Fie, for shame! A young lady talk so! Besides, I wish to eat a bit."

The Vicomte de Florville, like a fine lady, only picked a wing. Mademoiselle du Portail, very badly educated, ate like a lawyer's clerk. Those fines, which ought to have been discharged, I was shuffled out of. I wished to kiss the Vicomte: "Mademoiselle," he said, "the attack belongs to me."

He took me by the hand, led me from the table, and wished to embrace me. I repulsed him in a very lively manner: "Let me alone, Monsieur, you are very impertinent."

The Vicomte, more obstinate than enterprising, seemed only desirous of stealing a kiss, and laughed heartily at the resistance with which he was opposed. Apparently more accustomed to resist than to pursue, he employed in the attack a great deal of address and little strength. Mademoiselle du Portail, on the contrary, reversed the general custom, and exhibited in her defence very little grace and much strength. The Vicomte, presently exhausted, fell upon a couch:

"That girl is a dragon," he cried, "it would take a Hercules to subdue her. How wise dame Nature is! She has made other women mild and weak! I see plainly that all is for the best, in this best of all possible worlds! Come on, let everything take its proper order, and be appeased, thou spiteful girl. I am no more than the Marchioness de B***; the Vicomte de Florville yields to you all his rights."

For this once, I made use of the permission without abusing it, and we presently replaced ourselves at table.

"You will think, perhaps, Faublas, that I have singular fancies, but I beg you will not refuse."

"Can I do it? What is it?"

"I wish for your portrait, my dear friend."

"Does my dear mamma call that a singular fancy? It is a very natural wish, in which I participate. Would it be an indiscretion to ask for yours?"

"No, my friend, but it is for that of Mademoiselle du Portail that I wish."

"Ah! I understand you; and it is that of Vicomte de Florville which you shall give me."

"Precisely."

"I will get it executed tomorrow; we will see which of the two will be first done."

"Yours, most assuredly: you are not constrained, Faublas: as for me, I can only give the painter a few moments by stealth. You can easily guess that it is not at home that this miniature will be taken."

"Where, then, mamma?"

"At the house of that milliner, in the boudoir, which you know. I always leave these clothes in a closet there, of which I keep the key."

"What, was it there where you dressed this morning?"

"Undoubtedly, my friend. Under pretence of taking the air in the Champs Elysées, I came out in my morning gown with Justine. We went immediately to the milliner's, where the metamorphosis was effected, and from thence I was conducted in a hackney chariot to a livery stable, where I hired my horse: thus, out of a Marchioness I was made a Vicomte. Justine is at liberty for the whole day; she will meet me about seven in the evening at the milliner's, when I go to put on my gown. When I arrive at home, I shall say, without affectation, that I met the Countess de —— in the Champs Elysées—but I think I hear Jasmin. Let us take a ride, my dear Faublas, and we will come back here to dinner. We remounted our horses. After several long circuits, we found ourselves, towards noon, at the Bridge of Sèvres, which we passed, to go on the high road which leads to Paris. A splendid carriage, drawn by four horses, and preceded by a servant on horseback, was coming towards us. The brilliant equipage was not more than ten paces from us, when the Marchioness turned her horse and repassed the bridge at full gallop. I thought that her horse had been frightened and had run away. At the moment I had given a stroke of the spur to follow her, I saw a person thrust his head out of the window, and address me as Mademoiselle du Portail, when, hearing it was the Marquis de B***, I started full stretch after the Marchioness, who had left the main road, and crossed the fields. Justin galloped behind me, and cried out that we were pursued. Presently I heard our enemy, already very near us, urging still faster the excellent horse on which he was mounted. I turned round suddenly and riding directly against the zealous courier, saluted him with a severe stroke of my whip. Jasmin, burning to imitate his master, had his arm already lifted up. The poor servant, astonished that a young lady could strike him so hard, and restrained, without doubt, by the respect he thought he owed to my sex, as well as my rank; or perhaps by the idea of an unequal combat, since Jasmin held himself ready to assist me, and not knowing whether to defend himself or fly, looked at me with an air of stupefaction. I determined his resolutions by this fierce harangue, pronounced, nevertheless, in a tone sufficiently feminine.

"You rascal, I will cut you in the face if you follow me, if you turn back, there is wherewithal to drink my health."

He took my crown, and praising, after his manner, my strength and my generosity, returned as quickly as he came. Thus disembarrassed of my enemy, I looked around to discover the Marchioness. She had either greatly moderated the speed of her horse or she had stopped, for I perceived that she was not advanced far before us. We joined her in a few minutes, and I gave her an account of the manner in which I had received the envoy of the Marquis. "It was time for me to start," she said, "for I did not recognise the coachman and the horses until it was almost too late.2

"But why, my dear mamma, did you leave me without warning me?"

"Because it was too late, and we were pressed upon too closely. That riding-habit, which the Marquis knew, had betrayed you. I was willing that he should be all at once sure of his prey."

"I do not comprehend your reason."

"It is, nevertheless, very simple. It was of little consequence the Marquis seeing you, provided he did not see me. I calculated that, from the moment he recognised Mademoiselle du Portail, he would no longer concern himself about anything else. In leaving you there, I secured my retreat."

"Ah, well contrived. But what will the Marquis say?"

(The Marchioness came close to me, and whispered with a smile.) "He will say that Mademoiselle du Portail is a w—. He will positively announce to me that she is in the environs of Paris, and that he met her with that M. de Faublas, and the pleasure of having guessed all that will console him for the little mortification caused by the happiness of his rival. But," she added in a more serious tone, "my tender spouse repays me well for the infidelities I lend him."

"How so?"

"Do you not see that? He set out last night for Versailles, where he is only now going; consequently, he slept in Paris. He has deceived me!" she continued, laughing with all her might; "he has been even with me!"

"Be sure you do not pardon him for this offence, mamma. Come and revenge yourself at St. Cloud."

"At St. Cloud? No, indeed, no; it would he hazarding too much, we should be as thoughtless as children to do so. By this time M. de B*** is, perhaps, at Sèvres: the poor La Jeunesse—

"Mamma, is the man that I thrashed called La Jeunesse?"

"Yes, my friend, if it was him who preceded the carriage, he is called La Jeunesse."

"But since you have seen him near enough to know him, perhaps he has also recognised you."

"Impossible, my friend, in this male attire, with my hat slouched over my eyes: no, I am easy. I presume, then, that this poor La Jeunesse, already returned, will relate to the Marquis the unhappy adventure that he met with. At present my penetrating husband reflects, comments, guesses; he concludes, I am sure, that you reside at Sèvres, or not far from it. I would wager that, curious to discover your retreat, he will order La Jeunesse to scour the environs, to search, to wait, and examine well every face he meets with. No, my friend, it is not to St. Cloud we must go: let us return to Paris. I will take the nearest road to arrive at the milliner's where you will not delay to join me. It is in the boudoir that we will dine, it is there that you will keep me company until the return of Justine."

We separated about a quarter of a league from the capital. I wished Jasmin to follow the Marchioness, but she observed that a young cavalier could travel alone, but that it would not be becoming for a pretty girl, and particularly one in my equipage, to travel without at least one domestic. Madame de B*** entered by the Gate de la Conference; Jasmin and myself by the Barrière du Roule, and went direct to the milliner's, at whose door we found a country lad, holding a horse by the bridle, and who put into the hands of Jasmin a little bit of paper with these words on it: "Jasmin, take my horse to M. Farrante's livery stables, and tell him it came from the Vicomte de Florville."

I did not leave the boudoir until eight in the evening. The Marchioness, still faithful to her economical principles, sent me away in such a condition as still left me hopes of behaving in a manner sufficiently gallant to Coralie. I went home in the first place, to change my female attire, and was at the lodging of the opera dancer before ten o'clock.

"Good evening to you, my little Chevalier, let us sit down to supper immediately."

"Most willingly."

"I have been waiting above half an hour on purpose to scold you."

"For what?"

"Because you use me ill. I have always a middle-aged man who pays me for being loved, and a fancy youth, whom I love without being paid. Some ladies of my profession go still further; for in addition to their keeper and their fancy-man, they have a tall footman, as robust as Hercules, whom they pay for loving them. As to myself, I have not such extraordinary wants, I do not wish for a satyr; I can be satisfied with my fancy-man."

"Well, Coralie, what has that to do with the scolding you were to give me?"

"You shall hear: The gentleman who pays, I have, but must not tell you his name, for very sufficient reasons; now you are a pretty youth who loves me: is it not true?"

"After the scolding—"

"You shall see; I have taken you because you please me: I shall quit you, when you please me no longer. Well, to the point. Why, I do not expect presents from you, you have made me one which I will not have.2

"What, the set of china?"

"Yes."

"But I'll not take it back. Besides, Coralie, your arrangements do not suit me; I wish to be independent, and to pay."

"You are too young, Chevalier, and you are not rich enough. And then you will make a bad market. You are handsome and witty: yet, as soon as you pay, I should love you no longer. I cannot tell how it happens, but it is so with all of us! A bank note is, for him that gives it, a sure pledge of infidelity."

"I have given you no money, it was but a small present."

"I do not desire it.

"I repeat it, that I will not take it back."

"In that case, I will throw it out of the window."

"If it amuses you."

We disputed some time, when Coralie's servant ran in, greatly alarmed, and cried out: "It is he!"

"Indeed!" repeated the mistress. The two women seized me by the arms, dragged me into the bedroom, opened a little door at the extremity, and passed me through it. I found myself in a narrow passage which went all round the apartments. I was angry, and I laughed at the same time: one pulled me by the arms, the other pushed me by the shoulders, and proceeded so rapidly that I was soon at the outer door. I went home, and slept comfortably. The Baron was still out.

The next morning I sent for a skilful painter, and devoted the day to Mademoiselle du Portail. When the artist left me, I received an invitation from Coralie for the same evening. The adventure of the previous night was very disagreeable, but let it be recollected that I was only seventeen, and, at that age, who ever refuses to pass a night with an agreeable girl? Does any young man pretend that he would have resisted had he been in my place? Let him be produced! If he is not ill, I'll tell him he is a liar. The most robust man is not indefatigable. In the middle of the night I fell asleep in the arms of the dancer; the noise of a bell, very loudly rung, woke me about seven in the morning.

"I'd wager," said Coralie, "that those two fools there, have gone out at the same time without their keys, though I remind them of it every day! Have the goodness, chevalier, to open the door for me. I ran in my shirt, and even without any slippers, I opened the door, and beheld a man! I see—I think I am deceived; I rub my eyes, I look again, and cry out: "What!" Can it be him? "What! Is it you, my father?"

Illustration: What! Is it you, my father?"

The Baron started back with surprise on recognising me; addressed to me, with great violence, a very useless question: "What do you here, sir?" What could I reply? I kept a profound silence. In the meanwhile, at the sound of his voice, which she

thought she knew, Coralie ran to us in her chemise, intending, however, to put on her slippers; but to much in a hurry to be particular, she had thrust her little feet into my shoes. The nymph, on arriving at the spot, was struck with the comic effect of so unexpected a rencontre. She admired the mute astonishment of the father, motionless with rage, and leaning on the rail of the stairs; and the son, almost naked, standing like an image in the middle of the antechamber. Her proceeding in this case was singular; she threw her arms on my neck, and leaning her head against mine, one would have thought she was embracing me, she did nothing, however, but laugh, and laughed so loud, that all the neighbours might have heard her. The Baron blushed and turned pale by turns. He came in, shut the door, and bolted it. Coralie ran in, continued laughing, and I followed her. My father rushed after us into the bed-room. He made a menacing gesture, and was going to break the furniture. I seized his cane, already raised up: "Ah, father, do you forget that your son is here?"

This exclamation, perhaps a little bold, produced all the effect I had expected from it. The Baron, somewhat calmed, though still greatly affected, threw himself into an armchair, and ordered me to dress myself. Coralie had shut herself up in her dressing-room, where she laughed at her ease; she partly opened her door, to give me my shoes, and take her own. I was soon dressed, and we came away. The Baron had arrived there on foot, and without servants, therefore we got into a hackney coach. Though the distance was great, my father, gloomy and pensive, said not a word to me on the road, but when we reached our house, and the door was opened to us, he bade me follow him. It happened to be one of the mornings which I had marked for a visit to the convent; and, as I saw the hour at which Sophia expected me, swiftly gliding by, I pretended to have urgent business. My father insisted on my remaining in a manner which seemed more like a request. We went up into his apartment, where he ordered that no one should intrude upon us. He told me to sit down, and placed himself near, continuing silent for some time, but at length addressed me as follows:

"Faublas, forget for a moment that I am your father, and answer me as your friend. Were you with Coralie the night before last, between ten and eleven o'clock?"

"Yes, father."

"It was you, then, who were supping with her when I arrived. It is true. The noise which you made in going out gave me suspicion, which I dissembled; I pretended a journey into the country, that I might surprise my happier rival, but I did not imagine that it was the Chevalier de Faublas."

"The Baron does not wrong me so much as to think I was aware of the rivalship?"

"No, my friend, no. I know that, amidst all the errors of your age, you have seldom failed in the respect you owe to a father who loves you; I do not suppose you capable of coolly contemplating to mortify me. There remain now, Faublas, but few questions to ask. Is it long that you have known Coralie?"

"Within these four days. And you have passed with her—"

"Two nights."

"Two nights in four days! Two whole nights! What a thoughtless youth! And how have you recompensed her favours?"

"I have made her but a very small present."

"What! Can it be you who gave her the Sèvres china which I saw there the day before yesterday, I believe?"

"Yes, father."

"When a young man like you has the misfortune to be attracted by an opera girl, he ought to pay more generously. Stay here, and I will return to you presently."

He made me wait long enough, and came back at length with some paper in his hand.

"Take it, Faublas, and read—"

> Coralie, I leave you; and I think that the furniture, jewellery, and diamonds, which I have given you, will be a sufficient acquittance on my part towards you.

When I had finished reading this short epistle, my father sealed it. He then presented me a fresh sheet of paper, and I wrote, under his dictation, as follows:

> Coralie, I have done with you; and, as I value the two nights I passed with you at five and twenty Louis, I send you three bank-notes for two hundred francs each.

"You see, my son," he said, "that I profit by the lesson you have given me. Why should you be less docile than myself, and continue to reject my advice? You went out again the day before yesterday in that Amazonian habit which I forbade you to re-assume: you see the Marchioness every day: you have Coralie at the same time: and you have still another, perhaps, of which I am ignorant: be prudent then, and husband your health. You know not how precious is this blessing of which you are so lavish! And besides, since we have been at Paris, your studies have been shamefully neglected. It is not sufficient to be expert in corporeal exercises; it is also necessary to cultivate the mind. If you are clever in the use of arms, it is all very well, because it is necessary that a gentleman should know how to fight; but evil be to him who loves to shed blood! But the passion for the chase, the rage for dancing, and the love of horses, will last but for a time. You love music, it is true, and that may fill agreeably a few leisure hours; but that will not suffice. If you attain your fortieth year without knowing anything but the use of a gun, the management of a horse, and the arts of dancing and singing, you will find the autumn of your life very dull and tiresome: you will find the days drag listlessly along, and regret that your youth was spent in empty pleasures! You want not understanding, Faublas: make the best of your time hereafter in the study of *belles-lettres* and philosophy, those all-powerful and respectable resources embellish our riper years, and alleviate our old age; they occupy the leisure of the rich, and lighten the labours of the poor, they console us in our misfortunes, and aggrandise us in our prosperity. Commence, my friend, by going less frequently to see the Marchioness de B***, you will find a double advantage in it; you will have more time to employ in useful pursuits, and in less dangerous pleasures; you will improve your morals, and not exhaust your constitution. As to your passion at the convent, I will not speak about it, I know you are already reasonable on that very essential point. Madame Munich, with whom I was speaking the other day, told me she had not seen you these two months. I am satisfied with you, Faublas. Should you deceive the Marchioness, or some other fool, they cannot complain of an evil they have sought for. And if any inconveniences should happen to yourself from such a connection, it cannot affect your honour. But, to take advantage of youthful innocence!—I should never have pardoned you."

Whilst the Baron was congratulating me on my indifference for Mademoiselle de Pontis, I could scarcely contain myself, and groaned with impatience to see the appointed hour slip by.

The messenger, who was sent to the opera girl, returned. "Coralie," he said, "laughed very much at the name of Faublas. She thanked the Baron; and, as to the Chevalier, 'I accept what he has sent me,' she said, 'but, indeed, he has had nothing for it.'"

I went up to my own room, stung with vexation at having been baulked in my visit to the convent. The artist was waiting to finish the portrait, which was much advanced the day before. It was necessary to put on the Amazonian habit to represent Mademoiselle du Portail, and afterwards to become the Chevalier de Faublas again in order to dine with the Baron.

When I retired from the table to my own apartment, I found the old woman who brought the letters from my sister, waiting for me. She said, "Adelaide was surprised at not having seen me this morning, and begged I would come to the convent immediately." I ran there instantly, and Adelaide brought her dear friend, accompanied by Madame Munich, who did not appear angry.at seeing me again after so long an absence.

I was obliged to hear several long stories, to which I pretended to listen; and as it behoved me, at all events, to gain the interest of the *gouvernante*, with whose propensities I was acquainted, I promised to send her a bottle of excellent brandy which had been presented to me. This was an unlucky day. On leaving the conversation-room, I met my father, who was just entering it.

"It is thus, then, that I am obeyed!" he said in a low voice: "it is thus they trifle with me! If you will not renounce this foolish amour, you will compel me to use rigorous measures."

When I returned home, I wrapped up my portrait, which was just finished, with great care, and told Jasmin to take the little packet, early the next morning, to Justine, who would deliver it to Madame de B***, and the bottle of brandy to Madame Munich, at the Convent de ——. My very punctual servant started early, and came home late. He had drank so much, that I could not collect from him any satisfactory answer; but the manner in which he executed my double commission, produced, in the evening, a letter and a message. The letter from Madame de B*** thanked me very much for my charming present, and asked me what I wished her to do with it. I told Madame Dutour that I did not comprehend what the Marchioness meant.

"It is not in my power to tell you, sir, but she will no doubt explain it to you herself tomorrow morning, at her milliner's; do not fail to be there by eight o'clock, precisely, because at ten she sets out for Versailles."

"You may assure her, Madame Dutour, that I will be punctual." About an hour after came the old woman, to whom I never gave half-a-crown without making her dance for joy. She informed me that Mademoiselle de Pontis had something very particular to communicate, and begged me to come to the conference-room the next morning by eight, or a little after.

"Ah, my good lady! I would rather pass the night at the door of the convent than make Mademoiselle de Pontis wait a quarter of an hour."

As soon as the old woman received her money, she made her obeisance, and departed. Tomorrow, by eight precisely, at the convent! Tomorrow, at the boudoir, by eight precisely! Oh, this time, Madame de B***, you will be neglected. If you wish that I should attend to your appointments, you must never make them at that hour which Mademoiselle de Pontis chooses for hers. A look, a single look of my pretty cousin, is more precious to me than the last favour of the most beautiful woman! Even of a woman so fascinating as yourself, and all the Marchionesses in the universe are not worth a hair of my Sophia's head. As soon as the doors of the convent were open, I enquired for Adelaide. She came down to the hall, and her fair friend was not long in following her.

"Good morning to you, Monsieur," said Sophia.

"Monsieur!" cried I.

"Look here, Monsieur," said Adelaide, presenting me with a packet.

"And do you also, my dear, address me as 'Monsieur?'"

"Take it, then. Your servant, Jasmin, was tipsy yesterday; he delivered that portrait to Madame Munich. And the bottle of brandy," said Sophia, "he has taken to the Marchioness de B***. Yes, brother, yes, you abuse my friendship, you deceive the tenderness of Sophia, who exposes herself to trouble every day on your account! and I had a terrible scolding yesterday from the Baron. It is not handsome, Monsieur."

"When he has caused us to die with grief," added Sophia, sobbing, "he will regret his cousin and his sister." (I wished to take her hand, but she drew it away.)

"Have done with your caresses, Monsieur, they are agreeable, but they are deceitful!"

"Yes, Monsieur! yes; they resemble yourself," cried Adelaide, "my friend is right." She put her handkerchief to the eyes of Sophia, and then embraced her.

"Be comforted, Sophia," she said; "do not weep so: I love thee, I will always love thee, I will never deceive thee, I never deceive any one."

"Let us see, Adelaide, if he will attempt to justify himself."

"Ah, Sophia! My agitation, my tears, and even my silence—does not everything evince the remorse which tears my heart? Yes, I confess that this fatal portrait was for Madame de B***."

"You acknowledge it because we know it," said Adelaide.

"It was for Madame de B***," repeated Sophia, in a sorrowful tone.

"But will not my pretty cousin excuse the error of a moment?"

"The error of a moment! He has deceived me ever since he has known me! And calls it a momentary error! Adelaide! It is not more than two months, that every time he saw me, and whenever he wrote to me, he declared that he loved none but me!

"The error of a moment, aye! Sophia, my pretty cousin!"

"And I have the weakness to believe him, and the misfortune to love him! And he knows it, alas! He knows it. But tell me, my dear Adelaide, what does he expect from this treachery? What can he expect? What can he hope? Oh, thou ungrateful one! I did not ask for your love! Why proffer your vows to me!"

"Ah, mademoiselle! Ah, my pretty cousin! You do not know how dear you are to me. Your image haunts me by day, and at night embellishes my dreams! You are my life, Sophia! My soul! My divinity! I exist but by you! I adore none but you!"

"Oh! Adelaide! Thou hearest how he delights in augmenting my agitation and my uncertainty! His words are always the same, but his conduct—he desires my death!—he desires my death!" (I threw myself on my knees before her.)

"What are you doing, brother? Suppose any of the nuns were to pass and see you!"

Sophia rose from her seat in alarm. "If you do not sit down, Monsieur, I must go."

I resumed my seat, and wept bitterly. "My dear friend," said Adelaide, "what he says appears to be sincere nevertheless, and he speaks without affectation!"

"You do not know him: when he leaves here he will fly to the Marchioness, and say the same things to her. The Marchioness!

"I swear that I never will again! Never!"

"Upon the word of a gentleman, brother?"

"Upon the word of a gentleman, sister! Upon the word of a gentleman, Sophia!"

"My God," she said in a feeble voice, and putting her hand upon her heart, "my God!"

Her head sank upon her bosom, she fell against a chair, and her sobs became so violent that her utterance was stopped.

"She is unwell, my dear Adelaide!"

"No, no," said Sophia. Adelaide wiped the tears from the face of her dear friend. "Let them flow," continued Sophia, let them flow, they are tears of pleasure; they are tears of joy! Oh, God! Oh, God! What a heavy burden I had at my heart! And how I feel relieved!"

I took her hand, upon which I pressed my burning lips. The cloud of grief with which her charms had been veiled, was all at once dissipated. Her beautiful countenance was animated with joy, her eyes sparkled so with pleasure; and she gave me a look of inexpressible tenderness! Oh! With what ardour did I renew my vows of eternal fidelity, when she gave me hopes of a happy union at a future period! Adelaide, in the meanwhile, held the portrait of Mademoiselle du Portail: "Madame Munich, brother, recommended me to send this back to you. You put her in a fine rage, I assure you. 'See what a fool he is,' she said 'to send me his portrait. Am I of an age for such nonsense? But it is, without doubt, for Mademoiselle de Pontis, he loves her: the Baron was right. Ah! Let M. le Chevalier come here again; let him come here again!"

"Here, brother, take back the villainous portrait!—

"Villainous? No, no," said my pretty cousin, taking it from the hands of Adelaide; "it is pretty, they say it is thine.

"Well then, my dear friend, keep it," said Adelaide."

"Yes, keep it, my pretty cousin," I said.

"The portrait of M. de Faublas? Oh, no! It will make me ill! it will always call to mind this Madame de B***. I will not have it. I will not have it. Besides, it is in female dress. It is a portrait that resembles you, but it is not yours! But if my Sophia will—"

"What?"

"My artist is clever and discreet, he shall take both our likenesses."

"And mine also," she replied, with an air of uncertainty, and looking at Adelaide, who relieved her suspense by saying: "Yes, my dear friend, thine, and even mine, and perhaps a copy of each, that we might exchange. Well, my young cousin, when shall your painter go to work?"

"Tomorrow, from eight to ten o'clock, and every day at the same time, until he has finished them."

"Every day! But my *gouvernante*—"

"It is true she sleeps, and to this moment she has discovered nothing."

"Yes," interrupted Adelaide, "she sleeps; but the Baron, take care of him, brother."

"As for the Baron, my dear Adelaide, if he happens to rise earlier than usual, some day, it will baulk me very much, but I must put the sitting off until next morning."

"Tomorrow then, my dear cousin. Without fail."

At the moment when I bade her adieu, at the moment when she seemed to read in my countenance the lively pleasure I felt, at this moment a nun came abruptly into the hall. She eyed me with a curious but rapid glance from head to foot, and then with a mildness, blended with firmness: "It seems a long time, Adelaide, that you have been talking with your brother, and you Mademoiselle de Pontis, how is it that you did not perceive I ought to have commenced your lesson a quarter of an hour since? I return to the harpsichord, where I shall expect you. The scholars would have made some excuse, but the mistress retired without listening to them.

"My God!" said Sophia, trembling, "did she not see you kiss my hand?"

"I do not know; do you, sister?"

"I do not know, any more than you; but would you have me ask her?"

I could not help smiling at this reply. Adelaide appeared offended at first; but having reflected a little: "How simple I am!" she cried. "Go, go, make yourself tranquil, I will not ask her. Is that nun your music mistress, my pretty cousin?"

"Yes, my dear cousin: they call her Dorothea."

"Is she clever on the harpsichord? Very clever.

"But, nevertheless, someone has told her that you give it a much finer touch than herself. But she is very young?"

"Yes, very young."

"And she seems to me very pretty."

"It seems to me," she replied, with an air of mortification, "that amidst the most unpleasant circumstances you can readily make many curious remarks, and interesting discoveries, and put questions which are afflicting."

At these words she left me, weeping, without deigning to hear me. Adelaide, entirely occupied with the grief of her friend, did not observe me, but flew after Sophia. I remained less surprised at my own blunders, than afflicted at the prompt departure which punished them. The manner in which my pretty cousin was affected, afforded me, without doubt, some degree of consolation. Nevertheless, I went home in despair. On my return, I interrogated Jasmin, who acknowledged that he had not been able to resist the temptation to taste the brandy committed to his care. It was so good that he took several draughts, filled the bottle up with water, and then executed my commissions. I was no longer astonished at his delivering them wrong, and pardoned his infidelity, on account of the sincerity of his confession. In the meantime, the mortification of Sophia did not suffer me to forget the promises I had made to her: it was probable that the Marchioness, astonished at not having seen me, would send to me. I called Jasmin back, and told him that no one was to be admitted to me but my father, Rosambert, and my governor. "But, Monsieur, suppose Mademoiselle Justine comes?"

"You will tell her that I am not at home."

"And if it is Madame Dutour, or the Vicomte de Florville?"

"You will tell them the same."

"Ah! Ah!"

"Remain in the antechamber, to prevent any one coming, and send to the artist, to beg him to come here immediately."

The artist came in the afternoon, and began my portrait, he came with me the next day to begin that of my pretty cousin. Need I say that in this interview the conversation commenced by an explanation regarding Dorothea? Sophia could not conceive that a lover, in the presence of his mistress, could look on any other woman and think her pretty. I told her that a nun, in my eyes, had no more sex than a beautiful statue, and that I justified myself by such an observation. But Adelaide openly declared against me: the cruel Adelaide immediately remarked, that she, who had broke in upon and disturbed our agreeable interview, ought to have appeared to me ugly and disagreeable. It required more than common ingenuity to overthrow so solid an objection. In fact, I only obtained pardon by representing, with tears in my eyes, that a blunder was not a crime, and moreover, that a flattering remark regarding Dorothea, ought not, by any means, to displease Sophia, whose charms were like the passion they had inspired, above all comparison. My pretty cousin, thus consoled, resumed her former tenderness towards me; and my sister, to testify the return of her confidence, said, "I assure you, brother, that you were not observed to kiss my dear friend's hand, since our music mistress was chatting with us in the course of yesterday, and we were even talking of you two or three times, yet nothing transpired which could the least indicate that she had perceived anything in the morning."

Thus all three reconciled, we occupied ourselves about the portrait of Sophia, which continued in hand for several succeeding days; and sure the artists had need be armed with great patience against lovers. At first, I grumbled at the painter, because the charming miniature was not done quick enough, and afterwards I complained that it was almost finished. My portrait was finished first, and I did not obtain that of my

pretty cousin for a week after. In the meanwhile, Justine and Madame Dutour presented themselves successively at my door every day, and always received the unsatisfactory answer, "He is not at home." The Count, who learnt with astonishment what he called my sudden conversion, contended it would not last long.

"Rosambert," I said, "upon the word of a gentleman."

"Yes, but do you think that Madame de B*** will remain tranquil? At present she has only taken cautious steps—her measures are not decisive. Do not trust this deceitful calm; some secret designs are brewing. The Marchioness meditates in silence some bold stroke: she will be, you may rely on it, like a roused lion."

One morning, when I went to the convent, as usual, I thought I perceived that I was followed. A man, sufficiently disguised, kept himself at some distance, regulated his steps by mine, and seemed fearful of losing sight of me. When I came out of the convent, I saw him again tracing my steps. Rosambert, to whom I had imparted my suspicions, sent two of his servants to accompany me. I ordered them to guard each end of the street in which the Convent de —— was situated. A secret presentiment seemed to warn me that some misfortune attended our loves. On this day, in particular, I pressed Sophia to inform me what important business kept her father abroad, and what period was fixed for the return of M. de Pontis, and what means I must employ to obtain his consent to our union.

Sophia, after some moments' hesitation, took both my sister's hand and mine: "My dear Adelaide, thou, in whom I have found a tender sister, a true friend and you, my dear cousin, you who have made me love the exile in which I languish, it is time that you should know an important secret, which is known but to Madame Munich, and which must remain a secret between you and myself. I am not French: the name which I bear is feigned; my father, the Baron de Gorlitz, possesses considerable wealth in Germany, his native country, where my family is powerful and respected. I know not why they have deprived me of the happiness of living with him, but it is eight years since I came to France. It was the Baron who brought me. A French domestic, grown old in his service, has at length assumed the equipage of a person of quality. He is called M. de Pontis; he has said that he is my father; he left me under the care of Madame Munich, in this convent; since which, he has been here punctually every six months, to enquire after me, and pay for my board and education. For eight years I have only twice enjoyed the happiness of embracing my father. When I ask Madame Munich why he has educated me in France, why the Baron de Gorlitz refuses me his name, and why he comes so rarely to see his daughter she replies, calmly, that these precautions are necessary, and that I shall, one day, bless the wisdom of a father who loves me tenderly. For some months past, she frequently tells me, that the period of my return to Germany approaches. Alas! I know not whether my heart any longer desires it! It would be agreeable to see my country, my family, and my father! But Adelaide, Faublas, it would be cruel to me to be separated from you!"

"Separated! Never, Sophia, never! Were you to set out tomorrow for Germany, tomorrow I should follow you there. I will go and demand you of the Baron. If he loves his daughter, he will not oppose our happiness."

How delightfully the conversation was prolonged by the interesting confidence which Sophia reposed in me! Adelaide, tired of having twenty times repeated to us that it was past ten o'clock, and that Madame Munich would surprise us, Adelaide forced my pretty cousin to leave me. I felt my heart recoil when I embraced my sister!

And felt it groan when I bade adieu to Sophia! On leaving the convent, I perceived my Argus standing sentinel in a neighbouring alley. When he saw me, at some distance, he quitted his retreat, apparently to watch me home. I let him approach a few steps, and then turned upon him all at once. I took him by surprise he ran well, but I ran better. On turning the corner of a street, I caught him by the leg at the instant when one of my guards seized him by the collar. The runaway lost his equilibrium, fell to the ground, cried out terribly, and attracted the notice of the populace, who were immediately interested by such a spectacle. Already some of them cried out for vengeance, and were preparing to handle me roughly, when I cried out: "Gentlemen, he is a spy." At this word of proscription, my enemy, abandoned by all his defenders, saw that there remained no other method of sparing himself the blows of the stick with which I menaced him, than to confess who it was that paid him to watch me. He mentioned Madame Dutour. I sent him home with a recommendation not to come again on such an errand.

IX.

The next day, at an early hour, my father took me eight leagues from Paris to see a country-house which he had bought above a month before. We looked over the garden, which appeared to be very pretty, and I found the apartments both convenient and cheerful. I distinguished, above all, a very handsome and pleasant chamber, with bars to the windows. I remarked it to the Baron, who replied, with great *sang-froid*, that the windows were grated because that apartment was hereafter to be mine.

"Mine, father!"

"Yes, Monsieur. I had bought this house to enjoy the fine season of the year, but you have compelled me to make a prison of a place intended for pleasure."

"A prison!"

"You have deceived me, Monsieur. It is neither the lover of the Marchioness, nor that of Coralie that I lock up; it is the seducer of Sophia. When I congratulated myself on your obedience, you abused my confidence, you went to the convent every day. Someone, who apparently interests themselves in your proceedings, has given me private intelligence. Read this anonymous writing:

> 'Monsieur the Baron de Faublas is informed that Monsieur his son visits Mademoiselle de Faublas and Mademoiselle de Pontis at the convent, every morning, from eight to ten o'clock.'

"I know, Monsieur," continued my father, "the little faith that an anonymous letter deserves. I have not condemned you on such contemptible grounds. But, in affairs of this nature, nothing ought to be neglected, therefore I have informed myself; I have learned that they wrote me the truth. If you do not love Sophia, Monsieur, you are a perjured seducer, and this domestic imprisonment is too mild a punishment for you if, on the contrary, you do love her, I ought to exert myself to cure you of a passion which I do not approve. You will not quit this chamber, Monsieur. I leave here three men, who will be both your servants and your keepers; they know what persons I permit, and you may receive."

The astonishment into which this discourse threw me, can only be compared to the grief which it caused. I listened to it at first without being able to utter a single word. At length I made an effort to reply, with some moderation: "May I venture to ask, father, why, you disapprove my love for Sophia?"

"Because the father of that young lady is ignorant of it and because, if he would, he could not give you his daughter, as I have destined you for another."

"And who, then, is this unfortunate girl that you have chosen, father?

"M. du Portail is my intimate friend; he esteems you."

"Ah, 'tis Dorliska that I am to marry! A child who is lost, and perhaps dead!"

"Why dead? I think my friend will recover his daughter. Heaven owes this consolation to the most wretched of fathers. Lovinski makes fresh researches, and when absence and time, which wear out all the foolish passions, shall have destroyed yours, you will begin your travels, you will pass into Poland."

"Yes, and there, like the knights errant, I am to go from door to door, to search for a girl to marry!"

"You forget, Monsieur, that your answers are disrespectful."

"I beg your pardon, father, twenty times! The excess of my grief—"

"I have only one word more to say to you, my son. Prepare yourself to repair the innumerable misfortunes of a gentleman, to whom my friendship ought not to be useless."

"I will pledge my word, father, to Lovinski, to go even to the end of the world, if necessary, in search of Dorliska."

"And you will renounce Mademoiselle de Pontis?"

"I'd sooner die a thousand times!"

"Young man!"

"I will not set out for Poland, father, until I have obtained the hand of Sophia. I swear it by yourself, by her, and by everything that is sacred.

" Respect my authority, or dread—"

"Ah, what have I to fear, Monsieur? You will separate me from Sophia! And pray what greater evil can you do me? Take my life, if you are so cruel, take it, and you will do me a service."

The Baron, either worked up to a paroxysm of rage, or softened by the emotions of pity, went out abruptly, shut the door, and left me in my prison. What painful reflections agitated me in this frightful moment! The loss of liberty had been a trifle; but to lose Sophia! Sophia! My absence would awaken her jealousy! She would think me unfaithful and perjured. And if her father comes to fetch her, if she hastens to quit a country which my perfidy has made her detest, if Mademoiselle de Gorlitz, appearing at the court of Vienna, in all the splendour of her beauty, should choose a husband from among the young lords, who would be immediately attracted by her charms, under the idea of revenging herself of me? Mademoiselle de Pontis in the arms of another! Oh! No, never! Sophia, even in despair, will remain faithful to me! But her barbarous father may, perhaps, compel her to contract so odious a marriage, while mine, not less implacable, retained his son, dying with anxiety and grief, a close prisoner in an unknown village! Cruel Marchioness! It is through thee, without doubt, that my father has discovered my happy love! It was thy jealous rage that dictated the perfidious letter. How dear thou hast made me pay for the fleeting pleasures thou hast given me! Oh! That thy vengeance had only reached myself!

It is true that I have sacrificed Madame de B*** : and if my conduct does not justify her hatred, at least I ought not to be surprised at her resentment. But I am at a loss to account for the injustice of the Baron! He requires me to sacrifice my happiness to his friendship for M. du Portail. He punishes a legitimate and virtuous inclination as a most detestable crime! He cuts me off from everything that is dear to me, he tears me from Sophia. He shuts me up like a criminal! He certainly desires my death! Well, I will not hesitate to satisfy him. It is apparently to prolong my torture that they have removed from me everything with which I could rid myself of the burden of existence, but if they prevent me from attempting my life, they cannot oblige me to take any pains for its preservation. Let them bring something to eat! Let

them bring it me! I will throw the dishes out of the window, everything shall go into the garden through these infamous bars!

I persisted in this violent resolution until a very lively appetite, the result of five hours' fasting, had made me look at things in a more rational manner. And let not this be taken for a joke! At all ages, in all countries, in whatever situation we are placed, the stomach has a prodigious influence on the brain. An unfortunate person, who fasts, never reasons like the unfortunate one who comes from a hearty repast. I helped myself then, without being pressed, to the meats which they brought me for my dinner, and I said to myself, while devouring it, Truly, I was going to do a very foolish thing! And who would comfort my pretty cousin, if I was dead? Who would tell her that the last palpitation of my heart was a sigh for the love of her? I must eat to live; I must live to see again, to adore, and to marry Sophia.

On the third day of my imprisonment, the Baron sent me my books, mathematical instruments and pianoforte. My first care was to return thanks for his paternal clemency, in affording some occupation in my retirement, but when I came to reflect that the care evinced in alleviating my captivity, was a proof that it would be of long duration, I felt a most ardent desire to terminate it immediately. While they were furnishing my room with the effects which had just arrived, I made an attempt to escape, which the vigilance of my guards rendered abortive, and I remained convinced, after having examined the situation of my prison, and the regime established for its security, that far from neglecting the necessary precautions, they had taken some that were quite useless. I had still in my pocket three pieces of that all-powerful metal which opens doors and breaks bars. I offered my seventy-two livres to my gaolers, whom I endeavoured to address in the most flattering terms. They refused my gold and rejected my promises. I know not how my father had effected it, but he had found three servants who were incorruptible.

I was shortly honoured with the visits of those whom the Baron permitted me to receive. Shall I mention a retired shop-keeper, who pledged everything he said upon his conscience! A gentleman of the village, who repeated a hundred times the names of his dogs and the age of his mare, before he told me that he had a wife and children! A red-nosed monk, who drank heartily of a middling sort of wine, though he preferred a better; his bloated companion, celebrated for his skill in cutting up a fowl, and who served everyone with such address that the best morsel was uniformly forgot, I know not how, and remained for himself! Let us, however leave this kind of gentry, who are to be found everywhere, to distinguish four very extraordinary men, which chance had assembled in this village of de la B——. It was a curate who had wit, a master of a college who was never pedantic but through forgetfulness, nor impolite but by caprice! And an old military officer who frequently spoke without an oath, and an old lawyer who sometimes spoke the truth.

What a society for the friend of Rosambert! The pupil of Madame de B*** ! And the lover of Sophia! I suffered much less when I remained alone, then, my pretty cousin, I was with you; my eyes fixed on your portrait. I could believe you spoke while I was admiring your image. What consolation did I derive from the contemplation of thy revered image! And how often did I water it with my tears! What kisses have I printed on it! And when pressed against my heart, how often has it felt the pulsations of impatience and love!

I ought, nevertheless, to confess, that the *belles-lettres* also contributed to charm the listlessness of my solitude. But, oh! My Sophia! To escape sometimes from

the mournful pleasures of thy remembrance, required nothing less than the most estimable talents and the brightest genius our modern literature could boast of. I read Moncrief and Florian, Lemonier and Imbert, Deshouliers and Beauharnais, La Fayette and Riccoboni, Colardeau and Leonard, Dorat and Bernis, De Belloy and Chenier, Crebillion, the son, and De la Clos,<16> Sainte-Foix and Beaumarchais, Duclos and Marmontel, Destouches and De Bievre, Gresset and Colin, Cochin and Linguet, Helvetius and Cerutti, Vertot and Raynal, Mably and Mirabeau, Jean Baptist and Lebrun, Gessner<17> and Delille, Voltaire and *Philoctete et Melanie*<18> his pupils; Jean-Jacques<19> above all—Jean-Jacques and Bernardin de Saint Pierre.

But, when at the end of a day so happily abridged, my heart and my mind had equal need of repose, when I was obliged all at once to break the double charm, and endeavour to forget both letters and love: when that was necessary, our literature, which had done the evil, was there to repair it. I went and demanded of other writers the sleep which I stood in need of, and I ought to tell it to their glory; yes, it was of my contemporaries that I generally obtained the most violent narcotics. Good God! How rich is the present generation in this class of writers! What Scuderis! What Cotins, what Pradons she has resuscitated! What writers, famous for a day! Alas! Alas! How many reputations have been still longer usurped! What, even in the sanctuary, even in the bosom of the academy! Ah, Monsieur S——, who can they receive after you? Nevertheless, I owe you many thanks: your writings, so flat and so barbarous, are all-powerful against wakefulness. For eight successive nights, they made me sleep, for eight days, when not occupied in reading or sleeping, I languished in my prison. All communication was cut off from without. I neither received letters, nor was I permitted to write any. The Baron came to see me, and I endeavoured to bend him, for he was inexorable.

Four days had passed after this visit of my father and, in the middle of the fifth night, I was disturbed from my sleep by a noise in the garden. I flew to the window, and perceived a ladder planted under it. I distinguished four men, who seemed to be concerting operations. One of them mounted boldly with an iron bar in his hand.

"Are you the Chevalier de Faublas?" he said.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Dress yourself quickly, while I labour, as gently as I can, to raise a bar. If your keepers hear me, if they come to you, here, are two pistols, which you will show them: that will be sufficient to silence them. Make haste, your friend waits in a postchaise at the little garden-gate."

"My friend?"

"Yes, Monsieur, the Count de Rosambert."

"Oh, what friendship!

"Hush! Dress yourself."

He had not to repeat it a third time. My room was quite dark, but I felt for my clothes. Never was the business of my toilette so soon completed. In the meantime, my liberator redoubled his gentle strokes. When a bar was raised, I thought I saw the heavens open. I passed first one leg, next the other, and rested my feet on the ladder. Thin, however, as my body was, I had great difficulty in squeezing it through so narrow an opening. As soon as I found myself outside, and arrived at the middle of the ladder, I did not amuse myself in counting how many rails I had to descend, but

leaped from it to the ground, which had been newly turned up. We ran to the little garden-gate, which my liberators had opened, I know not how. A small ditch remained to cross; I sprang over it, and jumped into the post-chaise. I expected to fall into the arms of Rosambert, but it was the Vicomte de Florville who embraced me!

While I remained dumb with surprise, the postillion started. My four liberators mounted their horses, and followed, at full stretch, the rapid vehicle which conveyed us. I made no reply to the questions with which the Marchioness overwhelmed me.

"Chevalier," she said to me at last, "is it to the excess of your gratitude I must attribute this painful silence?"

"Madame"

"Ah! I know it well that I am no more to you than *Madame*! And, nevertheless, I expose myself to everything, in order to terminate your captivity!"

"My captivity! It is you who caused it."

"If you still love me, Faublas, what I have just done will be sufficient for my justification, but, listen to me, for I will not suffer the slightest pretext for your ingratitude. I have wept for your inconstancy, I wished to regain my lover, and I caused his proceedings to be watched. These are my crimes. The woman Dutour, who was charged with my orders, has surpassed them. I discovered, too late, that an anonymous letter had informed the Baron of your cruel amour. I presently learnt that your absence was no longer a sham, and that they kept you locked up, but I could not conceive where. Those who had followed the son, followed the father in his turn. During four whole days, the Baron never made a step of which I was not instantly informed: at length, he came to visit you last Sunday. They examined the neighbourhood, the garden, and house. Your grated windows were remarked. I profited by the first journey of the Marquis under the guise of the Vicomte de Florville, and under the name of the Count de Rosambert, I have risked everything to deliver you. Faublas, if you hold me accountable for the faults committed by the people you compelled me to employ, you will agree, at least, that the lucky intrepidity of the Vicomte de Florville has amply made amends for the fatal imprudence of the woman, Dutour."

"Do you think, Madame, I shall ever forget the service?"

"Oh, you cruel one! Your protestations, so coldly polite, convince me that I am sacrificed. Thus, then, what another woman would scarcely conceive, I have undertaken and executed, to put into the arms of my rival the most amiable and the most ungrateful of men. Alas! If there are no other means left of preserving at least his friendship, I must, I will be sacrificed! Faublas! I have the courage! I renounce you, Monsieur! I restore you to Sophia! Deprived of everything that was dear to me, I shall, perhaps, be happy in your happiness: perhaps the poignant regret occasioned by your loss will be alleviated by the consoling idea that I have contributed to ensure your felicity. Where, Monsieur, are you willing that we should conduct you?"

She waited my answer to this question, which was very embarrassing to me. After a moment's silence, she resumed:

"To return to your father would be seeking fresh captivity, M. du Portail is still in Russia; there is no one but M. de Rosambert, and he, they say, is gone, some days since, to one of his estates in the country. As for myself, I think he will search my house for you. Where, Monsieur, shall we conduct you?"

Penetrated by the generosity of the Marchioness, and affected by her attachment, at once so noble and so tender, I could hardly resist the desire to comfort her. I felt her hand tremble under my lips, which in the meantime I had gently pressed upon it.

"Answer me, then," she said, in a voice almost extinct. "Alas! my anxious tenderness has already prepared an asylum for you, as safe as agreeable, and you will not come!" she continued, in a more animated tone: "I shall lose you for ever! You will live for another! And shall I witness it with tranquillity? No, Faublas! My grief has made me wild! I may have said it, but never, never will I consent to it! I give you up to a rival! Do not hope for it my friend: that effort is too much for a mortal! It is too much for me!"

The feeble rays of trembling twilight began to leave the objects distinct. For fifteen days, I had seen nothing but plump village lasses, whose sunburnt charms, impaired by hard labour, were little calculated to tempt me; I had also only seen them through a grating, and more than fifty feet distant. Then, on the contrary, I found myself close to the Vicomte de Florville! The ruddy tints with which Aurora was decking the sky exhibited him to me more beautiful than ever Adonis appeared to the longing eyes of the enchanted Venus; and then the Marchioness wept! What can be more interesting than a woman in tears? I wished to wipe them: I know not how it was, but our glances met; my mouth touched hers, a fatal curiosity caused my hands to stray, Oh, my pretty cousin! I became perjured without knowing it, and I ought here to confess, that if thy guilty lover did not then consummate his infidelity, it was because thy cautious rival would not permit him to attempt certain enterprises, which, in a carriage so narrow, inconvenient and jumbling, over an uneven pavement, could not be accomplished with complete success.

"We return then to Paris, mamma?"

"Yes, my friend, because they will never imagine that you are returned there; besides, I have taken precautions so safe, that you will escape all researches. While they were purchasing me the services of these four men, who only knew me by the name of Rosambert, I occupied myself in seeking a commodious lodging for a young widow of my acquaintance, who comes to Paris to institute a lawsuit of considerable importance. She is called Ducange, and this Madame Ducange, my friend, is yourself, but as it would not have been decent for you to have come to Paris alone, the woman Dutour, impatient to make a reparation for the fault she has committed, has been practising for these four days to perform the important personage of Madame de Verbourg; as that is the name we shall give, if you are willing, to the respectable mother of Madame Ducange. Already decked out in a style of antiquated splendour, as might be expected in an old lady from a distant province, Madame de Verbourg gives herself airs of quality which will make you die with laughter. As to the rest, she will not play her part badly, when she has overcome certain energetic expressions, which occasionally escape her. She has naturally the awkward and clumsy manners of those village dames who have never quitted their provincial chateaux. You will have for your footman the nephew of Madame your mother, and they will easily procure you a cook and *femme de chambre*. I have hired and furnished an apartment, which our loves will embellish, at the Hôtel de ——, which is situated about two hundred paces beyond mine. If you will be ruled by me, you will never descend into the garden, which I reserve for my own pleasure. It has a door which opens into the Champs-Elysèes; it is by that I shall come to you, almost every day. My doctor,

understanding that I did not go into the country this year, has ordered me to take the air early every morning. The men who escort us, will leave us at the Barrier of the Throne."

The Vicomte de Florville and myself alighted at the milliner's, where we expected my mother, Justine, and my new footman. La Dutour commenced by acknowledging her fault, which she begged me to excuse; and Justine, delighted to see me again, could not finish dressing my head without playing me some waggish tricks. The Vicomte de Florville had provided for all my wants. I dressed myself in the simple dishabille of a pretty female traveller. They packed my luggage behind the chaise in which Madame de Verbourg placed herself beside me, and we drove to our lodging in the Street of the Faubourg Saint-Honore. Two hours after, Madame the Marchioness de B***, followed by her *femme de chambre*, came to know if Madame Ducange was arrived, we embraced like two women who loved each other, when they have been a long time absent. My mother, who knew how to conduct herself, left us alone. Love entered my bed-room the moment Madame de Verbourg quitted it, and the little god remained with us for two hours.

"Twelve o'clock is soon come," said the Marchioness, "and I must leave you. They know at home that I was to sup and sleep in the country, but they expect me to dinner—*a propos*, you are gallant!—Tell me what that bottle meant."

"A blunder of Jasmin, mamma."

"And when will you give me the portrait of Mademoiselle du Portail?"

"Presently, it is in a waistcoat pocket of the Chevalier de Faublas. See, my dear Madame, here it is."

"Tomorrow I will bring you that of the Vicomte de Florville."

"Has not the Marquis spoken to my dear mamma of Mademoiselle du Portail?"

"Assuredly, my friend. He says you live with that M. de Faublas, and that your relations search you at a great distance, while you are very near! He is very angry too at the manner in which you treated his courier, La Jeunesse. 'What, Madame!' he said to me, 'a stroke of a whip across the arm! Is that to be done? Is it fit that a young woman should thrash servants in that fashion? Recollect, Madame, the day that I received the blow on my forehead, when she thumped the piece of money on it, how she made me cry out! You thought that I was tender, and played the woman, but I can assure you, Madame, she has a fist fit for a devil, and made me suffer like a damned soul! You can see it in her physiognomy.'"

As soon as Madame B*** was gone, Madame de Verbourg entered. I begged her to send La Fleur to the house of M. de Rosambert.

"The Count is not at Paris, my daughter."

"Madame, my mother, I think he ought to be, and if he be not, I wish, at least, to be certain of it.

"But, Monsieur, Madame the Marchioness has given me no orders."

"Madame the Marchioness has not ordered! Surely you are mad! Do you imagine that I receive wages from the Marchioness like you? Learn, Madame Dutour, and forget it not that I am here in my own house. If La Fleur does not instantly go to

M. de Rosambert's, I shall go there myself. Hear me, Madame Dutour, here are three Louis; they are yours if the Count comes to see me to-day."

"But if he is in the country?"

"I shall be very sorry, but the three Louis will be saved. You know how to write, take a pen and some paper." Madame de Verbourg wrote under my dictation:

> Madame Ducange wishes to have a quarter of an hour's conversation with Monsieur the Count de Rosambert. If he will accept a humble dinner, she will be happy of his company. What she has to communicate is very pressing.

I called Le Fleur: "Take this letter, my friend, to M. de Rosambert. If he asks you any questions, you will only answer that my mistress is pretty, and lives in the Faubourg Saint Honoré, at the Hôtel of ——. If the Count does not happen to be at Paris, you will enquire to which of his estates he is gone. Madame Dutour, think of the three Louis."

My servant, on his return, announced to me that M. de Rosambert had followed him. Some moments after, Rosambert entered, with an easy and gallant air.

"Fair lady—" He stopped all at once, and burst into a fit of laughter: "The devil take me," he said, "if I have not run here in triumph! But I will not regret my pretended good fortune, since I embrace my friend."

I addressed myself to Madame de Verbourg: "Madame, my mother, will you have the goodness to leave us?"

"Madame, my mother," repeated Rosambert. "Ah! Let us see Madame, your mother! (He danced round her several times, and made her turn round him.) Madame, my mother, you are charming, you have a noble countenance, a dignified air, and a most elegant dress; but your daughter wishes you to leave us for the present. My dear Faublas, what means this masquerade?"

Rosambert could not listen to the details of my imprisonment and new metamorphosis, without interrupting me several times by his jokes. At length, he said, when I had finished, "The marchioness had done well, she has you hereafter in her power."

"Yes, Rosambert, my Sophia!"

"Your Sophia! Well, what would you that she should do to your Sophia? She is still in the convent."

"You know it?"

"Yes, I know it, and I know also that mademoiselle your sister is no longer with her."

"The Baron—"

Has taken her from that convent to place her in another, and he has discharged the honest Abbé Person."

"But, Rosambert, if I remain here, how can I see my pretty cousin?"

"I would willingly, my dear Faublas, offer you my house, but that asylum will not be respected; Madame de B*** would pursue you there."

"If you abandon me, my friend, I am lost."

"Do you doubt my friendship, Chevalier?"

"No, but I am afraid I shall stand too much in need of it."

"How! If I was in your place, and you were in mine, should you fear to render me the services which you are afraid of asking from me?"

"Most certainly not."

"Then speak boldly."

"Although, Rosambert, I am much better off here than in the village of La Brie, although I enjoy the pleasure of seeing, with perfect freedom, a charming woman, to whom I confess I am still attached, I assure you, nevertheless, that I have only changed my prison if I do not see my Sophia again. Could you not conceal me in the environs of Sophia's convent?"

"I understand you: the Marchioness has stolen you from the Baron, and I must ravish you from the Marchioness. I see no inconvenience in that. I could not prevent her from appropriating Mademoiselle du Portail to herself; Well! I will deprive her of Madame Ducange! It will be all fair, and there is something consolatory in the idea. Besides, I shall not be sorry to see how she who exposed me to the rigour of celibacy will support the ennui of widowhood. You may depend on me, Faublas, you may depend on me."

It was time for us to sit down to table. During our dinner, which was long, the Count amused himself very much at the expense of Madame de Verbourg. We were taking our dessert, when the proprietor of the house, M. de Villartur, who had lately become a financier, curious to see his new lodgers, entered without knowing if his visit was agreeable. If one were to imagine ignorance and folly personified, one would still have too favourable an idea of M. de Villartur. He found that they had not deceived him when they told him I was pretty. One may conceive that this dull personage would have been very tiresome to me, if the tone of pretended gallantry which he assumed had not afforded me the resource of mocking him. My mischievous companion very charitably assisted me in ridiculing the poor man, who promised, on retiring, to come and see me again very soon.

Rosambert had business to attend to; on leaving me, he said, "While waiting until I have found what you desire, I hope, my friend, that you will borrow some money, for which I have no occasion to-day, and which I shall be glad of at some other time." The same evening he sent me two hundred Louis.

Madame Dutour gave me the exact account of the expenses occasioned by my delivery from prison, and of those incurred in the house which I occupied.

The next day, when the Marchioness arrived, I begged her to let me reimburse what she had laid out. "Many women," said my beautiful mistress, "pretend, that between lovers, an affair of interest ought to be forgotten; as for me, my friend, I receive back my money without requiring to be pressed, and even think I ought to justify myself for the silence I have kept on this delicate article. I did not believe that you could so soon return what I had advanced, and therefore did not dare mention it for fear of giving you some mortification: nevertheless, I felt, that, in refraining to mention it, I was offending your delicacy I would, however, rather deserve the

reproaches of the Chevalier, than run the risk of mortifying my friend. Here, Faublas, keep this little case, it will be a treasure to you, as you are to me."

It was the portrait of the Vicomte de Florville, for which I returned the Marchioness my warmest thanks. At first, she participated in my transports of gratitude, which she presently thought herself obliged to moderate. It was no longer permitted me to speak when they announced M. de Villartur. Madame de B*** was anxious to see this original. He divided his foolish homage between the Marchioness and myself, and we paid the flatterer in his own coin. In the course of a conversation, which became extremely comic by the silly things with which the bulky financier seasoned it, we remarked that this gentleman believed in astrology. He was acquainted with magicians he had even seen vampires and apparitions. He concluded by telling us that he would bring one of his friends, who was half a sorcerer, and could recount to us our past, present, and future adventures, if we would only show him our hands and our faces.

"By God!" said Madame de Verbourg, who had just entered, "do you think that Madame, my daughter, would show him—"

"I stamped so rudely upon the foot of my dear mother, that she could not finish. The Marchioness laughed with all her strength. M. de Villartur enchanted, went out, telling us he would bring the astrologer tomorrow.

I did not see Rosambert that day. The Marchioness came early the next morning, and presided at my toilette, which I had executed in a superior manner on account of the astrologer, at whose expense we thought to amuse ourselves.

A little before noon, M. de Villartur arrived, and cried out that he had brought the sorcerer. I thought I should have fallen to the ground when, behind the financier, I perceived the Marquis de B***.

He saw his wife, and was astonished; he recognised Madame du Portail, and stood motionless and stupefied. "What?" he cried, "is that Mademoiselle Ducange!"

"Yes," replied Villartur.

M. de B***, with his arms hanging down, his look fixed, his mouth half open, seemed as if his little eyes were not large enough to examine me.

"Oh, how he looks at you!" said Villartur, "Your physiognomy strikes him! See how he is at work already."

The Marchioness, who always preserved an admirable *sang-froid* on pressing occasions, went up to her husband, took him by the arm, and drew him near to me.

"Your friend is more eager than you," continued the financier; "but it is you he looks at most! Your physiognomy struck him! It struck him! Oh, she has struck him!" repeated he, laughing in the most gross and vulgar manner.

In the meanwhile, I lent my attention to what passed behind me; and the Marchioness, as if she did not wish me to hear, recommended her husband to speak lower. "Did I not guess it, Madame?" said the Marquis. "Ah, she is, then, pregnant?"

"Have you not perceived it," replied the Marchioness.

"I? Aye, immediately. She is not far advanced. Four or five months, perhaps."

"As much, or more. I see it well. How I shall be revenged!"

"But, Monsieur, do not mortify her."

"Oh, I will not break the glasses!"

M. de Villartur, who had done laughing, began to speak to me, and prevented my hearing the rest.

"Are you aware," said the Marquis, coming towards me, "that I find you somewhat changed?"

"Ah! Ah!" interrupted Villartur, "do you know her?"

"Yes, when I knew Madame," she was a maid.

"Ah! But you were married soon after?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"And here you are, a widow already! But why, then, are you not in mourning?"

"For reasons which she can tell you," replied the Marchioness. "For my part, I think the poor husband is forgotten!"

"Why so, sir?"

"Because your grief did not prevent your going on a country excursion."

"I, Monsieur?"

"You will deny it, perhaps? Did I not meet you on the road to Versailles, at the bridge of Sèvres?"

"Yes."

"But, Monsieur—."

"Do not speak of that, Monsieur," whispered the Marchioness to him, "do you not see that it vexes her?"

"Madame Ducange," continued the Marquis, charmed with the embarrassment which I affected, "do you not know that it is imprudent to mount a horse in your situation? You should guard against miscarriages."

"You think then, sir, that I am pregnant?"

"I am sure of it. But, stop; I first perceived it at the last carnival. The marriage, perhaps, was already made; it was kept secret, was it not?"

"But, Monsieur—"

"All I can tell you, my fair lady, is that at that epoch there was already something in your eyes! I have never spoken to you of my talent for astrology, because I was studying, and was not then sufficiently expert, but you know I am skilled in physiognomy. Well! At the last carnival, I remarked in your countenance a something which announced a blood!"

"Ask Madame, for I mentioned it to her at the time; upon my honour I knew of the marriage. As to the pregnancy, I could not entirely divine that: besides, it was then early! But, at present, it is very different! One can no longer mistake! Your countenance, fair lady, is always very pretty, your height most becoming; but you appear a little fatigued, and see here, you have a greater protuberance than usual; it begins to be very conspicuous."

M. de B***, encouraged by the laughter which the Marchioness could not stifle under her fan, asked me who was to be the godfather of the little poppet! "Your father, no doubt!"

I endeavoured to blush; and, speaking in a humiliated tone: "My father is ignorant of my marriage, Monsieur."

"I was right, then. If, by chance, Monsieur, you should meet my father, or my brother, I beg you will not tell them you have seen me."

"Fear nothing."

"But Monsieur de Villartur—"

"Villartur! My sweet lady, he knows not your maiden name, and your relations will not know you under your name by marriage. Besides, Villartur is discreet."

"Certainly!" interrupted the latter. "Besides, I never meddle with or talk about things I do not know. Oh! But Monsieur the Marquis, I brought you here to tell the fortunes of these ladies; you know one of them, but does that prevent it?"

"No, no, you are right, I am going to tell their fortunes."

He approached his wife. "Come on, Madame, let us begin with you."

The Marchioness yielded him her hand, of which he counted the lines—long, short, direct, and transverse; next he examined her countenance, and after having looked at her tenderly: "Madame," he said, in a tone which evinced how perfectly he was satisfied with himself: "You have a husband who amuses you very much by his sallies, and who loves you to a foible."

"Very true, Monsieur," replied the Marchioness, drawing her hand from his, "I wish not to know more, I see you are a great magician."

"Now for you, fair lady," he said, and considering me with the same attention, demanded if my husband had not two names. He has but one, Monsieur, he is only called Ducange.

"That is singular.

"Why so, Monsieur?"

"Because it would appear that the poor defunct was—"

"Was what, Monsieur?"

"Ah, you are angry! How shall I tell you that? Stop, my dear lady, I will employ a figure. It appears that the fruit which is now upon the tree of your love, was grafted there by by one named Faublas, since we must tell it you."

"You insult me, Monsieur."

"Oh, how droll she is when she is in a rage!" cried the bulky financier, laughing so heartily that all his frame appeared agitated by convulsive motions, and the powder from his wig fell on the ground in clouds. "It appears even," replied the Marquis, "that the affair happened in a boudoir hired at the house of a milliner, in —— Street.

"What you are telling me, Monsieur, is very impertinent."

Madame de Verbourg, who had been to put on her fine gown, entered at this moment. She was greatly disconcerted on seeing the Marquis de B***.

After having made her obedience in a very comic manner, she came to me; I told her in a whisper what was the subject of discourse. I know not what question the Marquis put to his wife at this instant, but I heard him reply to her: "It is a pretended mother." The Marquis saluted Madame de Verbourg, whom he viewed very keenly.

"It is Madame your mother: but I believe in truth, I have had the honour to see you somewhere before."

"That is very possible, Monsieur," replied Dutour, who lost her presence of mind, "that is very possible, I go there sometimes.

"Where, Madame?"

"At what place did you say, Monsieur?"

"How, Madame, have you never heard talk of the boudoir? It was a joke."

"What boudoir? What do you twit me about your boudoir for, Monsieur?"

"Nothing, nothing, Madame. We do not understand each other."

"Nor I neither," interrupted Villartur; "I no longer comprehend anything they say."

My charming mistress laughed heartily; and I, tired of being restrained, embraced the opportunity of giving free course to my gaiety.

"See how she laughs!" observed the Marquis. "Madame, Madame, your daughter is rather flighty. Take care she does not miscarry."

"A miscarriage!" replied Madame de Verbourg, "a miscarriage! She! By G—d, I would as soon see—"

"Take care, Madame, I say, your daughter rides on horseback, and that is dangerous."

"Without doubt," interrupted Villartur, "one might fall; I did myself the other day."

"Fall!" replied the Marquis, "that is not what I fear from her. And why should she not tumble? I have had many falls myself."

"Why?"

"Because she sits a horse better than you. You cannot imagine how strong she is. Although you are very fat and big, my friend, I would advise you not to fight with her."

"Good! Do you hear that?" said the financier, coming towards me.

"Monsieur," I said, "are you mad?" He wished to take me round the waist. I seized him by the right arm.

"What is the man going to do with Madame my daughter," said Dutour, and she seized the left arm of Villartur. We swung him round with such violence, that he continued spinning like a schoolboy's top for a moment, and having become quite giddy, fell with a tremendous crash upon the floor. The noise caused the servants to run in. The financier rose up with shame and mortification, and left the room without

saying a word. The Marquis followed him to comfort him, and Madame de B***, who was going to dine at home, was not long before she left me.

I was astonished at not having heard from the Count. He called, however, the same evening a little before it was dark. While embracing me, he said, "I congratulate you on your happiness, my friend, everything has succeeded to your wish, everything is ready, follow me."

"What, directly?"

"At this instant."

I threw my arms round his neck. "Oh, my friend, what thanks do I not owe you! But tell me, Rosambert—"

"I will tell all about it below; my carriage is waiting for you; we have not a moment to lose; follow me."

"Must I then abandon the Marchioness?"

"Yes, in order to see your Sophia again."

"To see Sophia! Let us go, Rosambert, let us be off."

"Wait while I get the portrait of my pretty cousin." I rang for Dutour, and told her to get the supper while the Count and myself took a walk in the garden.

Instead of going into the garden, we got into the Count's carriage. "Drive by the Boulevards," he said to the coachman, "full gallop to the Gate of Saint Antoine, and gently from there to the *La Place Maubert*." As soon as the blinds were closed, Rosambert informed me, that since our last interview, he had found out, taken, and furnished for me, a little lodging, situated so near Sophia's convent, that I could see everything that passed there from my window. He warned me that Mademoiselle du Portail, lately become Madame Ducange, would be hereafter Madame Firmin.

All at once the carriage, which had gone with the greatest velocity over the pavement, now moved gently along. Rosambert said: "See, we are already near the Bastille; now, my fair lady, I must inform you that this elegant dress, which becomes a person of quality well enough, will not be so proper for a city dame. We must then recommence the offices of the toilette. In the first place, let us take off this showy hat; confine these flowing ringlets in a modest plait, hide your side curls under this simple cap, and for your elegant robe, let us substitute this plain white gown. Then, sweet nymph, I would have you boldly put on this petticoat in my presence; do not blush, for I will not be rash; I love you much, but I respect you more. Very well; now let us cover your bosom with this muslin kerchief, throw this black cloak over your shoulders, and hide your face with this large hood. There, it is done; you are disguised, but still genteel! As to myself, my dear Faublas, my metamorphosis will be performed still sooner." He took off his coat, and wrapped himself in a large surtout.

We got out at *La Place Maubert*, and walked on foot to —— Street. Arrived at the house of my new landlord, we went through a long court and a large garden, at the bottom of which I perceived a little pavilion, built against a wall which did not appear to me above ten feet high. I could see that from the window of my first floor, it would be very easy to descend by the aid of a cord, into the neighbouring garden. Rosambert overwhelmed me with joy, when he informed me that the adjoining garden belonged to the convent; he afterwards showed me, that in seeking for what was useful, he had not neglected what was agreeable. A pianoforte was near my window; the instrument

was placed in such a manner, that while playing upon it, I could see everything which was done in the garden of the convent. I was greatly afflicted at the departure of Rosambert, when he told me that we should be deprived of the pleasure of seeing each other, while I remained concealed in this house. He convinced me that the Marchioness would plant her people to watch all his motions, and that my retreat would be quickly discovered, if he had the imprudence to visit me. We agreed, however, to correspond, through the medium of the post office, and that to prevent discovery, I would direct to M. de St. Aubin, one of his particular friends.

Those who guess that I could sleep during this night, will be greatly deceived, if they attribute it to anything but the impatience, at the same time both painful and pleasant, caused by my contiguity to Sophia. I thought of my dear Adelaide, who for more than a month had been separated from her fair friend, and had not the consolation to see her brother. Alas! I thought of the Baron, to whom my flight would cause the most rankling inquietude, of the Baron who might accuse me of indifference and cruelty but love, love, more powerful than nature, stifled my remorse. Could I renounce the happiness of again seeing my pretty cousin? Could I return to an angry father, to expose my fair mistress to the danger of an eternal separation?

At day-break, I went and stood sentinel at my window, and arranged the Venetian blinds so that I could see without being seen. It was necessary that I should avoid the sight of Madame Munich, who, having formerly admired me in my Amazonian habit, might perhaps recognise me in spite of my new disguise. A range of chambers were before me at about fifty paces distant. Out of so many rooms, which could be the one occupied by my Sophia? My eyes wandered, without ceasing, from one end of the building to the other, and knew not where to fix.

At seven in the morning I was obliged to quit my post. My hosts came to visit their new lodger, and brought with them their gardener's wife, who took upon herself the charge of Madame Firmin's domestic affairs. As to my cooking, the keeper of a neighbouring public-house, which was dignified with the name of "tavern," undertook to supply me regularly with three repasts for six francs per day. Mons. Fremont, the proprietor of the little pavilion which I occupied, was astonished at the arrangements which I took to be always alone. He very gallantly observed to me, that a young and handsome female ought not to pass her best days in retirement, that a servant of some understanding would answer my purpose better than the publican, at less expense, and be some company at the same time.

To these very just observations of Monsieur Fremont I replied that, disgusted with the world, I had chosen a detached residence in a retired place on purpose to live absolutely alone.

My hosts left me, much hurt, they said, that so amiable a young person had taken the violent resolution of burying herself alive. In the meantime, the gardener's wife began to perform her domestic offices, but not having finished them when I wanted her absent, I sent her into my chamber, to put everything in order, and leave me quiet.

As soon as I was alone, I seated myself behind the Venetian blinds, and perceived several young ladies walking in the garden, but Sophia was not with them. I saw them run, dance, and amuse themselves with the little sports which are invented by peaceful innocence.

"How pretty are these young girls!" I said to myself; but, alas! My Sophia was not amongst them. If I could attract them towards my window, might not my Sophia be induced to join her companions. Soft music has a wonderful effect on an amorous heart! Sophia will come! No doubt I shall see her! She will recognise the voice of her lover!

I sat down at the piano, and sung, to an ancient air, these couplets, which my love inspired:

Young beauties, I crave
Your sports you would leave;
Haste—haste on the wing,
My charmer to bring!

The most lovely and fair,
Who has sworn to be mine,
Where is she? Where does she repair?
Young beauties! Ah, show me the maiden divine!

Show me the one on whom I call,
The one my eyes now seek in vain
I cannot speak my cruel pain!
The fears that this sad heart appal!

The modestest—the fairest she—
That one who gave to me her vow!
Where is she?—Let me see her now!
Young beauties!—bring my fair to me!

I accompanied the words with my pianoforte, at the first sounds of which the lasses ran under my window. I had finished the second couplet, when I saw two women approach, whose costume alarmed me. One of them, who was old, grumbled at the amiable young folks who were listening to my song. "Oh, let us leave these children to amuse themselves!" said the younger one. I thought I recognised her; she was both young and handsome.

"There," she said, "the music has ceased at our approach, it seems as if our very look was terrific to pleasure. Let us go in, sister, and leave the children to play, as their time for recreation is so short, and, besides, they have not the satisfaction to hear it every day. These airs are out of my line and, as to the execution, I should fall very far below it. Let them amuse themselves."

When the two ladies were at a sufficient distance, I continued:"

The rapture of a nuptial vow
Ye also in your turn shall prove;
Shall know what 'tis to fondly love,
And suffer as I suffer now!

The tend'rest and the prettiest she—
That one who gave to me her vow!
Young beauties!—fly and seek her now,
And deign to speak to her of me!

Tell, that till her again I view,
My life is but one scene of grief;
That I shall die without relief,
Without I find—and find her true!

Most pleasing —most adored is she,
That maid who gave to me her vow!
Young beauties! —fly and seek her now,
And deign, oh, deign to speak of me!

They listened to me with attention, and applauded me with transport; but, alas! Sophia, my Sophia was not with them! Despairing to see her, I quitted the instrument, and stood up, sad and pensive, behind the blinds. At length I perceived—I thought I had a glimpse—A young lady was walking alone in a shaded path, which reached under my windows. I sung this last couplet:

Within those shades is that my love,
Who walks along so sadly sighing?
When from pursuit her love is flying,
So mourns the turtle dove.

My heart assures me it is she,
Who gave, and always kept her vow;
Young beauties!—fly and seek her now,
And bring—restore her back to me!

I could only see the back of the young lady. That charming figure must be hers! That retired and shaded path must be the one where I have heard Adelaide say she went to bemoan the first impulses of her unhappy love. Ah, Sophia! It is thee! It is thee, without doubt! Oh, come a little nearer! Thou goest farther from me! Come back! Come by here! Turn towards thy lover! Show me thy much-loved countenance!

At this moment, a cursed bell sounded the signal for retreat; all the young ladies left the garden, and my cherished hopes were thus ravished from me.

At seven in the evening of the following day, the same young lady came to the same place, and I, concealed behind the blinds, watched her with great anxiety. Her slow and measured steps announced the melancholy of her mind; she seemed to dislike the light and open parts of the garden, and sought this solitary walk, which was the most shady in the place. Oh! Thou who inspirest me with so tender an interest, my heart tells me that I behold in thee the object of its adoration! But if my feelings deceive me! If it is possible that thou art not my Sophia! I am at least sure that thou lowest, and art separated from the object of thine affections!

I again sung the same couplet, and the lasses ran towards the window as before; but she whom I called heard me not. What was I to do to attract Sophia, and

remove her companions? If I continued singing, the young girls would remain, and my pretty cousin, whose mind was pre-occupied, would not come. I must be silent; I must watch with an impatient eye the steps of my charming pensive maid, and must wait in expectation.

As soon as I was silent, the young girls dispersed in the garden. Concealed by my blinds, and kneeling down in the balcony, I never lost sight of the interesting young lady, who continued the same melancholy step.—At length she came near. I saw her—'twas she!—rather pale, somewhat changed, but still so lovely! She was yet too far off for me to risk making any sign; but I indulged myself in the pleasing intoxication the sight afforded, until the bell sounded, and gave the cursed signal for retreat.

The boarders had already left the garden; Sophia followed them in her slow and pensive manner. I was rendered desperate at seeing the opportunity escape without speaking to her, I could no longer restrain my impatience; I pulled my blind back with one hand, and with the other, threw her portrait at my pretty cousin; it fell upon her shoulder. She recognised the miniature, and in the excess of her surprise, stopped and cast a scrutinising eye around her; this moment appeared decisive. Too much infatuated to be prudent, I lifted my blind. Sophia beheld a woman at the window of the pavilion, whose features struck her; she advanced some steps, pronounced my name, and fainted.

At this critical instant, my purveyor rapped at the door; I cried out that I was not hungry, and without considering the serious consequences which might follow my rashness, and impelled by an involuntary paroxysm, I sprung from the window into the garden of the convent. Happily for me there was no one in it but Sophia, and although a little stunned by my perilous leap, I ran to the shaded path, and threw myself at her feet. My kisses soon brought her to her senses.

"Ah, my dear Faublas, what a moment is this! But alas! What have you done? You have jumped from the window, are you not hurt?

"No, my Sophia! No."

"But if they should see you—How can you re-enter the pavilion? We are both lost! Tell me sincerely, Faublas, are you not hurt?

"No, my Sophia! No!—I will find some means of getting to my chamber."

"Will you quit me already?"

"Oh, my pretty cousin, if you knew how I have suffered!"

"And, Oh, Faublas, you have no idea what I have gone through."

As she spoke to me, we heard the air ring with the name of de Pontis, which several women repeated in a squeaking voice. I confess that I was alarmed; I threw myself flat upon my belly behind a bush. Sophia, to whom fear had given strength, flew towards those who came to seek her.

"Did you not hear the bell, mademoiselle? Must one run after you every evening?" said Madame Munich to her, in an angry tone. Some nuns, who had accompanied the *gouvernante,* grumbled also at my pretty cousin, and followed her out of the garden, shutting the gate after them. I found myself entirely alone, but much embarrassed.

When Sophia was gone, I found myself in pain all over, in consequence, no doubt, of the violent shock I had given myself. But this was not what rendered me the most uneasy; it was the question of regaining my chamber. I could not attempt to scale the wall until it was completely dark, and everyone in the convent asleep; which circumstances requiring me to wait for the proper time of escaping, I took the precaution of hiding myself. An old chestnut tree, whose branches came down low, and whose leaves were very thick, afforded me a more secure than convenient asylum; but how was I to mount the tree in the equipage with which I was encumbered? I resolved to take off my petticoats and roll them tight together, then slipping behind the trees towards my window, I threw them into my chamber. After that, I returned to the chestnut tree, which I presently climbed up, but its rough bark made long rents in the slight drawers with which my thighs were rather incommoded than covered.

I remained there three hours, in hopes that the moon, already shaded by some thick clouds, would withdraw from me her troublesome light. Nevertheless, about nine o'clock, the profound calm which reigned around, emboldened me to descend. It was in vain that I endeavoured to scale the wall of my pavilion, as it had been recently rough-cast, and no places were left to afford me a hold. When I had climbed a few inches, and wished, with my hands painfully grappling, to reach still further, my feet remained hanging; I no longer found a place to catch them in, and was obliged to fall down.

I devoted more than half-an-hour to this rough exercise, but at length my courage abandoned me with my strength. With my fingers bleeding and my body scratched, I laid down on the ground, and gave myself up to the most uncomfortable reflections. What should I do when the morning, which would quickly arrive, should exhibit to the nuns a man in their garden? A man; for I had no longer any petticoats, and my slender drawers were so torn that my sex would be betrayed, and the women, in their fright, would go and fetch assistance; Madame Munich would recognise me, and I should fall into the hands of a father, severe and jealous of his authority; the Baron would again shut me up, and snatch me for ever from Sophia, from Sophia cruelly compromised, and perhaps dishonoured disgraced! This horrible idea redoubled my despair, when I heard a creaking noise, similar to what is produced when one is opening a gate by gentle degrees.

I retreated to my protecting chestnut tree, and reached its top at the expense of my poor drawers, which hung in shreds. After some minutes' silence, a slight noise struck my ear; a female, whose remarkable costume I was enabled to distinguish by the light of the moon, advanced with cautious steps under the shaded walk, looking around on every side. At the same instant I perceived a young man on the coping of the wall, from which he descended with an agility which surprised me. He glided behind the trees, towards the retired path, and joined her who was waiting for him. They both sat down at the foot of the chestnut tree, where I continued motionless and attentive. I heard them mutually congratulate each other on the success of their daring enterprise, make the most tender protestations, mingle their sighs, and accompany, by those soft epithets which are sacred to love, their names, which they repeated several times. I recognised in the lover the only heir of an illustrious house. For his real name, which I must keep sacred, permit me to substitute that of Derneval. The fair one was not one of the boarders! She was not merely a lady who lodged in the convent! It was—shall I say it? It was a nun! It was Dorothea! Oh, love! What noble families hast thou united in these two persons! But what a time and what a place hast thou chosen!

It is true then, that thou penetratest sometimes those mansions of peace, wherein they have sworn an eternal hatred towards thee! It is true then, that thou hast altars everywhere! I saw the pious and happy couple, warmed with ardent zeal in thy service, prepare for their devotions, and offer to thy divinity, beneath the shade of a tree, the most fervent and heartfelt sacrifice.

Since Derneval had entered voluntarily into the garden, and testified no uneasiness as to the means of getting out, he must have a sure retreat, and I could compel him to let me depart with him. This reflection, so simple, presented itself all at once to my mind; and I waited for no other. I seized the extremity of that which appeared to me the longest and most flexible branch; I sprung with it, the branch bent, and though it bore me within a little distance of the ground, I fell with some weight. At the noise of my fall, and the sudden apparition of so grotesque a figure as mine, Dorothea shrieked out; Derneval jumped up abruptly, seized me by the arm, and instantly presented the mouth of a pistol to my breast.

"Oh! Do not kill him!" cried Dorothea, in a faltering voice. I looked tranquilly in the face of my assailant, and said to him in a calm tone: "I fear nothing, Monsieur; I am certain that Derneval is not an assassin; but be you also tranquil, I will not betray your fortunate loves."

While I spoke, Derneval looked close at me, at first he was deceived by my female head dress and little white jacket, but my tattered drawers attracted also his attention, they being of fine cloth, and setting tight to certain parts of my body, excited in him the most terrible suspicions.

"Is this a woman?" he cried, and with a rapid stroke of his hand he satisfied his doubts; and as soon as he was certain of my sex: "Amphibious creature! You shall tell me who you are!!

` "I am a lover like yourself, Derneval."

"A lover of whom?"

"Of the most charming and virtuous girl in the convent."

"What is her name, Monsieur?"

I looked stedfastly at both of them. "I know your names, but I have not asked them. Let it suffice you, Derneval, to know I am a gentlemen."

"You are a gentleman!"

"I ask but a moment, Monsieur."

He returned his pistol into his pocket, and while he was rectifying a certain part of his dress, which was very much out of order, Dorothea, who had hitherto been occupied in adjusting herself, regarded me with such a fixed attention, that I thought it was boldness. Her lover returned to me, saying, "Monsieur, whoever may be your mistress, you love her apparently, as much as I adore mine: the death of one of us must ensure the other an eternal secrecy."

"Let us go out together, Derneval, I am ready to satisfy you."

"And do you think I will suffer it?" interrupted Dorothea, throwing her arms round the neck of her lover. "My dear Derneval, and you, M. de Faublas—"

"De Faublas! Who told you so?"

"I recognise you; you are the Chevalier de Faublas! You are the living portrait of Adelaide! I have seen you sometimes in the conference room; you came there to inquire after your sister; your sister never went there without that pretty girl, Mademoiselle de Pontis. One day I surprised you kissing her hand. Ah, it's Mademoiselle de Pontis that you love! It was you who sung yesterday that air, of which I recollect the burden:

La plus modest et la plus belle,
Celle-la m' a donne sa foi.

The modestest, the fairest she,
The one whose faith is pledged to me.

"Do you remember yesterday, one of your ladies passed with me near your pavilion; you must have heard her scold our young ladies, who were listening to you, you must have heard me excuse them. It was you, Chevalier, who sang that rondeau! It was Mademoiselle de Pontis to whom you sang?—Derneval! Faublas!" she continued, uniting our hands in her own, "the similarity of your adventures should inspire you with equal confidence, you ought to find in each other a discreet companion, a faithful friend, yet you are going to destroy each other, and Sophia and Dorothea will presently be reduced to weep their lovers."

"Monsieur de Faubias, swear to me an inviolable secrecy."

"I swear by Sophia."

"And I by Dorothea," cried Derneval. We flew into each other's arms, and this reciprocal embrace was the pledge of the fraternity we promised ourselves.

The two lovers listened patiently to a recital of the events which had brought me into the place where I had surprised them; after which, Derneval said to me: the moon is gradually retiring, we will leave here the moment the storm, which is now gathering, shall break forth: permit Dorothea and myself to leave you alone for a moment.

The moment was long. Tired of waiting, I fell asleep at the foot of the tree where I had fallen. When I awoke, the clouds were rent by rapid lightning, the thunder rolled most dreadfully, and the rain poured down in torrents. I rose and was surprised at seeing nothing of Derneval. I advanced with anxiety under the shaded path on the side they had taken to retire. How abstracted are the minds of lovers! How pre-occupied with their passion! Whilst the elements appeared ready to come in contact, Derneval and Dorothea were amusing themselves with trifles.

"The heavens are on fire," said Derneval to me; "they may discover us perhaps by the flashes of lightning, we must not go yet."

"You appear at your ease, Derneval! I am almost naked!"

"Well, my friend, the rain has soaked me also!"

"Ah! Dorothea is with you."

I retired, overwhelmed with melancholy. Half an hour after, I returned to remind him that the thunder had ceased, and that the profound darkness favoured our retreat. He at length bade adieu to Dorothea.

"Happy lovers," I said to them, "have pity on a loving couple! Ah Dorothea! Ah! You, who know how sweet it is to see one's love, you are ignorant, without doubt, how dreadful it is to be separated! Ah show me my Sophia, 'tis in your power to do it."

Derneval took me by the hand: "Dorothea esteems you, she loves Mademoiselle de Pontis, we are brothers: you shall see Sophia, you shall see her."

"The next night, my dear companion?"

"No; our imprudence this happy night must not be repeated. I tremble lest I should expose Dorothea; you would not injure Sophia, Chevalier; we only see each other about twice in each week, and we always choose either a dark or rainy night for our rendezvous. We have agreed upon a signal, by which we can never be deceived; and as to yourself, it will not be difficult to inform you, since you live in this pavilion. Therefore, make yourself easy; in three days or better, you shall see Mademoiselle de Pontis. Let us separate."

He conducted me to the part of the wall where his rope ladder was attached. We perceived, that from thence I could easily gain my pavilion, but could not reach my window. Derneval being very tall, made me mount his shoulders, and afterwards, supporting my feet with his hands, he pushed me vigorously, and enabled me to seize the cord of my blinds. As soon as he saw me safe into my chamber, he returned to his ladder, and scaled the wall in an instant.

X.

I was fatigued: I was hungry, and slept profoundly, in expectation of my breakfast, which arrived at six in the morning. They brought me at the same time a letter by the post, from Rosambert. He informed me, that on the evening of my elopement, my dear mother had dared to come to him, to enquire what had become of Madame Ducange. To console this disconsolate mother, and at the same time make her believe he had never known her daughter, he employed one of his victorious arguments, which never failed of their effect upon Dutour. He recommended me never to leave my pavilion, and to keep absolutely incognito. Madame de B*** had sought everywhere for me; her scouts were on the look out from morn till night in the neighbourhood of the convent: my father could not stir a step without being observed, and the Count's own house was invested even during the night.

"Unfortunate Marchioness!" cried I, "how have I deserted you! With what ingratitude have I repaid your generous and tender cares? Can I deem you criminal for your efforts to discover my retreat? If you did not seek me, you would love me less!"

I drew from my pocket the portrait of the Vicomte de Florville and kissed it: I will not undertake to justify these reflections, which are, perhaps, misplaced, though just; and these emotions surely ought to be condemned, although involuntary: all I can say to the reader, to engage him to continue his indulgence towards me, is, that the moment after, my whole thoughts were devoted to Sophia.

She made her appearance about seven in the evening, accompanied by a woman whose dress at first alarmed me, but whom I soon recognised to be Dorothea. They both passed under my window. Could Dorothea look handsome by the side of Sophia, who shone superior to all her companions, like a rose among other flowers? I could not moderate my eagerness on seeing them so near me. They heard the rattling of my blinds, which I drew up: their prompt retreat checked my imprudence, and made me repent it. They had, however, the kindness to seat themselves in the covered walk, at a little distance, but opposite my pavilion. I could not doubt but they were talking of me, for my pretty cousin spoke with great animation, and continually looked towards my window. Presently I could perceive by the gestures of Dorothea, that she was pointing out to Sophia the part of the wall over which Derneval came into the garden. My heart was penetrated by the most lively sensations.

The next day, the same promenade, the same imprudence, the same chastisement, and the same pleasure.

In the meantime the sky was calm and serene. More impatient than a farmer, when two dry months have burned up his lands which have been sown to no purpose, I invoked the southern winds, and watched unceasingly the index of the barometer. On the third day some large clouds obscured the rays of the setting sun

"We shall have rain to-night," said Dorothea, when passing under my window, and, "I think it will be fine," said my pretty cousin.

"Ah! Yes, very fine!" cried I, loud enough for them to hear me. The two friends, who were always afraid of my vivacity, made a prompt retreat. At twelve o'clock, precisely, Derneval was at the foot of my pavilion; he threw me a rope ladder, which I fixed to my window, and I quickly embraced my brother. We went to the covered walk; where my pretty cousin and her dear friend were waiting for us.

"There she is!" said Dorothea to me, "I deliver her to you with confidence, Monsieur de Faublas; she would not love you so much if you were not worthy of her! Ah! Believe me, have a respect for her timid youth; and prolong this delightful period of pure and virtuous love. May your union be innocent, since it can be so as yet, and may you be one day happily married—Alas! That hope is permitted you, my charming Sophia, for these odious walls have not enclosed you for ever—those frightful vows—" her sighs stopped her speech. Derneval, impatient to comfort her, led her away, and left me with Sophia.

May it be permitted me to repeat here what has been said a thousand times; true love is timid and respectful. To pass whole hours with an adored mistress; to hold on one's knees the most lovely of girls; to inhale her breath; to feel the palpitation of her heart, and to content oneself with quietly pressing her hand, nor take, without trembling, a kiss of her lips, or dare to solicit the more precious favours which seem reserved for a chosen lover: this is what young Faublas never believed possible; but it was a truth of which his pretty cousin convinced him. In the first rendezvous, when I approached Sophia, her soul purified mine.

C'est avec cette ardeur et ces voeux épurés,
Que sans doute les dieux veulent être adorés.
VOLTAIRE, *Semiramis*.

'Tis with such ardour, and with vows so pure,
The Gods no doubt would have us them adore.

And Derneval, to whom the tenderness of Dorothea left nothing to desire, Derneval was, perhaps, less happy than myself. It was he this time who came to warn me that it was time to depart, for Aurora would not delay her appearance.

"Aurora! Why we have not been here an hour!"

"Come on, Chevalier, take courage, we shall see each other again in three days"

"Ah, Sophia! I always tremble lest Madame Munich—"

"My dear cousin, when my *gouvernante* has drank a few glasses of ratifia after supper, she thinks of nothing but sleep; I, who have the care of shutting the door of our little apartment—"

"Come on, the time flies," interrupted Dorothea, "we must not let the dawn of day surprise us here. Derneval, in three days; perhaps a little sooner—Alas! Perhaps a little later." "Adieu, my Sophia! In three days; a little sooner, if it can be; but I entreat you never let it be longer. Adieu, my Sophia!"

For this time heaven listened to the vows of a lover. The weather being overcast, made me think, on the second day, that the rendezvous was come. My pretty cousin passed under my window at the usual time, and confirmed my hopes.

"The night will be rainy," she said.

"Oh, my Sophia!"

"She did not wait the end of my answer."

An hour after my purveyor rapped at the door. I was at supper, when a stranger delivered me a letter, and he said was ordered to wait for an answer. See what Rosambert wrote to me:

> I fear I am going to be ill, my friend; I am this night in great grief! I really have not laughed for these two hours, so affected is my soul with what I have seen. Imagine that while waiting for the performance commencing at the theatre, I took a stroll in the gardens of the Luxembourg. A female, whose person was by no means disagreeable, was walking alone in a retired path. I happened to follow the pretty solitary. I passed behind two men, seated on a detached bench. One of them had a handkerchief in his hand: "Ah! The cruel one," he cried, "he has given me up voluntarily to the most mortal anxieties!" The voice of this man struck me. I had left, for a moment, the female, and retraced my steps to watch the two friends, who were too much occupied to perceive me. Him, Faublas, whom I heard complain, wept bitterly, it was your father! The other I think I have seen sometimes at your house: if it is not M. du Portail, it is very much like him. The Baron wept, my friend, and affected me so much, that I thought no more of the game I was in pursuit of, and ran away. I am come home to write to you. I have naturally, Faublas, a great friendship for pretty women, and I occasionally sacrifice a thousand little scruples to have the one I desire, but there are duties! I agree that Sophia merits that one should be guilty of some faults on her account; but your father wept! Reflect on that, Chevalier."

I bethought myself a moment, and then calling the stranger: "Monsieur, you will tell him who sent you, that I will give him an answer tomorrow."

I waited but for the striking of twelve to descend into the garden; my impatience, however, could not hasten the clock of the convent.

The two charming fair ones did not come until the appointed hour. As soon as Derneval was heard, Dorothea ran towards him. I was astonished to see them both return half-an-hour after.

"Chevalier," said Dorothea to me, "you have the secret of my life, I owe you the detailed history of my long and unfortunate amours." She commenced the affecting recital of them, which she could not finish without shedding a flood of tears.

"Console yourself, my dear Dorothea, you have not much longer to suffer in this prison; I shall shortly rescue you from this bondage, and thy unworthy parents shall groan at thy happiness, which they will not be able to prevent."

"And you, Chevalier," he continued with some warmth, "you have been so much affected by our misfortunes, you shall assist me in terminating them. I am thankful for the chance which gave me a friend, a brother in arms, and a companion like yourself. Animated by the same motives, exposed nearly to the same dangers, we found a mutual security in our intimate union. The enemies of Dorothea are yours; and I swear an eternal hatred to those of Sophia; evil be to those who hereafter interfere in our amours, thus mutually protected!"

"Derneval, I agree to it most cheerfully."

I embraced Dorothea, and Derneval embraced my lovely Sophia.

It was not four in the morning when I reentered my pavilion; nevertheless I went and rapped at the apartment of my landlord, to ask him for a proper key to admit me through all his gates, as I had business in the country, that my absence might

perhaps be long, but that I should always keep the pavilion, in order, under all circumstances, to have a home at Paris.

I was at the door of Rosambert before five o'clock, but the servants would not disturb their master, who was still in bed. I made so much noise, that the boldest of them ventured to tell his master that a lady wished to speak to him.

"At this time in the morning?" he said; "let her go to the devil!—But stop— stop— is she pretty?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"That is a different case! It is not too early! Let her come in!"

"Ah! It is Madame Firmin! And that is still better." He embraced me. "It appears that my letter—"

"Let me have some male attire, Rosambert, and I will go instantly to M. du Portail."

"I think you will find him, my friend. He is certainly returned, for it was him whom I saw with the Baron at Luxembourg. Indeed, the Baron has greatly affected me. He has been here ten times, but never found me at home, for I gave positive orders to be denied."

"Let me have some clothes, Rosambert."

He selected, from amongst his, those which were shortest, and I flew to M. du Portail, who was as much delighted as surprised to see me.

"Lovinski," I said, "I come to bring back the son of your friend. I deliver him into your hands unconditionally, deign only to be the mediator between my father and me. Will you have the goodness to conduct me to the Baron?"

"Instantly, my friend. What pleasure we shall give him! How happy my dear Baron will be!"

On the road, Lovinski told me that in consequence of wrong information he had made a useless journey to St. Petersburg. Though I felt for his misfortune, I could not help saying to myself: "As long as Dorliska is lost, they cannot make me marry her."

We arrived at my father's house. M. du Portail begged me to wait in the saloon, and to let him go alone to the Baron's bedroom. He told me it was a precaution he ought to take, not so much to engage the Baron to pardon me, as to prepare him by degrees for the pleasure of my return.

I was immediately surrounded by all the servants of the house, who were enraptured to see their young master returned; Jasmin, above all, could not contain his joy.

It was not two minutes that M. du Portail had been with the Baron, when I heard him cry out: "He is there, my friend!"

"Are you sure he is there? Let him come in then."

I advanced towards the door, which opened with violence. My father, almost naked, rushed into the saloon; the servants retired out of respect. The Baron took me in his arms, and embraced me tenderly. I had not power to say a word. All at once, my father, as if he repented him of his tenderness, pushed me from him in an irresolute

manner. I threw myself at his feet, and showed him a purse still full of gold: "You see, father, it is not through necessity that I am come back to you," I said. He again threw himself into my arms, and pressed me to his breast, embracing me twenty times, and watering my face with his tears.

"That was all I feared," he said, "my good friend! My dear son! Is it, then, true that thou lovest me? I could hardly believe it was thee, my dear Faublas; my dear son, thou knowest not what I have suffered! Thou wilt one day be a father thyself, and may thy children spare thee the grief thou hast caused me."

My father could easily perceive that my heart was full, and that my sobs stifled my voice. He wiped away my tears, which were blended with his own upon my face. "Be comforted, my dear child," he said; "thou hast left me, it is true, but the circumstances excuse thee. Thou hast left me several days in anxiety, but thou hast at length returned voluntarily. I was more uneasy than mistrustful; I have never doubted the goodness of thy heart. I love thee, perhaps, still more than I loved thee before! Who does not commit a fault at thy age? What young man has ever made amends for them better than thee? And what father is more happy than thine, or can boast of having a better son; Come on, my friend, the past is forgotten resume thy apartments, and enjoy all thy rights."

M. du Portail was sitting in an armchair, and beheld us with mingled sensations of pleasure and pain; we heard him repeat to himself the name of his daughter. The Baron, transported with joy, went to his friend, took him by the hand, and said: "She will be found! She will be found! And my son—" He did not finish his sentence, but turning towards me:

"Faublas, you will renounce Sophia!

"Sophia, father?"

"Yes, I require it of you, upon that point I am inflexible; you must not go to the convent!"

"To go no more to the convent!—"

"I repeat it to you, my son, you must promise me."

"Well, father, since you earnestly require it, I assure you I will go no more to the conference room."

"That is what I asked."

"Go, my friend, and repose yourself."

"But Adelaide!"

"Yes, she is in great anxiety." (He wrote for a moment.) Here, this is the name of the convent where she is now, run, run there directly, you have no idea of the pleasure it will give her."

I stepped up into my room to change my clothes, and went to see my sister, who lamented very much for her dear friend, of whose happiness she was ignorant.

After that, I went to Derneval, to whom I imparted my change of residence, and the reasons which had determined me. He praised my wise precautions, in preserving at all events, an asylum in the pavilion, and he promised me, that Dorothea should be instructed of it before the evening, and that she would not fail to inform Sophia.

"We will stop until the night after tomorrow, when we will go to the convent if it is fair. They know that rainy nights or dark nights are fine ones for us, on this point, lovers and travellers are never agreed."

The same evening, Justine came to me.

"Ah! How do you do, my dear Justine, it is a long time since we met alone!"

"Oh! Monsieur, it is fifty years since, but I beg you will first listen to what Madame the Marchioness.–"

Thou art always very pretty, my dear!"

"My mistress sent me, Monsieur."

"Does thy mistress already know that I am here?"

"Yes, this morning you entered by the great gate, and they came to tell her immediately but, Monsieur, do you remember our agreement?"

"What agreement do you mean?"

"You always forget; it is a long time since we determined, that whenever I came here on the business of my mistress, I should commence with my commission."

"Well! Make haste, despatch it then, Justine."

"My mistress was greatly surprised, and greatly afflicted at your flight—"

"But finish it then."

"Hey dey! Finish it yourself."

"What long prefaces you make, your mistress was greatly surprised! Do you think I have not guessed all that?"

"Stop a moment, Monsieur"

"Exordiums tire me at all times, but particularly just now. To the point, to the point, Justine."

"My mistress has charged me to announce that your secret amours—"

"My secret amours! What does she mean? But my amours with her are not public—are not public, I hope?"

"You are right, yes, yes. She says that your amours are likely to produce serious consequences, she foresees a disagreeable event, which may discover to the Marquis the secret of your disguise."

"The secret of my disguise?"

"Then my fair mistress will be lost. Therefore she is disconsolate, and weeps and mourns. 'I should not care,' cries she sometimes, 'if I could but see him.'"

"Well! Where is she? Where must I go to her?"

"There! See how it is! Just now I could not finish business too soon! And now you want to quit me directly!"

"Ah! Justine! Excuse me; you told me that your mistress was unhappy! What then is this dreadful event which she fears?"

"I do not know, Monsieur, she will tell you herself at six tomorrow morning, at her milliner's; will you not come there?"

"Most certainly; I will not abandon the Marchioness in so critical a situation. Well, my dear, now your commission is ended."

It was so long that I had been deprived of the pleasure of seeing my pretty *femme de chambre*, that no one must be surprised at her remaining with me a quarter of an hour.

The situation of her mistress being so critical, it will be no matter of astonishment that I flew with eagerness to the appointed rendezvous at six the next morning.

As soon as I entered the boudoir, the Marchioness endeavoured to hide the handkerchief with which she was drying her eyes.

"Monsieur," she said, "I hope you will excuse my importunities, I will not abuse your politeness, I beg but a moment's attention. I do not wish to remind you, Monsieur, of the important services I rendered you a few days since; I shall not speak of the extreme ingratitude with which you have repaid me. I will not ask you where you have spent the time which has passed from your flight up to your return to the Baron; I feel that it will no longer be satisfactory for me to enquire into your conduct; I perceive that my complaints, my reproaches, and my questions, will be equally useless. I have lost all my influence over your heart, but I still wish to preserve your esteem; we are both in danger, and I wish to convince you of it. Cast your eye with me over the past, for I mean to justify myself for my tenderness to you; and, provided that you still feel any friendship, do not interrupt me. Provided that you still retain any friendship for me, provided your life is safe, I shall behold with tranquility the danger to which my honour, and perhaps, my life, are exposed. You remember, without doubt, how accident seconded your address, and placed you in my bed. Alas! You have not forgotten at what a price your audacity was recompensed! But you will excuse my weakness, when you reflect that in my place no woman had been stronger than myself. The next day, however, when I came to reflect that a young man, whom I scarcely knew, possessed my heart and my person, I was much troubled. But a thousand brilliant qualities were united in this young man; his beauty astonished me, and I was charmed with his wit: he was not sixteen, and seemed to possess so much sensibility, that I flattered myself that I should captivate his tender youth, and model his docile heart; I even conceived an idea of attaching him eternally to myself. I spared nothing which might strengthen the bonds too precipitately formed, and I wished to render them indissoluble. All my hopes were cruelly deceived; I had a rival; I discovered it, unfortunately, too late; and made but useless efforts to bring back my unfaithful lover. Nevertheless, when he groaned in bondage I formed a design to deliver him. The excess of my imprudence proved the excess of my love; my rashness might, perhaps, restore me my lover: I examined no further; I executed the most daring enterprise ever attempted by woman! Alas! I executed it for the happiness of my rival, whom, without doubt, my perfidious lover has seen, and for whom he has ungratefully betrayed me? Ah! Pardon me, Monsieur, my grief distracts me: these are not the expressions—this is not what I wished to say. You have quitted me, Monsieur: another, in my place, would perhaps have hated you; but I request your esteem and your friendship. Oh! My friend!"

I threw myself at her knees, and wished to seize her hand, but she withdrew it.

"Your friendship, Monsieur, is very necessary to me. Get up, I pray, get up, and condescend to hear me out. Your first disguise, Monsieur, rendered new disguises

necessary, and a thousand imprudences have followed the first. Some precautions have hitherto saved us; but we cannot long deceive a curious and malicious public. The accidents which have served us, will lose us; it requires but an indiscretion in our servants, an unforeseen interview, or a slip of the tongue. These are the reflections which I ought to have made long before this; but I have not been wise, because I thought myself happy. As long as I listened to the fond delusions of hope, I was proof against danger; my eyes were never open until the astonishing flight of Madame Ducange penetrated my heart with the frightful truth that I was not loved. Ah! Had I still remained in my error, I should have been exposed to the most imminent danger, without having perceived it."

The Marchioness shed a torrent of tears; I again threw myself at her knees: "Oh, my tender friend, I love you! I love you!"

"No, no, I will believe it no more, I cannot believe it. Get up, Monsieur, I pray you will get up, let me entreat you to listen to me. I foresee that our connection will be discovered, the multitude will call my amour a gallant adventure; and this adventure, if the details are found piquant, will make a terrible noise; it will be the talk of the day; the Marquis will know how he has been treated, he will know the—I ask a favour of you, Chevalier, one only favour. Study, from this time, to guard yourself against the vengeance of the Marquis; I shall await it courageously, when I alone am exposed to it. Go, Faublas, go, take my rival; may you be as happy as I am wretched!"

"What! Would you have me be guilty of a double baseness, to fly from the Marquis, and leave the most generous of women exposed to his fury? But wherefore these cruel alarms, my dear mamma?"

"They are too well founded, Monsieur. You shall know how I am embarrassed: A very simple event will shortly awaken the suspicions of the Marquis, and induce him to seek for an explanation, the result of which will be most unfortunate. You cannot forget, any more than myself the fatal adventure of the sofa; that odd scene which so mortified us both at the time. You appeared then to see me with pain in the power of another, and I was hurt to be obliged to share a benefit which seemed to me only due to a person beloved. I even refused the Marquis the exercise of his most incontestible right. My husband, who was too pressing, frequently quarrelled on that account. At this epoch our appointments were more frequent, and I did not always preserve, when in your arms, that presence of mind so necessary in a wife who does not cohabit with her husband. Indeed, Monsieur, it is more than three months since the Marquis has slept in my chamber, yet, nevertheless, I am I am *enceinte*.<20>

"Enceinte!" repeated I with a shout of joy; "Enceinte! Then I am a father! And shall I abandon you! My dear, dear mamma, I have always loved you, but you are now become more dear to me than ever."

"I am *enceinte*," repeated also the Marchioness, but in a tone so piteous that it cut me to the heart; unhappy mother, more unhappy child!

At these words she fell back beneath the alcove under which she was seated her eyes were closed, her head sunk gently on her breast but the regular pulsation of her bosom, the colour of her lips which still retained their vermilion hue, the freshness of her complexion which indicated the neglected toilette of the morning, and which, far from fading, was heightened by a peculiar glow; all announced to me that the state of weakness in which I saw her, would not be productive of fatal consequences. Not

being able to restore her to life by my burning kisses, I precipitated myself into her arms: she started, but the most lively sensations were the result, and her lethargy was entirely relieved. She appeared at first to repulse me, but quickly returned my embraces, partook of my transports, and lavished on me the most endearing epithets.

"Behold me, exposed to fresh perfidies!" she said, as soon as she had recovered her senses. I reassured her by reiterated protestations of an eternal attachment. She testified, nevertheless, some distrust, when I told her that Madame [Ducange i.e. Faublas in disguise TN] took refuge in the house of Rosambert, but at length she appeared to believe me.

She told me, while loading me with the most tender caresses, that she thought herself in the second month of her progress towards multiplication, and I did not leave the boudoir without having fixed the day for seeing her there again.

For the two last hours I thought myself quite another man. What news the Marchioness had given me! How the idea of being a father flatters the self-love of youth! Faublas is no longer the idle boy, who plays with some trifling toy; who amuses himself with a new song, who elbows the men, and stares the women in the face; who dashes his curricle along, and passes like lightning by two old women gossiping at the corner of a street, frightens some coxcombs who are admiring a mountebank, and overturns some booby, whose attention is rivetted to a quack doctor's puff, posted on the wall; laughing all the time at the ridiculous accidents produced by his folly! No, the grave deportment of the Chevalier now announces a reasonable man; the noble boldness of his countenance is tempered with the joy which mantles on his cheek; and his dignified look, informs the passers by of the respect which they owe him; an air of dignity is spread over all his person, which seems to tell them they must respect the father of a family!

I hoped to find Rosambert at our house, because I longed to acquaint him with my happiness. Jasmin informed me that the Count had called, but could not wait long enough to see me. One of his uncles, to whom he was sole heir, had been attacked with a dangerous illness, and obliged him immediately to repair to an old castle in Normandy, of which this uncle was the lord. Rosambert could not tell Jasmin how soon he would return, but he begged me in case he should be detained, to come and spend a few days with him, if I had the courage, and my amours would permit me.

Oh, my pretty cousin! Thy remembrance occupied me the remainder of this day: and during the whole of that which followed it, a cloudy sky announced the night of rendezvous. I supped with the Baron; and then instead of retiring to my chamber, went out at the great gate. The porter at length gained by my liberality, did not see me go. I repaired to a by-street, at the back of the convent, where Derneval, accompanied by two faithful domestics, was already waiting for me. The rope-ladders were presently fixed, and I was soon in presence of her I adored.

I must acknowledge that she had to sustain severe trials. I dared not aspire to the entire possession of a mistress, as much honoured as loved, but I was desirous of obtaining more delicate favours than those I had hitherto received. It required all the virtue of Sophia to repel my enterprises, which were continually renewed. At four in the morning we took a parting kiss. Jasmin, provided with the key, waited my return, and gently opened the gate when he heard the appointed signal.

In this manner, for three months, I eluded the vigilance of the Baron, who slept soundly; while Sophia, having to combat with her own weakness and my increasing

desires, astonished me by her long resistance, and compelled me to admire the happy effects of that virtue she unceasingly exercised, and which sent me home each morning dissatisfied, and rendered me every night more amorous of her; she doubled my punishment by confessing that so many privations would not appear to her less distressing than to me, were she not indemnified by the testimony of a pure conscience, and the esteem of a lover.

It was thus that during three months, I deceived the jealousy of Madame de B***, to whom my days were consecrated. The Marchioness met me very often at her milliner's, sometimes at her little house at Saint Cloud, and sometimes also, but seldom, at her own house.

My beautiful mistress, charmed with my zeal in her service, and perhaps astonished at my constancy, seemed ever fearful of exhausting my love. Her situation, which required so much management, furnished a variety of pretences for the refusals with which she sharpened my desires. It was weakness of stomach, megrims, sickness at heart, and a thousand other indispositions, all of which reminded me that she was a mother, and rendered her more interesting in my eyes. Astonished, nevertheless, to see her figure, always so slender, keep the same proportions, I waited impatiently the appearance of that prominence and rotundity which would insure my paternal character. To the pressing questions which I put to her from time to time, she replied that she might be deceived in a month; that many women attained the fourth and fifth before their pregnancy was visible; in fact, that her ill health, and other signs more certain, did not permit her to doubt of her situation.

Rosambert returned in the beginning of October. The death of his uncle had embarrassed him with riches; the Normans, naturally litigious, had cheated him, but the pretty girls of Caux had consoled him.

At the news of the Marchioness' pregnancy, the Count, in the first place, congratulated me; but when I detailed the singular circumstances which had accompanied the reluctant confidence she placed in me, he smiled and shook his head with an air of mistrust.

"My friend," he said, "all that is not entirely clear; I think the alarms of the Marchioness ought not to make you very uneasy, as her situation appears, at least, problematical. In the first place, if it is true, at the period of the adventure on the sofa, she had renounced M. de B***, and I think her very capable of such an effort, it is still less doubtful, but on the first signs of a treacherous fecundity, she would have arranged matters in such a manner, that her happy husband might attribute to himself all the honour of the master-piece, which should come to light eight months after. Thus you may conceive she has affected to be uneasy in order to appeal more forcibly to your compassionate heart. I do not think, my dear Faublas, that you have as yet become a father. How was it, I pray, that you were not informed of this germination until the end of two months. Did this circumstance, whether happy or unhappy, not interest you sufficiently for you to have been informed of it at the end of the first month? And then three months have fled since the confidence was reposed; three and two make five—five months revolved, and nothing appears yet! No trace of protuberance or rotundity! These are things, my friend, concerning which they cannot deceive a lover. I assure you, my dear Faublas, that the little chevalier is a child of the imagination. This fecundity is a hoax to bring you back, to retain you, and to interest you. The trick, however, is not a bad one, as is proved by the good success it has had."

Rosambert's observations appeared to have some weight in them, but it cost me a great deal to renounce the pleasing delusion in which I had indulged for three months. I promised I would neglect nothing which could develop the fact, even that night.

Justine came to tell me that I could call on her mistress at dusk, and I did not fail to be there. I had no need to knock at the gates, for they were open; the porter saw me, I mentioned Justine, and slipped behind a carriage just entering, and reached the private staircase.

Arrived at the boudoir, I opened the door, entered abruptly, and was not a little surprised to hear M. de B*** talking very loud in the Marchioness' bedroom. At that instant, Justine, frightened at the noise I had made in opening the door, rushed from the bedchamber into the boudoir.

"He will be gone in a moment," she said, pushing me out of the door. I instantly descended a few steps.

"See how this fool runs away when I speak," cried M. de B***, who pursued Justine. He entered the boudoir at the moment, when she held in one hand the candle, with which she lighted me, and having the other on the door, which was partly open. The artful wench, without replying a single word, shut the door, which she double locked; and then made a sign for me to wait for her.

"Do not be afraid," she said, as soon as she was near to me, "he cannot come to us; the boudoir is, however, very unlucky for you."

At this moment Justine could not help laughing, and the Marquis heard her. "The impertinent hussy," he said, "is laughing at her own folly, and has shut the door in my face!" I did not hear the rest, for Justine, who had made some useless efforts to repress her gravity, began to laugh louder than before.

I took her in my arms: "You little rogue, you shall pay for your mistress!" I blew out the light, and seated her gently on the stairs.

"Oh, Monsieur, what are you going to do? What, on the staircase?" Instead of replying, I wished to make the most of the fortunate moment but Justine, a little too lively, made a movement so sudden and unfortunate, that the candlestick, which was beside her, rolled from the top to the bottom of the stairs, making a great noise.

"What is that?" cried the Marquis, through the door. "Have you made a false step, Justine?"

"Oh, that is nothing, nothing at all," she cried, in a tremulous voice.

"Oh, nothing? he replied, "and you can scarcely speak!" During this short dialogue, Justine endeavoured to drive me from the post which I had occupied, but I considered the position I had taken so advantageous, that I was resolved to keep it. Although it appeared very hard to quit the field before I gained the victory, I was obliged, nevertheless, to do it.

The Marquis, having rung for his servants, ordered them to go and assist Justine, who had made a *faux pas* on the private stair. I had not a moment to lose. At the risk of breaking my neck twenty times, I descended the staircase in extreme disorder, and perceived a coach-house: I ran under it to hide myself, and put myself in order. I was preparing to leave my retreat and cross the yard, when the servants

appeared at the foot of the grand staircase. They ran with their lights, and I had only time to open the door of a carriage and jump into it.

From whence I perceived that Justine spared those who came to seek her the half of their journey. She was carried back in triumph by the footmen, pleased to have found her safe and sound, after so terrible a fall as they supposed her to have had.

They ascended the grand staircase with shouts of joy, and I prepared to profit by this opportunity of escaping, but I was this evening destined to go through the most distressing yet ridiculous adventures. A sturdy groom all at once detached himself from the main body, and making his way towards the carriage in which I was concealed, placed his candle on the footboard. He then examined a carriage which stood next to mine, which was apparently the one the Marquis had come home in. After having looked about him he came back, took the candle from the footboard, blew it out, and seated himself in its place. "It cannot be long before she comes," he said to himself. As soon as the light, which mortified me most cruelly, was put out, I felt myself at ease. The night was so dark, and the fog was so thick, that nothing could be distinguished at four paces distant.

A quarter of an hour had gone by, and the person desired had not arrived. I was as impatient in my prison, as was my jailor, who sat whispering curses on the footboard.

At length I heard some noise in the yard; the groom heard it also, for he rose up and coughed gently; he was answered in the same manner, and someone advanced towards him and spoke in a low tone, "That is right," repeated he so loud that I could hear him: "it shall be in that," he added, striking the carriage I was in. After this, the intelligent groom who was left alone came and locked the door of my carriage, and that of the one which stood next to it. "Now," he said to himself, "I will light the reflector," and, as if he had been employed to torment me, he went in front of the carriage to light a very large lamp, which, at the bottom of this yard, more wide than deep, threw, in spite of the fog, a sufficient light to distinguish everyone who passed. This operation performed, he went away whistling.

You who read this perplexing adventure, if you love Faublas, have pity on him. They drove him from a boudoir; they disturbed him on the stairs; they pursued him under a coach house, they imprisoned him in a carriage; he is unhappy, he is disappointed, and, to heighten the evil, is supperless.

The agreeable savour of cooking reached me from the kitchen, and I was most feelingly convinced what a grievous thing it sometimes is to have a good appetite. My situation, however, was so critical, that even hunger was not the greatest evil I dreaded. The words, *it shall be in that*, caused me to make the most disagreeable reflections. Had I been discovered? Was the Marquis at length informed and preparing for vengeance?

O, my tutelary angel! O, my Sophia! It was to thee that I looked in this moment of peril. It is true that always operated upon by the object which is present, I have forgot thee for some hours; it is true that I was in misfortune when I offered thee my tardy homage; but do we honour those gods the less in our hearts, whose worship we sometimes neglect? and is it not uniformly when men are in tribulation, that they think of imploring their deities?

I had now plenty of time to think of my pretty cousin. I should soon have run away from such thoughts, perhaps, but I dared not attempt it, because the servants

were continually crossing the yard, and the fatal reflector would have discovered all my motions, and because the fear that I bad been discovered and waylaid, made me prefer waiting for, rather than seeking my enemy.

The enemy did not come, and I ultimately went to sleep at my post. The noise of the great gate, which creaked on its hinges, waked me in the middle of the night. The porter, with a bunch of keys in his hand, fastened all the doors. It was this moment that I dreaded; it was now, without doubt, they would come and besiege me. I was presently eased of my fears, for the porter entered quietly into his lodge, a servant put out the lamp, and everyone went to bed.

The profound silence which now reigned throughout the mansion, gave me great confidence. It was clear they had no idea of me, and the words, "It shall be in that," merely alluded to a nocturnal adventure, of which I was to be the witness. Nevertheless, it was but being relieved of one embarrassment to fall into another. My prison would be the probable stage for the scene which was preparing. In so narrow a space, a third person would but incommode the actors, and I was, moreover, interested that those, whoever they might be, should not discover me. I would not, therefore, come out of the carriage too soon. I still perceived lights in some of the apartments, but there was no longer any in the yard, and the fog continued very thick. I could get out of the carriage without fearing to be perceived, and I effected it successfully. What pleasure I experienced when I felt my feet on the pavement of the court-yard! The young Parisian, who makes his first voyage at sea, does not feel more agreeable sensations on returning into harbour.

The intoxication of this first transport was soon dissipated. Since everything was fast, I had only procured myself a more extensive prison. I was cold, hungry, and overwhelmed with ennui; a clock kept sounding quarters, when I wished to be counting hours, fatiguing me with its monotonous noise, and promised me the longest of nights. The candles were put out by degrees in the apartments; everything remained in profound darkness, and yet no one appeared! My impatience was equal to my curiosity.

At length, about three o'clock, I heard some noise in the yard; a man, whose features I could not distinguish, advanced gently, and I as cautiously receded; he opened the door and mounted the carriage, and I, goaded by curiosity, seated myself modestly behind it.

After a quarter of an hour's silence, the unknown rapped his feet together, and, apostrophising all at once the night, the cold, the fog, and someone he called *chienne*,<21> got out of the carriage, and walked under the coach-house, and came near to me to perform a very impolite office. In a little time, he began to evince fresh signs of impatience. The *chienne*, he cried at each instant, and accompanied this exclamation with others more energetic. At length he added: "Why did this wench appoint to meet me here, and not let me go to her chamber as formerly. She pretends that Madame heard a noise in her room, and that her honour would be in danger. Her honour! That may be all very well; but is it a reason why I should stay here two hours swallowing the fog? Does not the hussy know that when a man is frozen—"

The complaint of the lover, and it may be easily guessed that he was one, was interrupted by a slight rustling, which attracted both his attention and mine. He rose and met the expected person, and reproached her delay. She justified herself by a kiss,

imprinted with energy. The mode of reply gave apparent satisfaction to the lover, and he rejoined in the same manner, continuing the amusement for some time.

To the fear lest I should be discovered, I joined an anxious desire to know who the kind fair one was, whose language was at the same time, both soft and energetic; but the profound darkness, which had protected me against the lover, concealed the mistress from my curious eyes.

The happy couple, who understood each other so well without speaking, mounted the carriage.

Il en partit aussitôt des soupirs étoffés, des gemissments tendres, et la caisse, violemment poussée, fit en une minute vingt soubresauts, qui m' apprirent assez à quelle espece d'exercise se livraient ceux qui étaient dedans. Etrangement cahoté derriere, je songeais à quitter ma place, quand la voiture, remise par degres dans son parfait équilibre, m'annonça que les athletes reprenaient haleine.

[From it came deep sighs and tender murmurings; and the carriage, violently agitated, rocked twenty times in a minute, that made it obvious to me what was happening inside. Jerked about behind it, I was about to move away, when the carriage gradually coming to rest, told me that that the athletes had got their breath back.]

"My dear La Jeunesse!" said a voice, whose soft accents I recognised.—Alas! And so deceitful—"my dear La Jeunesse!"

"My dear Justine," replied the booby; and I felt the carriage resume its motion.

I endeavoured to get down, a grain of sand under my foot made a crash. "My God," said Justine, "I hear a noise—look into the yard—we are surprised."

La Jeunesse descended with amazement, walked at random in the court, and pretended to feel about. Justine, more dead than alive, remained motionless in the carriage. I stepped in at the door: "It is I, my dear girl, I have heard everything; send La Jeunesse away presently, recollect that I want a lodging, and have had no supper."

"What, Monsieur de Faublas, are you there?"

"Yes, I was there, but send away La Jeunesse, get me a chamber, and give me some supper. I will tell you afterwards what has happened to me, what I have heard, and what you have done."

Having said this, I resumed my post. Jeunesse came back, and assured Justine she was deceived. She contended that she had heard a noise, and that someone had risen in the house. She had the cruelty to send her lover away, but he did not leave until he had embraced her several times, and made her give her word to meet him in a more convenient place the next night.

As soon as he was gone, Justine declared she knew not where to conduct me. "Monsieur," she said, "passes the night with the Marchioness."

"What, the Marquis?"

"He would not be refused."

"Ah, ah, but you have a chamber, Justine?"

"Yes, Monsieur, quite close to the chamber of Madame."

"Well, my dear, conduct me to your chamber. I have been fasting in the cold these seven hours, would you leave me to perish?"

"Oh, no, Monsieur de Faublas! Oh, surely not, but it is—if my mistress hears any noise?"

"Good! I will not make so much as La Jeunesse did the last time."

Justine took me by the hand, and we both went on tip-toe, listening and feeling, until we reached her chamber. Justine lighted a lamp, and hastened to make a fire. She did not dare to look me in the face, but her timid glances seemed to ask pardon, and I thought I could perceive on the arch-looking features of the *fille de chambre*, a certain confused air, which rendered her more interesting than ever. Oh, how often was I tempted to forgive her! What youth of seventeen is capable of bearing malice to a pretty girl of his own age? I could not doubt but La Jeunesse had been happy, but I had been so also; the question, then, was, which of us she esteemed the most. Yes, but to have a rival in the stables! To divide my pleasures with a groom! Nothing, in truth, but an idea equally distressing with the present, could enable me to refrain from committing an additional infidelity, in regard to the poor Marchioness, and a fresh injury to my Sophia.

The moment these delicate reflections had stifled my rising desires, I felt my hunger increase:

"Give me some supper, Justine."

"I have nothing, Monsieur de Faublas."

"What, nothing at all?"

"Nothing but two pots of sweetmeats in my closet."

"But two, Justine?"

"Here they are, I have preserved them for my best friends."

"In that case, it is La Jeunesse who has had the first of this. I regret I did not thrash him that day when he galloped after me over the bridge at Sevres."

"Ah, you gave him a stroke with a whip, which made his arm quite black!"

"I am no longer astonished at the interest you took about him at the time of that affair. But give me some bread, child."

"I have none—Not a mouthful."

"Not a crumb? And some drink?"

"Oh! I have plenty; here is a jugful of water."

Two pots of sweetmeats! 'twas a supper for a nun; 'twas healthy, but so light, that my stomach was not satisfied, and, by way of adding to my comfort, I was obliged to swallow a tumbler full of water, so cold, that it froze the palate of my mouth, and my inside. Justine appeared to feel for my distress. The fire did not burn well; she stirred it, and coaxed it continually. I was still cold. She buttoned my coat. My hat was not sufficient to keep my head warm; I was, therefore, obliged to entreat her to let me put on one of her night-caps. The wind came in through the crevices of the door; and she stuffed them with paper to protect me from it. She was indefatigable, not only in relieving my present wants, but in guarding against those which I might have; in fact, she lavished on me that minute and agreeable attention

those little delicate cares and tender caresses with which a woman always loads you when she really intends to deceive you.

"Monsieur," at length said the artful Abigail, curious to know how I liked being on the watch at three in the morning, "I thought you would have had time to get out at the great gate, as I know you are so light and nimble! I forgot that the disorder you were in at the time would require a few minutes—"

I interrupted her, to detail everything which had happened to me from the moment I entered the house. When I mentioned the boudoir, she with difficulty restrained herself from laughing; the remembrance of her fall down the stairs was nearly making her blush; and a pretended look of pity appeared on her malicious countenance when I described my imprisonment in the carriage. But, when I came to the close of my recital, which I attempted to render poignant by some sarcasms, a sudden change took place in every feature: the poor girl cast down her eyes, turned aside her head, looked pale, and with her right hand counting one after another the fingers of her left, she ventured, with timidity, a few words in her own justification.

"I beg," Monsieur de Faublas, "you will lay no stress on what was done in the carriage; I know I was there."

"Then you were perfectly pleased with what passed there?"

"Certainly; but I committed no infidelity towards you."

"How! Are you sure of that, my dear?"

"To be sure; because I never left you for La Jeunesse: it was to him, on the contrary, that I was unfaithful, when I submitted to your embraces."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, Monsieur de Faublas, for you have only loved me a few months."

"And La Jeunesse?"

"More than two years; but I have preferred you from the moment I saw you. That was no reason, however, why I should break with him, because I can make him marry me."

"You have done right!"

"You laugh, Monsieur, but you may rest assured that he will marry me."

"I do not doubt it, Justine; he *married* you half an hour ago."

"I am wretched, Monsieur; I see you are angry with me, and my mistress, perhaps, will turn me away tomorrow."

"What! Do you think, Justine, that I shall tell her?"

"No, Monsieur, it is not that, but Madame is not satisfied with my fall downstairs; she is not to be duped. When I went in, the Marquis seemed to pity me; but the Marchioness looked cross at me. 'It serves her right,' she said dryly, 'she should have gone down at once, instead of amusing herself on the stairs.' She has said no more to me, because the Marquis has not left her, but she received what I did for her with a bad grace, and I am fearful that tomorrow—"

"If she turns you away, Justine, come to me, and I will find you a place, upon a certain condition. It is now five months that the Marchioness has pretended to be with child."

"Ah, Monsieur! I assure you—"

"Yes, what you have assured me several times; but you must not be in such a hurry to answer me: I shall know the truth sooner or later, and if you have not told it me, I shall abandon you."

"But if I tell you the truth?"

"Then you will have nothing to fear, I will not desert you. So, it is true, then, that your mistress is not pregnant?"

"She told you so, Monsieur, in order to work upon your feelings, and effect a reconciliation, and it seemed to give you so much pleasure, she could never make up her mind to undeceive you, and you would be wrong to desire it. All she has done was to please you."

"Yes, yes, Justine, if she turns you away, I will get you a place, and, in the meantime, take this."

I made her take the ten crowns which I presented her. "You had better lie down on my bed," she said.

"I can rest very well on this armchair, my dear."

Justine, however, insisted, but my unlucky stars prevailed. I refused, observing to her that she must be more fatigued than myself; that it was necessary for her to go to bed; and that the mattress would do for me, if she could dispense with it for a few hours.

The obliging Justine dragged her palliasse towards the fireplace, and put a mattress upon it: then, without undressing herself, laid down on her bed, which was greatly reduced by the division. She bade me good night, darted a tender glance at me, and heaved a deep sigh. I know not how it was, but I sighed too, in spite of myself. My imagination, always so lively, caused my feeble reason to stray. I should have yielded to the impulse of desire, but I all at once thought of Sophia. It is true that I remembered also the motion of the carriage! And, whatever the reason, instead of sharing Justine's bed, and reposing on her bosom, I threw myself on the mattress prepared for me. I put my head upon my arm, which served me for a pillow, and sunk into a profound sleep. I shall leave the reader to determine whether it was disgust which stifled desire or, for this once, whether the tender passion of love triumphed over my libertine inclinations.

I had not enjoyed the sweets of so necessary a repose above two hours, when I was awakened by the dreadful cry of "Fire!"I found myself in flames. I rose, rubbed my eyes, and it was Justine who cried out with all her strength. To bid her hold her tongue; to stifle with my hands, already cruelly burnt, the fire, which had already consumed the left skirt of my coat; to throw back into the chimney the flaming coals which had rolled to the mattress, and kindled that also, to snatch a jug of water from Justine's toilette; to throw the almost frozen contents on the paliasse and mattress; by a single stroke, to tear away the counterpane and sheets from Justine; toss the feather bed on one side, the mattress on the other, and to overturn the bedstead with my feet. All this was the affair of a moment: I did it quicker than you can read it.

In the meanwhile several persons, drawn by the cries of Justine, ran towards her chamber, and begged her to open the door. I was almost distracted on hearing the voice of my charming mistress and her spouse. Where could I hide myself? —There was no bed! No closet! I could see nothing but the chimney, and ran into that! And Justine brought a chair to assist me in climbing up.

"Open the door, Justine," cried the Marquis. She, holding the chair, answered that the fire was extinguished. "Never mind, open the door," replied the Marchioness, "or I will thrust it in."

Let me dress first", said Justine, still holding the chair "You shall dress yourself tomorrow," replied the furious master.

All the domestics had arrived. They were ordered to break open the door. At that instant I made a leap, and caught hold of a bar which crossed the chimney. Justine took away the chair, quickly flew to the door, opened it, and in they all rushed.

The chamber was filled with people, who, all in a breath, questioned, answered, commented, were frightened, comforted and congratulated each other, without understanding the merits of the case. The shrill voice of the Marquis was presently distinguished amidst the confusion:

"What an impertinent baggage to set my house on fire, to alarm us in this manner, and disturb the rest both of myself and her mistress."

While the Marquis was scolding, the Marchioness caused the mattress and paliasse, which had done all the mischief, to be thrown out of the window, and examined the room to see if there was further danger. "Let everyone retire," she said. The men obeyed immediately; but some of the women, more curious, perhaps, than zealous, offered their services to my charming mistress, who ordered them a second time to retire.

"How have you set this place on fire!" cried the Marquis, still in a rage.

"Stop a moment," said the Marchioness, "wait till they are gone."

"Zounds! Madame! And if they hear it, is it such a great mystery?"

"Well, Monsieur, but do you not see that she is trembling? And do you think that she would burn herself on purpose?"

"Ah, Madame! I see how it is with you and your Justine! You overlook everything! I tell you she is a fool; a hare-brained hussy; and, take my word for it, she will come to a bad end. Look at her! I have always observed in her physiognomy that she was somewhat deranged. Look at her countenance! Is there not something wild in it?"

"Come, Justine," interrupted the Marchioness, "inform us by what accident—"

"I was reading, Madame."

"A fine time of night to be reading!" cried the Marquis: "Must she not have been out of her senses?"

"I fell asleep, Madame," replied Justine, and the light, which I had not put out, was too near the mattress—"

"—And set it on fire," interrupted the Marquis: "a great miracle, truly! And, pray, what were you reading so late at night, miss?"

"I was reading, Monsieur, replied the subtle *fille de chambre*, a book called *The Complete Physiognomist*."

The Marquis seemed all at once appeased, and began to laugh: "It is *The Perfect Physiognomist*. Well, Justine, is it not a very amusing book?"

"Yes, Monsieur, very amusing; it is on that account I—"

"And where is the book?" demanded the Marquis.

After some moments' silence, Justine replied: "I cannot find it; it appears to be burnt."

"What! Burnt?" cried the Marquis: "My book burnt! Have you burnt my book!"

"Monsieur!"

"And how dared you take my books, miss? Who suffered you to take my books and burn them?"

"Monsieur," said the Marchioness, "you rave loud enough to distract my head?"

"And pray, Madame, is the impertinent slut to burn my books?

"And pray, Monsieur, cannot you buy another?"

"Buy another? Buy another, aye! What! You think, then, Madame, they are to be got like romances? There is not, perhaps, another copy in the world! And this fool has burnt it."

"Well, Monsieur," rejoined the Marchioness in a very lively manner, "if this book is burnt, and no other is to be found, you must overlook it, I see no great evil in it."

"Indeed! Madame Ignorance—Stop! For I must go—for I will tell you—and you, mademoiselle, I repeat to you, you are a fool! A thoughtless slut! An idiot! And it is long that I have discovered all that in your physiognomy!" said the Marquis, and left the room in a rage.

Squeezed into a chimney, which was both narrow and foul, forced to thrust my head and shoulders against one side, to stiffen my legs against the other, and for the greater safety, to strain my hands also firmly on each side, I found myself in the most uncomfortable situation, and began to be greatly fatigued. Nevertheless, I was obliged to have patience, as it was necessary that I should hear the matter finished, I therefore summoned up my strength, and continued to listen.

The Marchioness began: "You see he is gone! That is what I wished; and now we are left alone, I hope, mademoiselle, you will explain to me, satisfactorily, the reason of your fall downstairs in the evening; and also for the noise I have heard in your room for these two hours; and how do you think I am to believe this story about burning the book? I hope you will condescend to acquaint me why a fire was kindled in your bedroom."

"Madame!"

"Answer me, mademoiselle, you were not alone here!"

"Madame, I assure you—"

"Justine, you are going to tell me a falsehood."

"I was reading, as I told you."

"Tis false! Mademoiselle, the book you speak of is in my cabinet."

"Then I was at needlework, Madame, and talking to myself—but you cough, Madame; you are catching cold.

"Yes, I am catching cold, that is very true. I see that I cannot come at the truth to-night."

"I shall leave you, mademoiselle; tomorrow, I have no doubt, I shall succeed better." She was going out, but returned. "We must, for fear of a fresh accident, extinguish this fire entirely," she said.

She took, at the same time, a pot of water, and emptied it on the few embers remaining in the chimney. My mouth, my nose, and my eyes, were immediately asailed by a thick smoke, and I was nearly suffocated. My strength failed me, and I fell upon my feet. The Marchioness recoiled with terror. I came out of the chimney immediately; her fright gave way to astonishment, and we regarded each other in silence.

Illustration: Her fright gave way to astonishment, and we regarded each other in silence

"Mademoiselle," said the Marchioness, at length to Justine, "with a look which betrayed the violence of her anger, there was no one with you! And then, turning towards me, in a reproachful manner: Faublas! Faublas!"

"Justine threw herself on her knees before her mistress: Madame, I assure you—"

"What, mademoiselle, do you dare again—"

Whilst poor Justine was endeavouring to appease her mistress, I was occupied in contemplating her person, which was so agreeably exhibited. A single petticoat, scarcely fastened to her slender waist, afforded but a slight covering to those luxuriant charms which had so often fired my youthful imagination. They now delighted my ravished eyes, and called to mind the raptures I had experienced while embracing them. Her cap had fallen off, and the beautiful flowing honours of her head were scattered over her shoulders, which were whiter than alabaster, and fully exposed by the falling down of her chemise. Some of her silken tresses fell in wanton ringlets, and by their glossy hue of raven jet, forming a delightful contrast upon her ivory bosom, heightened its fascination. Oh, how charming she appeared! I gazed on her with ecstasy, and forgot the pretended pregnancy. I seized one of her hands, kissed it, and said:

"My dear mamma, appearances are often deceitful."

"Ah, Faublas! To whom have you sacrificed me!"

"To no one: I can explain everything in a word. Justine wished to assist me with her evidence."

"You are very audacious," said her mistress.

"Yes, you are right," she is very audacious, cried the Marquis de B***, who, tired of waiting for his wife, had come to fetch her.

The Marchioness blew out the light, and giving me a kiss on the forehead, said in a whisper: "Have a little patience, Faublas, and I will come back in an instant;" then, elevating her voice, and addressing herself to Justine: "Come, mademoiselle, come along with me." Justine obeyed with alacrity; the Marchioness opened the door, repulsed her husband, who was coming in, locked the door after her, and took away the key, leaving me once more in prison.

My slavery, however, appeared now more supportable, as I was at least permitted to indulge some agreeable expectations. My droll tribulations, so strangely varied, so cruelly prolonged during the whole night, were, without doubt, I thought, to be terminated; and the Marchioness, who would shortly return, could not refuse me the just indemnification for so many evils suffered on her account. This consolatory idea reanimated my spirits; I took a chair, the back of which I placed against the door, and, like a hunter on the watch, I waited for my prey.

Presently I heard a noise in the apartment of Monsieur and Madame de B***. She spoke quick and loud, and disputed in anger. I suspected that the Marchioness could not disembarrass herself of her husband, and had therefore determined to quarrel. I made sure that she would succeed in irritating him to such a degree as to oblige him to retire; but it turned out otherwise. After considerable debate, the

Marchioness ran out of her chamber, and came towards the one I was in. "It is a very scandalous thing," she cried, in a rage; "do not follow me, Monsieur! Do not follow me!"

She had reached the end of the corridor, and was near to my prison, when her foot slipped, and she fell with such violence, that the key of Justine's room flew out of her hand and bounced against my door. My unfortunate mistress uttered a terrible cry. Her husband, who was at her heels, raised her up; several of her women ran to her assistance, and carried her to her chamber. A moment after I heard the Marquis exclaim that she was wounded. The servants were ordered to rise, the porter to open the gates, and a surgeon to be sent for.

XI.

Oh! How my heart beat at this awful moment! What uneasiness did the misfortune of Madame de B*** cause me! How mortifying to be thus shut up and unable to ascertain if her wound was dangerous, and her life threatened! These reflections only increased my impatience. In the midst of the flurry which such an accident must cause, in such a moment of trouble and agitation, would Justine be able to leave her mistress? Would she think of delivering me? The time was precious, for daylight began to appear. If I effected my escape, if I could return home, Jasmin could come here and bring me intelligence of her. It was, therefore, necessary that I should try all possible means to procure my liberty. The noise which they made in opening the large gate, informed me that one of the greatest obstacles was removed, and gave me hopes of surmounting all the rest. I attempted, but in vain, to draw the key, which laid in the passage, under the door. I then tried to remove the lock, and draw the screws which fastened it, but found that they were rivetted on the other side.

I examined the lock minutely, and was endeavouring to open it with my knife, when La Jeunesse, whose voice I recognised, said, in a gentle tone: "Is it you, Justine? I thought that you were with your mistress. Let me in, then." The opportunity was too good to be suffered to escape. I immediately determined what part to take, and to run some risk for the sake of liberty. I spoke very low, and counterfeiting as well as I could the voice of Justine, said, through the key-hole: "Is it you, La Jeunesse? Can you tell me how your mistress is?"

"Thy mistress is well, her skin was scarcely scratched; Monsieur came and told us that the surgeon said it was nothing. But how is it you did not know this? Let me in."

"I cannot, my dear friend; Madame has locked me in—Yes, you will find the key in the passage; look for it."

La Jeunesse looked and found the key; he opened the door and beheld me: "Ah! Mon Dieu! It is the devil!" he cried. I attempted to pass; he levelled a tremendous blow at me; I parried it, and returned it. The blow told well, and sent him reeling to the ground, with a great gash over his eye. I leaped over his carcass and rushed down the staircase; my enemy rose and pursued me, but I was the nimblest, because unhurt, and stimulated by a more urgent motive. I flew rapidly across the court, and had already escaped out of the gateway, when La Jeunesse, rendered more furious as he despaired of reaching me, roared out with all his might, "Stop thief!"

I had shot through one street, and fear gave me wings. La Jeunesse, followed by some other domestics, was still pursuing me, but at a great distance. I thought myself saved, when all at once, on turning a corner, I found myself among a patrol of the guard of Paris. The sergeant arrested me on the spot, as my appearance was suspicious. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine a stranger figure than I presented. I had been occupied by so many cares during the latter part of this night, that I did not, until this moment, reflect upon the grotesque sight I must have been when running through the streets. A part of my coat was burnt, another blackened with soot, my whole person disfigured with smoke, and lastly, my head wrapped up in Justine's night cap; therefore, I could be no longer astonished that La Jeunesse took me for the devil.

Notwithstanding the surprise which my curious costume occasioned, even in myself, I assured the sergeant that I was an honest man. He appeared very little disposed to take my word, and La Jeunesse arrived, panting for breath. All the other

servants surrounded me, and cried, "Stop him! He is a villain! A robber! Bring him to our house." I demanded that they would take me before the commissary of the district, and my request was so just that it was immediately complied with.

The commissary expected it was some business of profit, but when he found it was only a criminal affair, was angry at being awakened so early in the morning.

"Who are you, my friend?" he said.

"I am the Chevalier de Faublas, your humble servant, Monsieur."

"Ah, pardon me, Monsieur, where do you live?"

"With my father, the Baron de Faublas, Rue de l'Université."

"And what is your occupation?"

"Like many other young men of family, I have none."

"From whence do you come?"

"Can you not dispense with my answering that question?"

"I cannot. Where do you come from?"

"Out of a chimney."

"These are improper jokes, Monsieur, for which you will pay dear."

"No, Monsieur, they are truths, confirmed by my clothes: look at them."

"Where were you going?"

"To bed."

"A fine answer indeed! Where are the complainants?"

La Jeunesse immediately presented himself.

"What is your name, my friend?" said the magistrate.

I replied for him, "La Jeunesse."

"Pardon me, Monsieur," said the man of law, "I spoke to this youth. Where do you lodge, my friend?"

"In the heart of one of the Marchioness' maids," I replied immediately.

"It is not you whom I interrogate, Monsieur!" Then turning towards La Jeunesse, "What is your employment, my friend?"

"He kisses young women in carriages," I replied.

The commissary stamped his foot on the ground with anger, La Jeunesse looked at me with astonishment: the poor youth was so confounded, that he knew not how to reply to the questions with which our city judge overwhelmed him. He deposed, however, that he found me locked up with Mademoiselle Justine in a bedroom, in the house of the Marquis de B***; that I broke open a lock, and in coming out I had apostrophised him, the complainant, with a terrible blow on the eye.

The man of law, seeing the case assume a serious aspect, bade me sit down a moment. After speaking to his clerk in a low tone for a little time, I saw the Marquis de B*** enter the office. He came, he said, to inform him that a robber— "Ah! It is M. du Portail!"

COMMISSARY. Monsieur du Portail! That is not the name the gentleman bade us write down.

MARQUIS (laughing.) Pardon me, Monsieur du Portail? But what a condition do I see you in—how is it? What's the matter?

FAUBLAS (whispering in the ear of the Marquis.) I have had a singular adventure, which I will relate to you with pleasure, but this is not a proper time.

MARQUIS (staring very hard at him.) Yes, Yes, but how the devil came you dressed in this manner?

COMMISSARY. Monsieur the Marquis, I will read you the deposition.

FAUBLAS. It is unnecessary (Then, in a whisper to the Marquis,) I will tell you all that.

MARQUIS (looking at him with an air of uncertainty.) Yes, yes, but let us see the deposition.

The Commissary began to read, and I drew the Marquis into a corner of the office, and pretending to speak very low. "Pray take me from this place immediately," I said, "you know how my father confines me! If he should ever know!—if the Commissary should send for him!"

MARQUIS (aloud.) What, is your father at length returned from Russia?

FAUBLAS. Yes.

MARQUIS. Zounds! It is very singular that he is never to be found, I have been twenty times to the Arsenal.

COMMISSARY. But Monsieur does not reside at the Arsenal.

MARQUIS. Monsieur du Portail not live at the Arsenal?

COMMISSARY. Monsieur does not call himself du Portail.

MARQUIS. Does not call himself du Portail? That is very singular! Ha! Ha!

COMMISSARY. You may laugh, sir, as much as you please, but Monsieur declared to us that he lived in Rue de l'Université, and calls himself de Faublas.

MARQUIS (recoiling with astonishment.) What! How! De Faublas?

FAUBLAS (in the ear of the Marquis.) Hush! Hush! I have given that name, as 'tis very disagreeable to expose one's own before a magistrate.

MARQUIS. I understand you. Pray how is mademoiselle your sister, Monsieur?

FAUBLAS (in a tone as if hurt by mention of her name.) Very well, sir.

MARQUIS. When I met you at the opera one evening, you told me you did not know this M. de Faublas.

FAUBLAS. Oh! That was because you spoke of the son! Who is a bad subject—but the father is a good man.

MARQUIS. But tell me how it is that my people have been in pursuit of you.

COMMISSARY. Monsieur the Marquis, hear the deposition, it is very serious.

MARQUIS. Read on, I am listening to you.

FAUBLAS (to the Marquis.) Much time will be lost.

MARQUIS. It will not be long.

FAUBLAS. But I will relate the whole to you myself.

MARQUIS. Undoubtedly, but let us see what my servants have deposed You may make yourself easy, I am well aware you are not a thief.

The Commissary read the deposition all through, the Marquis ordered La Jeunesse, who was without along with the other servants, to be called in. He confirmed everything he had said, and entered into fresh details necessary to clear up certain facts which I could not deny.

MARQUIS. Monsieur shut up in Justine's chamber! How the devil could that be! I went in there myself and did not see him.

FAUBLAS. You can prove that I was not there, Monsieur the Marquis.

MARQUIS. And my wife entered there also, and even remained there a considerable time! She did not see you either, Monsieur.

FAUBLAS. Another proof that I was not there! (to the commissary) You see, Monsieur, how vague this accusation is; will you permit me to retire?

COMMISSARY. No, Monsieur! No; sentinel, bar the door.

FAUBLAS. What, sir!—can you—

COMMISSARY. I am very sorry, Monsieur, but you entered into a house, they know not how, or when; they find you shut up in the maid's bed-chamber! It is not clear to me that a complaint might not be lodged against you for seduction.

FAUBLAS. Monsieur, as a justice of the peace, you are to receive depositions, examine witnesses, listen to proofs, and, always faithful to the spirit of the law, you should reject perfidious probabilities. What you call a conjecture, is no more than an uncertainty, particularly when it affects the honour, I will not say of a nobleman, but of a citizen, or of a man, let his rank be what it may.

MARQUIS. Permit me to ask Monsieur where he has known Justine!

FAUBLAS. I might dispense with answering that question, Monsieur, but to convince you of my complaisance, I will readily acknowledge that I knew Justine through the medium of a woman named Dutour, who was her friend, and who waited on my sister.

MARQUIS (with an air of satisfaction.) Yes, who served Mademoiselle du Portail.

FAUBLAS. Yes, Monsieur.

COMMISSARY (in a pet.) If Mademoiselle du Portail is your sister, your name must also be du Portail. Why have you made a false declaration?

MARQUIS. There is no great evil in that; I know why he did so! I know the reason! Let the name of de Faublas still stand on your books (then turning to me) I would not injure you for the world; but tell me in a friendly manner what you came to my house for.

FAUBLAS. What, can you not guess? I became acquainted with Justine at my sister's, they found me in her bedroom; her charms have seduced me.

MARQUIS. Ah, you little libertine! You have passed the night with her! The Marchioness would be in a fine way if she knew the brother of one of her dear friends came to debauch her maids. But how came Justine's room on fire?

FAUBLAS. We were fatigued and fell asleep.

MARQUIS (laughing.) You must have been greatly alarmed when I knocked at the door.

FAUBLAS. You can have no idea what a panic I was in.

MARQUIS. But we did not see you, where the devil were you hid?

FAUBLAS. In the chimney.

MARQUIS. But when my wife returned to Justine's room she must have seen you there.

FAUBLAS. Not at all; I heard her coming, and went up the chimney again.

MARQUIS. And you did well. Oh! My wife could not bear the slightest impropriety in her family. It is not that she is less indulgent than others, but a respectable female would not have the slightest suspicion attached to her own character; people may do what they please so long as they do no harm at her house; and indeed she carries her indifference on this point too far, for she sometimes excuses in her friends those weaknesses—but Monsieur, is mademoiselle your sister still at Soissons?

FAUBLAS (appearing to hesitate.) Yes, Monsieur.

MARQUIS. Indeed! Always in the convent?

FAUBLAS (pretending to be embarrassed') Yes, Monsieur!—Yes—Why not?

MARQUIS. My motive in asking that question arises from being informed that she was in. the environs of Paris.

FAUBLAS. In the environs of Paris! Your informant was deceived, Monsieur, it surely could not be my sister—but everything is now explained, I think; let us go.

COMMISSARY. Everything is not explained, Monsieur, I am waiting for someone.

This somebody entered at that instant; it was my father; the man of law said to him: To whom have I the honour to address myself, Monsieur?

BARON. I am the Baron de Faublas, Monsieur.

COMMISSARY. In that case, Monsieur. I owe you a thousand excuses. I have sent for you because a young man, against whom there is a very serious charge, has assumed your name and calls himself your son; but his declaration is false. I am sorry that I have disturbed you.

MARQUIS (to the Commissary.) What do you mean by his declaration being false! Did I not tell you to let the name of Faublas stand in your process? (aside to the Chevalier) you know not the consequences of that! If once this commissary ascertains your real name, he will send and fetch your real father, and he would make a rare noise. Beg of this Monsieur de Faublas, to let you keep his name, and that will settle everything.

CHEVALIER (to the Marquis.) I dare not.

MARQUIS. I will ask him myself. (To the Baron) Say that he is your son.

In the meantime, the Baron, struck with astonishment at everything he saw, looked by turns at the commissary, the Marquis and myself. Monsieur, he replied at last, to the attentive judge, your care is not thrown away, nor is my trouble useless. In the situation in which I behold this young man, I ought perhaps to disown him; but the place even where I find him, prompts my indulgence for him. I know he is possessed of some pride and sensibility, and if he has been guilty of any folly, an examination here, will, I doubt not, be a sufficient punishment. This young man has told you his real name, Monsieur, he is my son.

MARQUIS (to the Baron.) Well done! Very well performed.

COMMISSARY. But I do not understand this, I shall send for this Monsieur du Portail.

MARQUIS (to the Chevalier.) He does not understand it I believe him.

BARON (to the Commissary with great warmth.) Monsieur, do I not tell you he is my son!

MARQUIS (to the Baron, pulling him by the coat.) Admirable! (To the Chevalier) He plays his part to a miracle!

CHEVALIER (to the Marquis.) Oh, the Baron is a clever man and then he owes our family some reparation.

COMMISSARY (to the Baron) All that is very good, Monsieur, but there is a charge.

MARQUIS (as loud as he could bawl.) I withdraw it.

COMMISSARY.That is not sufficient, Monsieur; the business is of such a nature! Public justice is interested in it.

BARON (with great vehemence.) Public justice is interested! What then is the charge?

MARQUIS. Zounds! A mere trifle, a paltry intrigue!

COMMISSARY. An intrigue?

MARQUIS. Yes, Monsieur, an affair of gallantry. (To the Baron) It is nothing more than a gallant adventure, you may take my word for it!

COMMISSARY. There is a false declaration, escape, assault, battery, and seduction.

BARON (in anger.) That is impossible! Who says so? Who dare attack in this manner the honour of my son and my family?

MARQUIS (to the Chevalier.) Ah! How well he hits his part! I could not have conceived it. (To the father) Come on, Monsieur, make yourself easy; it was only an affair of gallantry. Monsieur, your son has slept with one of my maids, and in making his escape, he has thrashed one of my men; that is all, I can assure you.

BARON (to the commissary.) You know my name, and my residence; are you willing that I should take my son home, and be answerable for his appearance?

MARQUIS. Yes, and I will also be responsible for him.

COMMISSARY. Gentlemen, you will be bound to produce this young man at such a time and place as may be required; and will be answerable in your own persons.

BARON. Yes, in our own persons.

MARQUIS. Yes, body for body. Come, let us be gone.

We all three came out together. "Ah! Monsieur," said the Marquis to my father; "Ah! Monsieur, how well you performed your part in this comedy! How natural! How life-like! You could give lessons to the actors!" (Then addressing himself to me) "Did you hear him when he exclaimed, 'Who dares thus to attack the honour of my son?'—Of his son! Why he would almost have persuaded me to believe, who know so well to the contrary."

While the Marquis was speaking, the Baron observed him with a look which would have greatly amused me if I had not known the extreme irritability of my father's temper. I trembled lest the droll compliments with which the Marquis de B*** loaded him, might raise his anger; but I was happy that he restrained his passion.

His carriage waited at the door: "Do not stand on ceremony, he said to me, get in first."

The Marquis wished to detain me. "Will you continue talking in the street in that figure?" said the Baron. I sprung into the carriage, and my father placed himself beside me; we bade the Marquis politely adieu, and he went home on foot.

My father then said: "Why will you spend your nights from home? Are not the days long enough? See what danger you expose yourself to through your obstinacy." I excused myself as well as I could. "But your health will be destroyed," continued the Baron.

"Ah! Father, never was reproach less merited; if you knew but how prudent I have been during the night."

"Does my son think he is still speaking to the Marquis de B***?"

"Certainly not, father; but I assure you that I could pass three hundred and sixty-five such nights as the last, without the slightest injury to my health, if you will permit me to give you the details.

"No, my friend, no, keep them for M. de Rosambert."

He then informed me that M. du Portail, Adelaide, and myself were invited with him, to dine the next day with the Duke de —— , at the entrance of the Boulevard St. Honoré.

"If the weather changes, and it should keep fine, we will set out early," he said. "You shall all three take a walk round the Tuileries, while I go in to speak with M. de Saint-Luc, who lodges there. Do not forget this, and be ready in good time."

XII.

When I reached home, Justine was waiting for me. The Marchioness was a prey to the most bitter anxieties on hearing that a robber, concealed in Justine's bedroom, had been arrested and taken before the commissary of police, and that M. de B*** had gone there. She ordered her *fille de chambre*, who was no less alarmed than herself, to run to our house, to wait there until my return, and to beg me to inform her precisely of all that had transpired relative to an adventure which might produce such serious consequences.

Justine wept when she found I had sacrificed her to save her mistress. "I was aware," she said, "that it could not well be otherwise, my master will say I must be discharged; and my mistress, who is already angry with me, will embrace this opportunity of sending me away."

I comforted the poor girl, and assured her I would find her a place, but that, at all events, I would not abandon her.

The moment Justine was gone, I changed my clothes and washed the soot from my face; I then ran to Rosambert, and related to him the various ludicrous accidents which had occurred to me during the preceding night. I told him afterwards, that if he would see Adelaide, he must be in the Tuileries the next day, in the path which they call L'Allé du Printemps. The Count promised me he would be there before noon.

After dinner I received a visit from Derneval, who informed me that we were to go to the convent the next night, let the weather be fair or foul. "My dear Faublas," he added, "we are about to separate."

"How?"

"The business which detained me here is finished. Everything is ready for the grand enterprise which I have meditated several months past. Tomorrow night I carry off Dorothea."

"Ah Derneval, and how can I see my Sophia when you shall have abandoned us?"

"Have you not your pavilion?"

"But the garden gate?"

"Ah, you are right, I did not think of that."

"Can you, then, Derneval, leave your friend, and the friend of your mistress, in despair?"

"No, Chevalier, no; I will speak to Dorothea; we will not set out before you have a key of the gate which leads into the garden; and, believe me, if it is necessary, I will defer, for a day, the execution of my projects."

Derneval left me, plunged in the most cruel reflections, which agitated me all the evening, and indeed during the whole night. He goes, I said to myself, he goes off with her he loves! And I remain behind, perhaps without another chance of seeing my beloved Sophia! And if she has a key, would she venture to open the gate? Would she dare to come alone into the garden? Would not the elopement, too, of Dorothea, make a terrible noise in the convent? Would it not induce them to take every possible precaution to prevent such a thing in future? Would not the garden be better guarded

than before? Ah! My pretty cousin, it will only be permitted me to see thee sometimes through the blinds of my pavilion. Ah! Derneval! Ah! Dorothea, you abandon us. Is this what you promised?

It was thus, without foreseeing the great events which were preparing, I reproached Derneval for his precipitate departure, which I was presently about to wish more anxiously than himself.

There was a thick fog during the night, and the Baron, who rose sooner than usual, finding the morning damp and cold, knew not whether he would send for Adelaide, lest it might affect her health.

I told my father that the sun would soon warm the air, and that no day in autumn would be finer. M. du Portail, who arrived at ten, was of my opinion. We went, all three of us, to fetch my sister from her convent, and we were presently in the gardens of the Tuileries. The Baron ordered his servants to wait for us on the Pont-Tournant.

"I am going in," he said, to M. de Saint-Luc, you can walk about in the meantime."

"In the Allé du Printemps?"

"Yes; I'll be there in a few minutes."

After walking there a little time, Rosambert joined us. He thanked the chance which gave him so happy a meeting: he paid Adelaide all the compliments she so justly merited, and, during a quarter of an hour, he occupied himself so much with the sister, that the brother was forgotten. I made a thousand efforts, however, to attract his attention. Impatient to consult him on the new misfortunes which threatened my amours, I took hold of his arm, and begged him to give me a moment's converse.

At length he deigned to attend to me, and we doubled our pace without perceiving it. My sister, who could not regulate her walk by ours, remained behind, accompanied by M. du Portail.

We did not think of returning until we reached the bottom of the walk. On turning round, we saw Adelaide at a distance, surrounded by three men, and made haste to approach her. We soon recognised the two newcomers to be my father and the Marquis de B***, who were speaking with great warmth.

"Let us hasten," said Rosambert, "here is some awkward mistake."

His conjecture was right, for at the moment of our arrival, the Marquis said to my father, "Why do you interfere in this matter, Monsieur?"

The BARON DE FAUBLAS. Why do I interfere? Do you know whom you are insulting?

The MARQUIS. If I know Mademoiselle du Portail!

The BARON (in anger.) That is not Mademoiselle du Portail. Monsieur, it is my daughter. Monsieur du Portail has no children!

The MARQUIS (with great vivacity.) Monsieur du Portail has no children! Who was it, then, Monsieur, that slept with my wife?

The BARON. What's that to me?

The MARQUIS. But it matters to me! And I am sure it was Mademoiselle du Portail. (pointing to my sister.) She is, I think, somewhat altered—for a reason I will tell you presently.

The BARON (in a rage.) For reasons which you will tell us presently! Dare you repeat it? Zounds! Monsieur, put a riding habit on this hare-brained youth (pointing to the Chevalier de Faublas,) and you will see the same Mademoiselle du Portail you have seen before.

The MARQUIS (looking at the Chevalier with an air of stupefaction.) Can it be he?

In the meantime, M. du Portail and Rosambert divided their attention between Adelaide, who appeared ready to weep, and the Baron, whose wrath their advice could not moderate.

The CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS (approaching the Baron.) For God's sake, father, consider what you are about.

The MARQUIS (looking hard at the Chevalier.) What! His father!

The BARON (darting a terrible look at his son.) Hold your tongue, Monsieur! Do you know what he said to your sister? I came up at the very moment when he was congratulating her on her having been brought to bed before her time, and that her pregnancy was scarcely visible. Disguise yourself as a woman and deceive fools, but do not compromise your sister's honour.

The MARQUIS (regarding the Chevalier with the greatest attention.) The more I examine him— (He then put himself in a menacing attitude, and ran up to M. du Portail) If you are not a coward, tell me, (pointing to Adelaide) is not this young lady your daughter? (Then pointing to the Chevalier:) And is not this the young man I saw at your house in the riding habit?

M. DU PORTAIL (with the greatest coolness.) Monsieur, you know not, perhaps, that my birth is, at least, equal to yours, but I am happy in having some advantage over you. I always recollect how gentlemen should behave to each other when they become enemies. I shall not imitate you in this respect. As to your questions, I would rather not answer them—but this young lady is not my daughter, and that is the young man you saw at my house, dressed in a riding habit.

M. de B*** remained silent for some time; he came to me, took my hand, and squeezed it with great violence. I gave him a wink that I understood him. My father perceived these murderous signals, for I heard him say in a low tone: "Why could I not restrain my first transports of passion? What a blind rage! What unfortunate madness! Should it cost my son's life!"

"You have tricked me most unworthily," said the Marquis to me in a low tone, "I shall expeet you to meet me tomorrow morning by five, at La Porte Maillot. I have no reason to complain of your father, but du Portail and Rosambert are your accomplices; therefore tell them I will bring two of my friends to punish them. Adieu, you shall soon see I know how to avenge myself."

Having said this, he retired. We were surrounded by a crowd of persons, whom the noise of our quarrel had attracted. Adelaide, frightened and trembling, could scarcely support herself, but we repaired to the Pont Tournant, as fast as her strength would permit, and found our carriage waiting for us. The Baron took my

sister into his, M. du Portail and myself stepped into that of Rosambert; and to avoid the crowd which followed, the coachman was ordered to drive full gallop to our house, but by a circuitous route.

M. du Portail said, "Why did you leave us, gentlemen? You were only thirty paces distant when the Marquis de B*** came up to us. He loaded us with compliments, and put a thousand questions to your sister, which she knew not how to reply to. And I understood very little of his conversation. I was in hopes you would arrive, and relieve me from the embarrassment in which I found myself. The Marquis had already congratulated me twenty times on the return of my daughter, and the good health she appeared to enjoy; and addressing himself to your sister, said 'Upon my honour, Mademoiselle, you look well, and are very little altered.' Here he dropped his voice; and as I was not without great anxiety, I listened. 'That is astonishing,' he added, 'for if I calculate right, you must have been brought to bed before your time.'"

"Mademoiselle de Faublas shrieked out, and I exclaimed with indignation: 'Brought to bed before her time! Dare you, Monsieur!' Unfortunately, the Baron was already behind us, he rushed between his daughter and the Marquis, and in a furious tone, said: 'Who, Monsieur, was brought to bed before her time? I insist on your explaining that insolent question.'

"You know nearly what followed, gentlemen," added M. du Portail, and looking at me: "it will be attended, no doubt, with serious consequences."

"Certainly, Monsieur, it will, for tomorrow morning the Marquis de B***, accompanied by two of his friends, expects us all three at La Porte Maillot."

"What, another duel! More bloodshed!" exclaimed Rosambert.

"You now see," said M. du Portail to me, "what are the consequences of a criminal passion! Six brave men are to destroy each other on account of the Marchioness de B***. Tomorrow, whatever may be the result of the combat, Monsieur the Count and myself will be punished for having participated in your errors. Being a soldier, I have a hundred times experienced how painful it is not to be able to save one's own life, but by sacrificing that of another, and one sometimes whom we may be compelled to esteem. M. de Rosambert as well as myself is about to shed the blood of two men, of whom, perhaps, we are entirely ignorant, and who have never done us the least injury."

"Ah! Monsieur, I am more to be pitied than yourself, because I am fighting with the Marquis, to whom I have done every possible injury."

"It is very singular," said Rosambert, interrupting me, "that I should sustain your quarrel. It is droll that I am to fight for you because you have choused<4> me out of my mistress. But a truce to your reflections, gentlemen, we have no time to lose. If we are not dead at six tomorrow morning, it will be necessary for us to fly the country."

"Frenchmen!" exclaimed M. du Portail, "who have afforded me so much hospitality, shall I not quit your country without having transgressed the wisest of your laws?"

"To what country shall we retire?" demanded Rosambert of us.

"To Germany," I replied, with great vivacity.

"Yes, to Germany, if you please," said M. du Portail. "To Germany!"

"Well! Be it so," added the Count.

We arrived at the house. Adelaide and the Baron had already ascended the grand staircase. M. du Portail ran after them, thinking I was going to follow him. I bade adieu to Rosambert.

"How is this! Where, then, are you going?"

"To Derneval's"

"I would have you occupy yourself on such matters as our circumstances require, and remember to insure our flight."

"But shall we not see you in the evening?"

"I cannot answer for it, perhaps I shall not see you until tomorrow at four o'clock," and I left him at the moment M. du Portail was coming back to look after me.

I entered the residence of Derneval in so wild a manner, that he asked if any accident had happened to me.

"I have, tomorrow, my friend, an affair of honour; tomorrow I die, or Sophia leaves France with me. The chaise in which you carry off Dorothea must also bear away Mademoiselle de Pontis."

Derneval was not a little surprised at this resolution; and we employed ourselves the rest of the day in making every preparation which was necessary for so great an enterprise. I would willingly have spent a moment at my father's in the evening, but I was afraid he would detain me.

A little before midnight I concealed my sword under a large cloak; Derneval took the same precaution, and we set out, accompanied by three servants, on whose bravery and fidelity my friend well assured me he could rely. Arrived under the wall of the convent, we threw into the garden a large bundle, containing everything necessary to dress two men from head to foot; and as soon as our ladders were attached, we ordered two of our servants to stand guard, at some distance, and the other to go and bring us the post-chaise, precisely at four in the morning.

We went over into the garden; Derneval and Dorothea left me alone, under the covered path, with my pretty cousin. We went and sat down at the foot of the chestnut tree, so propitious to love. I regarded Sophia in silence, and sprinkled her hands with my tears.

"What means this silence?" she said; "and wherefore these tears?"

"These tears announce the most dreadful calamities: Do you not know that Dorothea is about to leave us? Yes, but her departure is deferred a whole day on our account."

"No, my Sophia, no, her departure is not deferred; Derneval takes her away this night."

"This night?"

"Yes, I cannot see thee in the conference room, I can no more meet thee in the garden, therefore we shall be separated forever. This night, my dear Sophia, is the last we can pass together."

"The last!" she cried, with tears in her eyes.

"Yes, the last, Dorothea leaves us, Dorothea abandons thee; she sacrifices everything to her tenderness for Derneval; Derneval is more happy than I am! Ah, my friend, could you desire a happiness which would cost me mine? This, Sophia, is the last night we have to spend together. Let us pass it, then, my friend, in such a manner as will leave us no reason to reproach ourselves tomorrow."

"Tomorrow we shall mourn our absence, whilst Derneval and Dorothea will be on their road to Germany."

"To Germany! Do they go to Germany?"

"Yes, my beloved! They go to Germany."

"Well, my dear Faublas, we will shortly go and join them; for Madame Munich informs me, the Baron de Gorlitz will soon be here to fetch me.

"The Baron de Gorlitz will arrive too late. Why too late? He will arrive too late, my beloved!"

"Do, pray, explain yourself."

"The departure of Dorothea is the least of the evils which menace our amours. But tell me, then, have you not said a hundred times, that on the arrival of the Baron de Gorlitz, you would go and throw yourself at his feet, and beg the hand of his daughter?"

"The Baron de Gorlitz's consent would avail me but little, if my father would not agree to the marriage."

"But your father will approve of it, as soon as my father consents."

"Sophia! I ought not to deceive you, my father has destined me for another!"

"For another! And is it you who announce it to me! Oh! Thou cruel one! I understood you too well!—I am sacrificed!"

"No, my Sophia, no, be consoled. I now renew to you my vows a thousand times repeated, never shall another woman be called my wife, and if you are not mine, you shall have no one to blame but yourself."

"Myself?"

"Yes,—you are not willing to render this marriage so much desired, necessary."

"I do not understand you."

"Ah! If for three months less rebellious to the vows of your lover."

"My dear Faublas, what is it you mean?"

"I should have presented my Sophia to the Baron de Faublas, and said to him: she has accepted my plighted vows, our faith is registered in heaven; I have taken advantage of her weakness and her love; and she now wants nothing but the title to make her my wife. What! Would you have had me purchase this title, Faublas, with my dishonour?"

"By your dishonour! You love me but little, then, if you think you would be dishonoured in belonging to me! Cruel maid! When do you expect, then, to consummate the most tender love! We are going to be separated! They will shortly conduct you into a foreign land, and remove you far distant from your disconsolate

lover! Do, Sophia! Do open your eyes to the dangers which threaten us! You can prevent them; you can unite yourself to me by the most indissoluble and most sacred bonds you can at this moment, by a single act, make me your husband, in the sight of God! In the law of nature! It requires but your kind assent—Deign, Oh! Deign to grant the cherished boon, and bind me eternally with the bonds of gratitude and love!"

"No, I will never consent to that."

I made a thousand useless efforts to triumph over her virtue. Rendered desperate by her obstinate resistance, which left me no hope of success, I gave myself up to grief.

"Your tears wound me to the heart," said Sophia; "but what is it you require of me?"

"I require no more."

"Into what distress do I see you plunged, my dear friend!" (she pressed my hands within her own.)

"No grief can be deeper, or for juster cause, than mine, Sophia. The hours glide by; he will appear too soon, and I repeat it to you, this is the last night which we shall have to pass together."

"Oh! Heaven! In what a tone he speaks to me! What black despair has settled on his countenance! Oh! My friend, your sighs and tears make me wretched!." (she dried them with her handkerchief) "They are cruel, deadly tears."

"Oh! My first beloved, my soul is torn by the most poignant griefs. I am weeping, now, Sophia presently you will weep also; for some frightful news will spread throughout the city, and reach even within these walls, and your repentance will come too late to reach your lover."

"Oh! Cruel man! Do you mean to destroy yourself?"

"No! It is not my own hand that will strike the mortal blow. Sophia! If my life was dear to you, I would defend it against the Marquis de B***."

"Great God! Are you going to fight a duel?"

Having made this exclamation, she fell fainting into my arms, and I bestowed every attention upon her which her situation required, but as soon as she begun to recover her senses, I embraced the advantage which her weakness afforded with a promptitude which ensured me a victory.

Oh! Thou last combat of vanquished modesty! First triumph of rewarded love! Moment of possession! Moment of celestial pleasure; the most eloquent of wits has consecrated your delights in an immortal work:<22> let me, therefore, be silent, since I cannot express it to you so well.

The clock struck four when Derneval advanced beneath the covered walk. I ran to meet him, and he told me the post-chaise had arrived; but that Dorothea, who had been obliged to leave him for half an hour, would soon return to the garden, and that it would not take long to change his clothes. I interrupted him, to beg him to retire, as I must prevail upon Sophia to go with us.

I returned to my fair mistress, and showed her the male attire I had brought for her; conjuring her immediately to put it on, and leave her own behind.

"How? For what?"

"Derneval and Dorothea set out for Germany, does not thy heart whisper that we should go with them?"

"Go with them! What! Shall I cut my father to the heart? Shall I overwhelm him with shame and bitter mortification? Alas! Am I not already guilty enough?"

"Hear me, Sophia!"

"No, I will not listen to you, you cruel one, you have ruined me! You have studiously concerted my dishonour." (She threw herself into my arms.) "Now, Faublas, you may do as you like with your wife; but have pity on her, do not abuse your power over her! Do not render her dishonour public!"

Oh, my dear Sophia, I would spare you these cruel alarms; but I am obliged to remind you that the Marquis—"

"Alas!"

"Do not tremble any more for the life of him to whom your own is attached! Your husband will be victorious; your husband! I will now defy the whole family of the Marquis! But you know not the laws of the country. Sophia, if, after having overcome my enemy, I remain here, I am exposed to lose my head on the scaffold. Ah, wretch that I am! Where am I? What have I done? We must be gone, Sophia; we will go to Germany: the Baron de Gorlitz cannot refuse you to your lover, and my father will confirm my happiness. My dear Sophia, suffer your husband to undress you."

The three quarters had struck before I had finished the disguise of my Sophia.

Dorothea came to join us, and Derneval, impatient to begone, reminded me that we must not let the morning overtake us in the city, and that I had business at La Porte Maillot.

"What, do we not all four go together?" cried Sophia.

"Honor calls me, my beloved; I leave you with Dorothea, and place you under the protection of Derneval. He will scarcely gain a post before me; he may expect me at Meaux; in two hours I shall rejoin you."

Sophia threw herself into my arms: "I will not leave you! I will not leave you!"

Derneval stamped the ground with his foot: "The fog still favours us," he said, "but the daylight will surprise us here."

I tore myself from the arms of Sophia. "If you leave me, Faublas, I will not go."

"Well, Sophia, I will not leave you; let us make haste to quit the garden."

Derneval had foreseen that our two lasses would have too much trouble in scaling the wall with the rope ladders, and had provided two short wooden ladders. Dorothea, who had long been ready for her elopement, was presently in the street; but Sophia would have fallen twenty times if I had not followed close to her.

When we arrived at the post-chaise, she wished to see me get in first.

"But honour calls me, Sophia."

"Honour! And pray have I not sacrificed mine to you? Oh! You ungrateful one! I will not leave you! You shall not fight! I will not let you fight!"

She was talking to me in this manner, when the clock struck five. No one could be in a more cruel situation than myself. In my despair I drew my sword, with a view to point it against myself, but Derneval stopped me.

Sophia trembled, and cried "Well! I obey you! I will go!"

While they were placing her by the side of Dorothea, I said to Derneval: "It is five o'clock, if I must go on foot, I shall be too late, and be dishonoured. I will dismount one of the three men; let him go as quick as he can to my father's, where I will pass, and order them to give him the horse, which is no doubt prepared for me."

Sophia, almost dead, leaned out of the carriage door. "Ah! My dear friend," she said, "at least conduct me to the field of battle!"

"My dear friends! My Sophia! I will join you in two hours."

"Barbarian! My love! My husband! Take care of yourself! defend my life!"

I saw the post-chaise start, and galloped to the Rue de l'Université. Jasmin was waiting at the door for me: "Make haste, my dear master, make haste; the Baron has sent to seek you in every quarter; rendered desperate by your absence, he ordered his horse to be saddled, took his sword, and I fear is gone to fight for you. Ah, my God!"

I started full speed, and Jasmin galloped after me: "Will you not have the best hunter?"

"It may go to the devil! Return, and when a man comes for a horse, give it him."

I pushed the one I had so furiously along, that I soon came in sight of La Porte Maillot. Presently I perceived the Baron, surrounded by several men. By his gestures I saw that he set the Marquis at defiance. It seemed as if M. du Portail, Rosambert, and the two friends of the Marquis de B***, were already engaged.

As soon as they saw me, they separated. "I was sure! cried Rosambert."

"Monsieur," said the Baron to me, "you come very late!"

"Too late, father, too late, without doubt, since you were going to expose your life."

The Marquis de B*** interrupted me: "If it had only been to meet a pretty girl, he would have risen earlier. Come, then, you cowardly, effeminate, and perfidious wretch, and your death shall presently avenge my insults."

We crossed our swords. The great superiority I had acquired in the art of fencing, and the coolness that I opposed to the fury of the Marquis, balanced in my favour, the immense advantage which he derived from such an attack unattended with danger, because the sight of my enemy reminded me of the wrongs I had done him, and although I was excusable on many accounts, I felt I had more than one reproach to make myself. I could not determine to threaten the life of a man whose self-love I had hurt, and whose honour I had violated.

Satisfied with parrying his thrusts, I let him exhaust his strength in useless efforts, and depending on my own skill, I flattered myself that when he was entirely

fatigued he would be glad to save his life by acknowledging himself vanquished. My hopes, however, were deceived.

My father remained about ten paces distant, a spectator of a contest so painful to him; I could see him watch with an anxious eye the rapid motion of our swords. More than once I thought that carried away by his impatience, he would have plunged into the lists.

M. de B***, with menace and insult on his lips did not to cease to provoke my rage, and pressed forward on me with a vigour at which I was astonished. Nevertheless, he could not obtain an inch of ground upon me, and my hitherto calm resistance only served to provoke his fury. All at once, restraining the transports of his rage, he deceived me by a feint; I returned rather late to my guard, and my assailant's point, too feebly parried, glanced along my breast and tinged it with scarlet. My father uttered a cry of alarm, and drew his sword, but stopped himself immediately he broke it with indignation; then lifting his eyes upwards, he clasped his hands and fell on his knees: "Oh! Heavens! Oh! Heavens! He exclaimed, my God have compassion on me, and save the life of my son!"

I could no longer bear the heartrending sight exhibited by my father. The Marquis in his turn defended himself valiantly, but was unable to delay the fatal blow. His fall terminated the mortal anxieties of the Baron. I saw my father sink on the turf at the same time with the Marquis. I imagined that the Baron considered me seriously wounded, I ran to him, and discovering my breast, assured him it was but a slight scratch. My father, without saying a word, looked at my wound and kissed it. I wished to embrace him, but he restrained me, and showed me the field of battle.

I looked around me, and saw one of the Marquis's friends stretched motionless on the ground, and the other binding up a wound which he had received in his side. A surgeon was dressing the arm of Rosambert, who was supported by M. du Portail and several servants.

"We have given thrust for thrust," said the Count, as soon as I approached him: "my adversary does not appear dangerously hurt, at which I am greatly pleased; but he has brought me to the ground, for which I am sorry."

The Baron was not long in joining us, and heard the surgeon assure us that the Count was not mortally wounded, but could not, without danger, be exposed to a long journey. "I will take care of him, said the Baron, save yourself."

"Yes, save yourselves," said Rosambert. "Come, Faublas, let us embrace, and begone."

My father held me for a long time pressed against his breast: "Behold," he said to M. du Portail, "an unfortunate affair which deranges our projects. Lovinski," he added, "serve him for a father until I can rejoin you. Let me not detain you any longer, my friends, be gone. Here are excellent horses, who will take you in less than an hour to Bondy, where you will find a chaise. I have caused relays of horses to be stationed on the road as far as Claye; you will not take post horses until you reach Meaux; make the greatest speed till you are in a place of safety. Stop nowhere on this side Luxembourg.<23>"

At length we started, and found the post-chaise at Bondy, with my father's postilion and my faithful Jasmin. The relays succeeded each other at short distances until we reached Meaux; it was at Meaux also that Derneval was to take post horses. It

was there that he had promised to wait for me a quarter of an hour. I enquired if they had seen three young men followed by three servants, and was informed that they had been gone half an hour. The same questions were put and the same answers given at the three next post towns. Derneval was always half an hour before me; he was apparently in dread of being pursued, and could not be blamed: but what must have been the anxiety of Sophia!

M. du Portail, astonished at hearing me make so many enquiries, and give so much money away, asked me why I felt so lively an interest about these young men. "They are brothers, Monsieur, who had this morning an affair of honour like ourselves, and I must absolutely join them. Oh! Let me beg you to let us take horse and push on to them."

"But if we give up our chaise, my friend, we may be obliged to go on horseback all the way."

"Well! I fear not the fatigue!"

"And I, Faublas, am accustomed to it."

We left our chaise and Jasmin at Vivray. Derneval must have been well supplied with horses, for we did not come up to him until within half a league of Dormans. Sophia uttered a cry of joy the moment she saw me. She thrust herself out of the window, and spread her arms towards me: "My dear wife," cried I, "do pray moderate the excess of your tenderness; it will betray me; M. du Portail follows me; recollect that you are the brother of Derneval."

At Port-a-Binson Derneval got out, saluted us, begged us to excuse his brothers, who would remain in the chaise and said: "As it is important that they should not trace us, if they may be pursuing us on this road, I have taken precautions which you will no doubt approve. About two miles on this side of Epernay we will send back the horses with which we shall be furnished at the next post, to take better ones, which a friend of mine, who has been apprised for some days past, will surely have provided for us. A cross road will conduct us to Jalons by a circuit which is not very long. From thence, sufficient relays are posted on the road as far as Sainte Menehould, where we shall again take post horses. But, gentlemen, when I took these measures to secure my own flight, I did not reckon on your company. To dismount my servants, in order to give you their horses, would render our escort too weak. Happily our chaise is sufficiently large and convenient, both of you had, therefore, better get into it, and I will undertake to conduct you; I will be your postilion."

M. du Portail, after some pressing, accepted the offer. I whispered to Derneval that I found myself in a strange embarrassment: "Your pretended brothers, my friend, are so handsome! And I fear, above all, that their soft voices, and the tender distractions of Sophia, cannot long be misunderstood by M. du Portail. Pray, therefore, Derneval, recommend our dear friends to be sound asleep when M. du Portail and myself enter the chaise. There is no other means of avoiding a discovery which would be so dangerous, but by acting in a very impolite manner."

Everything happened as Derneval expected. We found a relay of horses at some distance from Epernay. What emotions did I experience when I found myself seated in the post-chaise, opposite to Sophia.

Sophia appeared to sleep, but I pressed my knees against hers; and, by the gentle return, and her half-repressed sighs, I found that my pretty cousin was awake to her lover.

"Are these two young persons the brothers of M. Derneval?" said Lovinski to me with much astonishment.

"He has assured me so, at least," I replied.

M. du Portail asked me no more questions. I observed that he no longer looked at Dorothea, but continued to fix his attention on Sophia, who, more tranquil since I was near her, had really sunk into the arms of Morpheus.

After a silence of half an hour, M. du Portail told me he did not believe they were the brothers of M. Derneval. "Nor I either;" I replied coolly.

"Why did you tell—"

"I told you they were, because he told me so; for my part, I am unacquainted with his brothers."

"There is something ambiguous in this adventure, Faublas."

"I verily believe so."

"Faublas, they are women in disguise."

"Upon my honour, Monsieur, I have the same suspicions."

M. du Portail remained silent, and, for a quarter of an hour, looked at Sophia with the most marked attention. At length, pointing to Dorothea, he said: "This one is pretty! But that" (he pointed to my pretty cousin, and his eyes glistened) "is handsomer! Is she not?"

"Much handsomer."

"And then her countenance!" (M. du Portail's voice failed him.)

"—is charming! Do you not think so?"

"Oh, yes! Delightful! Her countenance!" He heaved a deep sigh, and said no more.

With his eyes always riveted on the face of my fair mistress, M. du Portail continued plunged in a profound reverie, until we arrived at Sainte Menehould. While the postmaster of that place was changing our baggage, and endeavouring to persuade us that his miserable hacks were excellent horses, M. du Portail addressed himself to Derneval, and asked him if the two ladies sleeping in the chaise were his relations.

"Since their disguise has not deceived you" (replied Derneval, as astonished as myself at this question, which was, at least, indiscreet), "I must inform you that one is my wife, and the other my sister;" he added, looking towards me at the same time.

"Your sister! Which of the two, Monsieur?" asked M. du Portail.

"The one on this side," said Derneval, pointing at Sophia.

"You have a very interesting sister, Monsieur. I congratulate you on having such a sister."

My surprise increased at every word of M. du Portail. I knew not if he perceived it, but he drew me aside for a moment. He said to me: "See, Faublas, the

wonderful power of a strong passion which survives its object. I am singularly interested with the sister of Derneval, and do you know why? It is that in looking at her I think I again behold my wife, whose loss I shall ever lament. Yes, my dear Faublas, at the first glance, I said to myself, 'Tis Lodoiska!' and I still repeated it to myself, after I had minutely examined all the traits of that countenance, which is at once both beautiful and animated. Yes, my dear friend, such would have appeared to you the daughter of Pulauski, when, under the disguise of a man, she fled, in company with her father and her husband, from our persecutors, the Russians. A little older, but not less beautiful, was Lodoiska at that period. Lodoiska still breathes in this charming young woman!"

I listened to M. du Portail with a secret pleasure; yet, persuaded that he endeavoured to deceive himself as to the nature of the feelings he experienced, I could not but lament that so sensible a man, of his age and experience, should so badly defend himself against the dangerous fascination of a growing passion; but I congratulated myself on my happiness, which would no doubt excite a thousand rivals.

In the meantime the sun went down, and the evening closed upon us; but we continued our journey the whole night. Next morning, by eight o'clock, we were at Luxembourg. We alighted at the first inn, and partook of a short repast, during which M. du Portail lavished the most flattering compliments on my pretty cousin. He did not feel that he had need of repose, until our friends, fatigued by so long a journey, expressed a wish to retire.

Derneval had been occupied with the host in providing four chambers, one for the ladies, two for ourselves, contiguous to theirs, and one for M. du Portail at the other end of the corridor.

Derneval took the hand of Dorothea; Lovinski, more prompt than myself, possessed himself of that of Sophia. He conducted my fair mistress to the door of the chamber prepared for her, and sighed deeply as he returned to his apartment.

As soon as we thought him asleep, Derneval and myself entered the chamber of our wives. Dorothea was already in bed, but Sophia was sitting with her clothes on, weeping, and listening to some words of consolation which her friend addressed to her. Derneval, in a whisper, told me to take her with me. "Come, my Sophia, come; let us leave these lovers together; they have, like ourselves, a thousand things to say to each other."

I took her in my arms, and bore her to my chamber. Oh, what a delightful burden for a lover!

"Is it, then, true," she said, sobbing, "that the first fault is always the forerunner of one still greater? Is it, then, true that an unhappy girl, betrayed by her own heart, and deceived by a foolish hope to take one rash step, must finish by violating the most sacred duties? Why did I come so often to that fatal conference room? And why did I receive you in the still more fatal garden? Ah! I could not love virtue since I preferred my lover! I have merited my disgrace, since I have so easily exposed myself to it!"

"What is it you say, my Sophia? Why poison your happiness by such horrible reflections?"

"My happiness! Is it, then, in the bosom of remorse that I am to taste it?"

"I assure you, my Sophia, that whatever may be the intention of M. du Portail, I shall start with you for Gorlitz. We will go and throw ourselves at the feet of your father."

"Never! Never! I dare not appear before him!"

"Then you do not love me."

"I do not love you! Faublas, my friend, your Sophia is already degraded in her own eyes, and will presently be so in those of her friends. Do you think, then, that she could support her existence if she did not love you? My dear lover! My dear husband! I see that repentance offends you, and my remorse wounds your feelings. Oh! Pardon the violence of my anguish, for in this very moment, when my guilty conscience goads me, I feel that my wandering reason still gives way to this fatal passion!"

Having said this, the charming Sophia threw herself into my arms, and the same bed received us both. It was noon before we fell asleep; some hours after we were awakened by a terrible noise.

"I would not advise you," said Derneval, "for I will blow out the brains of any one who dares to enter here." They ordered me to open my door; at the same time I heard, with as much surprise as alarm, the voice of my father. The trembling Sophia hid herself under the clothes; I dressed myself in a hasty and negligent manner, and opened my door. M. du Portail entered with the Baron de Faublas: "Your unworthy projects are, then, accomplished," said the latter. "Have you, then, dared—"

At this instant, those who had been rapping at the door of Derneval, entered my chamber. I recognised Madame Munich: "There he is! That's him!" she said to an old man who followed her. The stranger called me an infamous ravisher, and put his hand to his sword. I seized my own, and cried out, "Who is this insolent stranger?"

"The Baron stopped me, and said: "Thou wretch! It is a father, who came to seek his daughter in Paris, the very day that thou stolest her away!"

"What, Monsieur, can it be the—"

"he old gentleman interrupted me: !I am the Baron de Gorlitz."

At this name, Sophia uttered a terrible cry; she threw off her clothes, opened the curtains, made an effort to rise, stretched forth her arms towards her father, and fainted. "And so the crime is consummated," cried M. de Gorlitz, at the sight of Sophia, almost naked.

M. du Portail had great difficulty in holding my father, who loaded me with reproaches; and the Baron de Gorlitz, desiring me to put myself on my guard, said: "You have dishonoured my old age, vile seducer! I will be revenged or perish." He advanced the point of his sword towards me, but I threw mine at his feet, saying: "Strike, for I will not defend myself against the father of Sophia; pity your daughter; listen to me; hear her justification. Sophia is dying, help her, relieve her."

"Relieve her!" answered the Baron de Gorlitz, "may a hundred deadly wounds revenge my wrongs, and punish her." He ran towards Sophia with his sword in his hand, but I threw myself upon him and seized his body, exclaiming: "Barbarian, take my life! injure not your daughter, for I will defend her even against her father. Deign, my lord, to hear me; your child is innocent; it is I who have beguiled her, I alone am culpable."

While I was thus employed in staying the rage of M. de Gorlitz, Madame Munich was bestowing on Sophia a variety of useless efforts to restore her. At last, however, she heaved a long sigh, and opened her eyes; but on seeing those who surrounded her, she relapsed into a fit still more insensible than the first.

At this instant, Derneval, followed by three armed men, rushed into my chamber, and, in a very fierce manner, demanded what right they had thus to disturb the repose of travellers.

"And what interest do you take in our quarrels?" asked my father in the same tone. I know not what reply my brother in arms prepared for him, for being obliged to divide my attention between several objects equally dear to me, I cried out to Derneval: "My friend, moderate yourself, it is my father, and there is the father of Sophia." Derneval and his servants retired from the chamber, but continued in the passage.

In the meanwhile, M. de Gorlitz, whose paroxysms of rage were succeeded all at once by an apparent calm, had taken a seat, and preserved a terrific silence; contemplating with a dry eye, my father, his daughter, and myself. I concluded he was a prey to the blackest despair, for I knew that the most acute griefs were silent, and produced no tears.

My father approached the Baron de Gorlitz, and endeavoured to console him. I flew to Sophia, whom Madame Munich was just bringing to life. M. du Portail was seated on the bed, and did not appear to be less agitated than myself. I repeated the name of my sweet angel a hundred times; and at length she opened her eyes at the sound of my voice: "Alas! You have destroyed me, she said;" and this reproach, so justly merited, heightened the horror I was in at that dreadful moment.

Illustration: Alas! You have destroyed me, she said.

My father continued to say everything to M. de Gorlitz which he thought most likely to calm his troubled mind. The latter interrupted him at each moment with the cruel exclamation: "She is not my daughter!"

M. du Portail united his entreaties to those of my father, saying: "At least, you should listen to her justification; your daughter may not be entirely innocent, but she may be excusable. It is not likely that so charming an exterior conceals a corrupt heart. Do pray listen to her justification."

The BARON DE GORLITZ.I repeat it to you both, gentlemen, she is not my daughter.

M. DU PORTAIL. But–

The BARON DE GORLITZ. She is not my daughter; her governess knows it well. Madame Munich will tell you that I adopted this child to give her a portion of my wealth. She was scarcely seven years old when my relatives attempted to poison her, and that is why I caused her to be educated in France.

M. DU PORTAIL (with great emotion.)She is not your daughter! Do you not know her parents?

The BARON DE GORLITZ. I could discover them, no doubt, but I have never sought after them: it is a crime, the fruit of which heaven does not permit me to enjoy.

M. DU PORTAIL (with great vivacity.) Monsieur—

The BARON DE GORLITZ. Deign, sir, to give me a moment's attention.

One may easily imagine the anxiety I felt during this strange explanation. Sophia, who listened with great pain, wished to speak, but her weakness prevented her. A deadly paleness overspread her face, and a cold sweat ran from her discoloured forehead.

"Gentlemen," continued the Baron de Gorlitz, "I have passed my life in the midst of arms. In the year 1777, I was in the Russian armies, and fought against the Polish insurgents.

M. DU PORTAIL. "Against the Poles in 1777?"

The BARON DE GORLITZ. "Yes, Monsieur, but you interrupt me every moment. After a bloody victory which we gained over them, I only demanded, as my share of a very considerable booty, an infant of about two years of age."

M. DU PORTAIL (rising and running to Sophia.) "Ah! My dear Dorliska!"

The BARON DE GORLITZ (taking hold of him.) "Dorliska! That is the name I found written under a miniature attached to her breast."

M. DU PORTAIL immediately drew a portrait from his pocket "Behold, sir, a counterpart. Oh, my daughter! My dear daughter!

The BARON DE GORLITZ (still holding him.) "Your daughter, Monsieur? What are the arms of your family?"

M. DU PORTAIL (showing his seal.) "Look at them."

The BARON DE GORLITZ. "They are the same; they are marked under her arm-pit."

Sophia shrieked out, mustered up her strength, and stretched her arms towards M. du Portail. Lovinski embraced her and wept.

"Ah, my dear child! Art thou at last restored to me! In what a place and condition do I find thee! What bitter griefs poison the happiest hours of my life! Dorliska, do you know what your mother was? Your mother felt for several years a chaste and legitimate affection; a virtuous maiden, she was worthy to become a wife; as a tender mother, she never ceased to bewail thy loss; and thy remembrance occupied her last moments. 'Search everywhere for my dear Dorliska,' were the last words pronounced by the dying Lodoiska. For these twelve years past I have been constantly occupied in a care so tender to my heart; for twelve years I have not conceived a greater happiness than the finding my beloved daughter. Alas! And now that I hold her in my arms, I am overwhelmed with grief. Oh, the most prudent of wives! Oh, the most respectable of mothers! Lodoiska, thy faithful spirit, I doubt not, hovers round us! How must thou bewail thy Dorliska, seduced, and at this moment in the power of a ravisher! How must thou pity Lovinski, become, by a cruel destiny, an accomplice in. the elopement of his daughter and the witness of his own dishonour!"

M. du Portail threw himself into an armchair; his wretched daughter, forgetting she was nearly naked, rushed from her bed, and fell down at his feet. Madame Munich, observing this, seized the counterpane, and covered Sophia, who

cried out: "Ah! You are my father, my heart tells me so; your generosity proves it to be, for you condescend to acknowledge me, although so unworthy of you."

M. du Portail repulsed his daughter, and turning aside his face, exclaimed: "Cruel child!"

Sophia held one of his hands, and I took possession of the other, and threw myself at his feet, "Your grief kills me, Monsieur; I cannot be happy while you suffer such affliction. My errors become more serious, since they draw tears from my friend, from my father's friend, and from the father of my Sophia! You are injured, Lovinski, but let your anger fall entirely on him who deserves it. Your daughter is innocent; your daughter—if you knew the snares by which she was entrapped, how long she resisted the seduction, and how dear the guilty victory cost me! Lovinski, your daughter is innocent, wash away your insults in my blood, or, rather, as you have a heart full of tenderness and sensibility, and have felt the power of an ardent and mutual love, and know how the passions may lead astray a giddy youth and deluded maiden! Lovinski, be no longer inexorable; have compassion on our youth, excuse her, pardon me. You can, by one word, repair our errors and render our passion legitimate; conduct us, then, to the altar; and there let me repeat those vows which have already united me to Sophia, there you will find your Dorliska."

My father joined his prayers to mine; M. du Portail appeared to be moved, but continued silent, we could perceive, however, that he meditated an answer. At length, he embraced his daughter in a most affectionate manner, looked at me without anger, and, in a calm tone, requested everyone to retire, and leave him the remainder of the evening alone with his daughter.

The next day I married Dorliska.

Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvray

SIX WEEKS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS

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XIII.

The august ceremony was finished. The eloquent priest then proceeded, in a discourse which to me appeared very tedious, to recommend certain virtues, the observance of which I considered by no means difficult. Sophia called me by the charming name of husband, and my lips were uttering a vow which came from my heart, when the sacred vault of the church rang with a lamentable and piercing cry.

Everyone turned around in alarm. I perceived, already at a distance from the astonished spectators, a young man fly like lightning through the door, but could distinguish nothing of him but a blue uniform.

Illustration: He Fixed his Eyes on Sophia

He had been seen, some minutes before, to enter precipitately, and abruptly piercing the crowd, approached the altar. He fixed his eyes on Sophia; in a plaintive tone he exclaimed, "It is she!" and then uttered that long, deep groan, which affected me very much. Rendered uneasy and curious by this occurrence, I wished to fly after him, but my father opposed me and stopped me; my dear companion, Derneval, being more free, and less agitated than myself, ran immediately after the stranger.

During this momentary tumult, caused by so strange an event, Sophia inclined towards me, and in a tremulous tone, said, "My friend, take care of me."

I was going to reply to her, I was going to ask her why; when M. du Portail, whose attention had been distracted for a moment amidst the general confusion, but who was apparently brought to his recollection by what had happened with regard to his daughter, came immediately and took his place beside her, seeming to repent having quitted it. I saw him give a severe glance at my timid spouse, who cast down her eyes and turned pale. During the short space of time that the priest was concluding his exhortation, my mind was tormented by a crowd of the most cruel reflections.

"What, Derneval my friend! What, so soon returned? Do you know this young man? Who is he? What does he want? What has he said to you?"

"His servants, my dear Faublas, had a horse ready for him in the cloister, and he was at the end of the street by the time I reached the door of the church."

"And are you ignorant of what is become of him?"

"He rode at full gallop, my friend, and I was on foot: at all events, I would have followed him in the carriage which brought Madame de Faublas, but the obstinate coachman would not let me."

"Derneval, you know not how uneasy I am: promise that you will not leave me to-day; that you will not set out before tomorrow.

"Tomorrow! Suppose my persecutors were this day—"

"I believe your dangers to be possible, but mine are, perhaps, inevitable. Since the terrible scene which occurred yesterday, since the Baron de Gorlitz and Madame Munich are gone, Lovinski has taken possession of his daughter, whom I did not see until at the altar the other day. I have scarcely been suffered to speak a word to her; and all answer on her part seems to be interdicted; it is only in the presence of the Eternal that she could renew her faith to me! It is only to my wife that I have been permitted to swear, I shall always adore my mistress. Let me beg of you, Derneval, to notice Lovinski, and observe his gloomy and care-worn countenance, his watchful and suspicious looks. Do you find in him the air of satisfaction which a good father experiences when he gives his daughter to the husband of her choice? Does he evince, think you, that air of noble pride which you would expect from a man who had pardoned an injury? And, my dear Dorliska, my pretty cousin, my charming Sophia? What an expression of deep sorrow is stamped on her lovely countenance, which ought to be embellished with the idea of those joys which are now rendered legitimate! And her eyes, too, which are dim with sorrow and filled with tears which she tries to suppress! What, then, is it that thus damps her felicity? What is it that has changed a day of joy into a day of sadness? What fear? What regret? Who knows this young man? And for what did he come here? A frightful suspicion tears my heart! But no, Sophia could not betray me. Is she, then, going to be the victim of some secret treachery! 'It is she!' said the stranger: 'Take care of me!' exclaimed Sophia. But how am I to defend her? Who are her enemies? For what dangers must I prepare myself? I conjure you, Derneval, by our friendship, not to abandon me in such critical circumstances; for, if you leave me, I am lost. The designs of our enemies are enveloped in a profound obscurity, and a frightful uncertainty paralyzes all my faculties. How can I frustrate plots of which I am ignorant? And from the multitude of evils which I anticipate, how can I divine the one which is to overwhelm me?"

I did not hear the answer of Derneval; for Sophia, still accompanied by her father, had left the altar, and reached the door of the church. "Do you come, Faublas?" she said. There was in her tender look a strong expression of grief, and a marked alteration in the inflection of her sweet voice which served but to increase still more my mortal anxiety.

We arrived in the cloister. Was it through forgetfulness or incivility, that Lovinski, without noticing either Dorothea or my father, had handed his daughter into the carriage, and seated himself immediately beside her? While I was asking myself this question, Lovinski shut the door, and the coachman, already mounted, drove off with the greatest possible rapidity. The carriage, so furiously driven, was more than fifty paces distant, before any of us could recover from the profound stupefaction we were thrown into by this unforeseen flight.

The moment I came to myself, I darted forward like lightning. The greatness of my loss, and the hopes of recovering the invaluable treasure which had been snatched from me, gave additional swiftness to my natural agility; I felt a more than human strength: I expected in a few moments to overtake the carriage, and to rescue my wife from the arms of her ravisher. But, alas! Derneval and my father recovered from their astonishment too soon for me, because their noisy bustle was more mischievous than the fatal stupor in which I had left them. They both followed me at a distance, calling out with all their might, "Stop him! Stop him!" As for myself, I ran so fast that I could not call out. Several soldiers came by, and seeing me alone, and flying so swiftly and silently along, imagined that I was pursued. They presently formed a circle and surrounded me: I wished to explain myself, but I spoke French to Germans. Mortified at not being understood, and at wasting my precious time in such vain discourse, I attempted to break through them; but what could one man do against ten? My resistance only served to irritate them, and to procure me ill-treatment. But their blows were scarcely felt, for I was so eager in catching the sound of the carriage, which was already at a great distance, and every turn of its wheels was like the stroke of a poniard at my heart. Whilst they were all struggling with me, I looked with grief on the rout of Lovinski, and could distinguish nothing in the distance but a cloud of dust. Then, seized with anguish and despair, I felt my courage expire, and my strength exhausted; I felt the most dreadful revolutions taking place throughout my whole frame. I fell insensible at the feet of the barbarians who had stopped me, at the feet of my father and my friends, who had at length come up to me. I fell. Ah, my Sophia! My soul followed thee!

Unhappy Chevalier! Where were you when you returned to your senses?

Upon the bed of sickness; and the Baron watching at my pillow, which he bedewed with tears. Sophia was the first word I pronounced when my reason returned.

"See what an effect his ptisan<24> has had," said a little man whom I perceived behind the Baron. "The crisis is now passed, and tomorrow will be his fourth day."

"What, Monsieur, have I been here but three days? Is it only three days since they tore Sophia from me?"

"Yes, my friend," replied my father, with tears in his eyes, "three days have passed away since your wretched father has been waiting to see you recognise him, and to hear you repeat his name."

"Ah, pardon me father! I beg a thousand pardons—but you know not, you cannot conceive what a burden I have at my heart; how much I feel myself borne down by the weight of my misfortunes."

"Such, my son, is the common result of those passions which lead giddy youths astray. At first they enervated your soul in the bosom of pleasure, and now deliver you up, without strength, to bear the storms of adversity. God forbid, however, that I should now reproach you with your faults, as the events which have transpired have already too cruelly punished you. You have need of some solace, and it is my wish to render you all in my power. Listen then, my son, to my feeble voice; receive my paternal consolations; attend to a friend who partakes of your griefs, and to an alarmed parent who groans through his own sufferings, and trembles for you. Thy Sophia is thine own; no one can deprive thee of her. Du Portail, in conducting her to the altar, has given up all his power over her. We will search for her, my friend, and in whatever place we can trace her, I promise thee that nothing shall be neglected in order to extricate her from her thraldom; I promise to restore thee thy wife. Recall thy courage; let Hope again take her seat in thy bosom; have pity on my extreme distress, and let me see my dear son restored!"

"Yes, yes, let him but continue his ptisan," interrupted the little man, "and we will cure him."

"Alas, father! I am twice indebted to you for my life!"

"And to me also, Monsieur," interrupted the little man: "Do you think you owe nothing to me? Do you take no account of the draughts I have given you since the morning?"

"Do they know, father, what has become of her?"

"Derneval and Dorothea set off the day before yesterday, and they promised me they would make every inquiry."

"Gentlemen," said the little man, addressing us once more, "this conversation must be finished. We must cure this young man, since he has already recovered his reason. Let him be silent, and continue his ptisan; tomorrow all will be well, and we can then remove him."

Having said this, he instantly filled a large cup, and bringing it with an air of triumph, invited me to swallow the comforting dose.

An ardent young lover who inquires after a beloved mistress that has been torn from him, and is presented with a draught of physic, may well be impatient and wanting of politeness. I snatched the cup, and dashed its contents on the head of my Esculapius. The thick liquid rolled down his oblong visage, and ran over his slender body.

"Ah! Ah!" he said calmly, while wiping his wig and his clothes, "your son is again in his delirium. But Monsieur the Baron, let not that alarm you. Let him continue his medicine, only administer it yourself; because, as you are his father, he will not dare to throw it in your face."

The best physician is he, who, being acquainted with our passions, knows how to humour them when he cannot cure them. Thus the promises of the Baron did more towards my recovery than all the remedies of the little doctor.

The next day I found myself much better, and was removed as they had promised me. We went to the village of Holrisse, two leagues from Luxembourg, to occupy a country house which my doctor had recently taken, and of which retreat the Baron had been advised to avail himself, in order to complete my recovery.

The tranquillity of the place, its rural gaiety, the charms of the country, and the occupation of the peasantry at the season, would all afford me, they said, agreeable recreations. I could, without danger, breathe a wholesome air, and take moderate exercise in a large garden.

My father also thought that we should be better concealed in an obscure village, and to a change of residence, which was perhaps superfluous, he added a necessary precaution in altering our names. He was to be M. de Belcourt, and myself de Noirval. The Baron's *valet de chambre*, and my faithful Jasmin, were our only servants. He sent his other domestics on different routes, with the double view of searching for Lovinski, and rendering ourselves more quiet by their absence.

On our arrival at the new dwelling we had chosen, M. de Belcourt examined all the chambers, that he might give me the one he thought most quiet and convenient.

M. Desprez (the name of the little doctor) pointed out to us a little pavilion between the court and the garden. He told us that it contained three very pleasant chambers, on the first floor, but that the last proprietor had been obliged to abandon them on account of their being haunted. Noirval, said my father, smiling, is not afraid of spirits; he has pistols already, and when he is a little better, he will have his sword.

I was put into possession of one of the three rooms. Jasmin entered with glee into another, and promised to defend even the third from spirits. M. de Belcourt took up his abode in the body of the house, which looked into the street.

Night came, but the spirits did not appear. They left me entirely to my melancholy reflections. Oh, my pretty cousin! Oh, my charming wife! What tears did I shed in thinking of thee! Where has her father conducted her? Why has be snatched her from me? What powerful reason could hurry to his extremity a man naturally so mild and compassionate as Lovinski and one, too, who had so well experienced the irresistible empire of a passion vainly opposed. Could the inconsolable husband of Lodoiska become a cruel father? Besides, had not a speedy marriage repaired what he called my errors? What could the honour of his house, so involuntarily compromised, require more? In fact, was it not even to my faults that he owed the unexpected happiness of finding his daughter? And did this ungrateful man dare to ravish her from me? And would the barbarian fear to immolate her? Yes, without doubt, he will destroy her! Overwhelmed with despair, Dorliska will fall a victim to his cruelty! The unfortunate Dorliska—Oh, my Sophia! If you are no more, you must, at least, have carried with you the just hope that I shall soon follow you! I shall not be long in accomplishing it! In a little time, far from a jealous world and from unnatural fathers; free from the insupportable burden of tyrannic customs, and relieved from the odious yoke of persecuting prejudices, I shall go with tranquillity and satisfaction to join my happy and consoled spouse. I shall be in the bosom of Peace in the Elysium promised to true lovers and there our souls, more intimately connected, shall taste the ecstatic pleasures of eternal love!

Thus, in the silence of the night, my grief fed upon ideas the most calculated to feed it, but the morning brought me some repose. My father, who always rose with the sun, did not cease to repeat to me his promises, and explained to me the means he

intended to employ, in concert with myself, to recover my wife, and his not appearing to doubt of success, relieved me from despair.

Nature seems to have ordained, by one of her immutable and beneficent decrees, that hope should spring from misfortune. It is seldom that hope abandons an unfortunate person and the greater his miseries are, the more easy it is to persuade him that they will be shortly terminated.

Sometimes agitated by the most galling suspicions, I asked my father what he thought of the young man, whose lamentable cry still rung in my ears. M. de Belcourt was at a loss for a reply, when I enquired how the stranger could have followed us to Luxembourg; what design brought him there? When could he have known Sophia? and why Sophia had never spoken of him.

Sometimes, also, recalling less melancholy ideas regarding the crowd of events which had transpired during my sixteenth year, I indulged myself in thinking of that interesting beauty by whom the commencement of my career, sown with so many flowers, had been rendered so agreeable. Poor Marchioness de B***, what is become of you? Perhaps shut up in a prison! Perhaps dead! Equitable reader, it is to you I appeal whether, without ingratitude, I could refuse a few tears for the fate of that unhappy lady, whose only fault was her affection for me.

I should not forget to mention, that my doctor, M. Desprez, afforded me also some amusement. He enquired every morning if I had been disturbed by apparitions; every evening he recommended me to continue the ptisan; but, though I often pressed him earnestly, he never would take it himself. I was astonished that my father had chosen such a strange doctor, who thought of nothing but his ptisan and the ghosts. M. de Belcourt informed me that the most skilful physician in Luxembourg had, in the first place, been consulted, and had prescribed for me everything that was necessary; that M. Desprez, hearing a sick person was going to be taken into the country, came and offered his services and his house. The first physician approved the situation, but rejected the humiliating and dangerous practice of consulting with a modern professor, with whom he was unacquainted. M. de Belcourt, therefore, to prevent discord, took the advice of the one, and the house of the other.

It was the eminent physician of Luxembourg who prescribed for me; the unknown doctor of Hollrisse had no other merit than that of letting us his house at a very high rent. I was at liberty to believe in his ghosts, but I had nothing to dread from his drugs.

More than eight days had elapsed, when we received some encouraging news. Dupont, one of our servants, whom my father had dispatched on the road to Paris, wrote word, that on quitting Luxembourg, he heard, at the first post, that they bad furnished horses to a middle-aged gentleman, accompanied by a young lady in tears. He did not doubt but it was my wife and father-in-law, and had followed as far as the environs of Sainte Menehould, where he unfortunately broke his thigh through the fall of his horse. This accident had prevented him from forwarding sooner such interesting information.

M. de Belcourt, expert at catching everything which would flatter my hopes, did not fail to observe, that henceforward the object of my wrath would be more easily followed up, since we found it was circumscribed by the extent of the kingdom, or, rather, of the capital. M. du Portail, he added, has calculated that he might safely

return to Paris, as he was so little known, and that even should we discover his retreat, we should not dare to follow him there.

"I will dare it though, father, I will go there, and speedily embrace my Sophia."

On the same day we received a letter from Rosambert, to whom, since our change of name and residence, M. de Belcourt had sent the details of our recent misfortunes. The Count, still concealed in the retreat he had chosen, was already much recovered, and reckoned soon to join us. He had sent to the convent to enquire after Adelaide, who was greatly afflicted at our absence. He informed us that the Marquis was not dead, but said not a word of the Marchioness. The silence which he affected regarding a too unhappy and too lovely woman, whose fate he knew must be interesting to me, appeared strange, and could not but excite my most lively interest.

I was not less surprised that he had not written to me at the same time as to M. de Belcourt; but, after reflecting awhile on this subject, I guessed that my father, fearing the effect of such a correspondence in my present situation, had intercepted my letters.

If there was nothing positively good in the news I received, it was still sufficient, in some degree, to tranquilise my mind. My convalescence was certainly apparent, and the little doctor disputed both with love and nature the merit of my speedy recovery, and attributed all the honour to his nasty ptisan, so rarely taken. One circumstance alone obliged him to confess that some propitious divinity watched over our destinies; the spirits had not haunted the house since our residence in it. M. Desprez had spoken so often to me of ghosts, that at length I begged he would inform me what gave rise to all these jokes. He put on a grave face and, in a solemn tone, thus commenced his awful tale.

"A little farm-house, the tenant of which was named Lucas, once stood on the very spot where this pavilion is built, and which, consequently, did not then exist."

"Your consequence is well deduced, Monsieur Desprez."

"Lucas loved his wife, Lisette—and Lisette adored her husband, Lucas."

"My God! M. Desprez, how many times are you going to name them?"

"If I am to tell the story, Monsieur, it is proper that I name the personages who figure in it."

"You are right, doctor, I will not restrain you."

"I have already told you expressly, that Lucas and Lisette were married together; and I now beg you will observe, that for a marriage to be happy, it is necessary for the husband and wife to be good managers."

"A very excellent remark, M. Desprez."

"And that they manage well, it is necessary their tastes should be similar, and their tempers in unison."

"Good again, doctor."

"But I have already told you that Lucas loved something besides his wife."

"Oh! Monsieur Desprez, how admirably you relate it!"

"Ah, my memory is good! You see I forget nothing!"

"And you repeat it for fear of forgetting it."

"Because it is necessary to be clear and explicit, Monsieur. But this other thing which Lucas loved so much, and perhaps more than his wife, was good country-made wine, at three-half-pence per pint, Saint Dennis' measure! But his wife loved to drink of the limpid stream, and detested the juice of the grape.

"Ah, Doctor, you are now getting quite poetical!"

"Sometimes, Monsieur. There was this inconvenience in the propensity of Lucas, that the wine chafing the irritable fibres of his stomach, caused acrid vapours to ascend into the warmer fibres of his heated brain, and made him always coarse, brutal, and vulgar when he was drunk.

"Let me tell you, doctor, that this is a definition almost worthy the *Medecin Malgré Lui*.<25>"

"You insult me, Monsieur; I am become a doctor in spite of all the world; my medical genius impelled me to it. And in the opposite taste of Lisette there was also a contrary inconvenience, for the abundance of water relaxing her viscera, diluting too much her badly dressed victuals, affecting the tone of her stomach, and destroying her digestive organs, generated bad chyle, which occasioned heart-burnings, want of sleep, yawnings, listlessness, and drove to the inflated membranes of her brain that tenacious and bilious humour, which, in little women, has the peculiar effect of rendering them clamorous, obstinate, and crabbed scolds.

"Now, Monsieur, you can easily perceive that it would have been necessary for these two opposite propensities to have been amalgamated and blended together, to produce one well-regulated appetite. Lisette should have mixed a little wine with her water, and Lucas should have poured a great deal of water to his wine, because the temperament of the husband, and the temperament of the wife would have thus sympathised together, by means of a just medium; because their humours would have been found to accord; because—because—"

"Do not trouble yourself, doctor, I can guess the rest."

"It stands proved, then, Monsieur, that if things had been regulated in the manner I have just laid down, the fatal catastrophe I am about to relate, would not have occurred to this unhappy couple.

"Now, doctor, for the catastrophe."

"It was, Monsieur, in the year 1773, on Friday, the 13th of October, at thirteen minutes after eight c'clock in the evening. I will just observe as I go on, that in the recurrence of several numbers, thirteen is always fatal. They had just gathered in their vineyards, because the vines were late in ripening that year. Lucas, on coming out of the tub in which the fruit had been pressed, drank thirteen glasses of new wine; when he re-entered the farm-house he was no longer a man—he was a devil. Unfortunately, his wife had eaten for her dinner a little omelet, composed of the yolks of thirteen eggs, and had drank nothing but water. Her digestion became painful, and on seeing Lucas a little merry, began to scold, make faces at him, and to use a thousand irritating expressions. Lucas replied by a menacing gesture and gross language. Lisette, in the moment of anger, threw thirteen plates at his head. Lucas, in return, gave Lisette thirteen blows on the head with a quart pot, which he held in his hand, and knocked her down ultimately as flat as a flounder. When he saw her lying dead

before him, he began to feel that he loved her, and threw himself, broken-hearted, upon her carcass, begging pardon for having killed it.

"Alas! Cries he, in a lamentable tone, this is the first time I ever did so! At length he rises in a melancholy mood, and marches, with his arms akimbo, to his wine tub, and drops gently into it, head first, without saying a word. In about thirteen seconds after, he was taken out by his neighbours, when he was already dead."

"Ah, doctor, this is a long but charming story!

"I did not make it, Monsieur, it is a tradition among the people, but hear the conclusion. Justice, indignant, took cognisance of the affair, they seized the body of Lucas, which, fortunately for him no longer contained a soul, and hung it up by the heels; the farm-house was levelled with the ground, and the land put up by auction. The person who bought it found himself very uncomfortable in it. He never ventured to inhabit his pavilion, because every vintage season, and sometimes a little later, a most terrible change takes place. Night comes on, the sky looks pale; the earth quakes; the elements are in convulsions; the pavilion leaps from its foundation; the roof dances in the air; and the walls appear red either with blood or with wine. A horrible clatter is heard within, like the smashing of plates and the knocking together of pots. The groans of a dying person are also heard, and the cries of one drowning."

"Ah! What a delightful history, M. Desprez! Let me entreat you not to tell it anyone else; keep it entirely for me, and when I get to Paris, it will form a charming plot for a comic opera. I shall take care, in order to delight and surprise the whole world, to introduce into each scene, two or three ariettes<26> in verse, nearly rhyming; I will retain much of your manner, M. Desprez, and I will not write worse than you relate. If the work is applauded, and lays the basis of my fame, I will try every year to treat as happily two or three subjects of the same kind. Then the musicians, who always judge so well, will steal my verses; the comedians, who are infallible, will propose them for models; and the public, who are never mistaken, will call for the author with enthusiasm. In this age of little talents and great success, my chef d'oeuvre will be performed a hundred succeeding nights. Every fool will quote me as a great man; and if I have only men of letters and men of taste against me, I shall, most probably, become an academician."

This project was certainly noble and aspiring, but, as will be seen by the sequel, I had so many others to attend to on my arrival at Paris, that I could not spare time for its execution.

Had the credulous doctor's frightful story deranged my brain? Let the judicious lady who may be at this moment perusing my amours, decide on the subject. In a dream, which lasted nearly two hours, I saw, almost continually, my pretty cousin. The Marchioness de B*** presented herself five times at intervals; and only once—do not scold me, reader—once I thought I had a glimpse of the charming little creature of whom I have spoken in my first year—Justine. I cannot tell which of the three beauties it was that embraced me, but I can assure you that I was embraced, and as closely as if all the three had hugged me at once. I woke, and jumped up: the day began to break. Upon my honour, I felt my lips still tingling from the burning kiss I had received; my orange-coloured curtains were gently waving, and I heard a shrill noise in my apartment. I sprang to the foot of my bed, and walked round my room, but no one was to be seen; everything was fast and tranquil. I must surely, thought I,

be delirious! Love and ghosts had turned my head. Oh, Sophia! My Sophia! Come back: hasten, if you would not that I should lose the remainder of my reason!

When my father and M. Desprez came in to me, I was still so affected by the kiss I had received, that I told them a spirit had embraced me. My father smiled, and considered it a sign of my recovery. The doctor appeared delighted, and, in the meantime, advised me to take some refreshment.

Those who do not believe in spirits will be very much astonished to learn that the next morning I was awakened in precisely the same manner: I experienced the same sensations, heard the same noise, made the same useless searches in my room, and concluded that the ardour of my imagination had returned with my strength.

Oh, my Sophia! For several days I supported, more impatiently than ever, the uncertainty of thy fate, and the torment of thine absence; nor did I cease to press for my return to Paris. Unfortunately, my father received disagreeable news, which seemed to present difficulties to the accomplishment of my wishes. They spoke of nothing in the capital but my adventure, and the duel with which it terminated. Of the two friends of the Marquis, the one who fought with M. du Portail was killed. He was generally regretted, and his friends, who were numerous and powerful, made the most urgent representations against us. I could not show myself in the capital without risking my head on the scaffold. M. de Belcourt seemed alarmed at the danger, of which I was fully sensible, but which, nevertheless, would not have stopped me, if the braving of it could have restored my Sophia; but before I went to face so many perils, it was, at least, necessary I should know in what place my unfortunate wife was detained.

Being obliged to confine myself to the premises I lived upon, I endeavoured to relieve my melancholy and ennui by walking all day in the garden.

One evening, when undressing myself, I found a letter carefully wrapped up in my nightcap; instead of my usual address, were the following words: *Noirval, dismiss your servant, and read.*"

I accordingly sent Jasmin away, opened it, and read as follows:

> If it is true that the Chevalier de Faublas is not afraid of spirits, let him burn this letter, and preserve to-night a profound silence, whatever may happen!

"Ah!" I said, pretty loud, "this is one of my dear doctor's little jokes." I burnt the mysterious paper, put out the light, jumped into bed, and went to sleep.

My sleep was not of long duration. I could not resist the accustomed impression of this kiss, which burnt my lips, and made my heart beat. For this time, I was not deceived by a vain dream; it was no longer a fugitive shadow which embraced me; even in my bed, and presently in my arms, I found a living body in voluptuous contact with my own. But gently—blunderer as I am, I was going to tell the simple fact in simple language, and the fair reader is already blushing: let us, then, endeavour to clothe this affair in decent phraseology.

I felt myself taken hold of in a very delicate manner, and gently drawn towards it by a charming little hand, which I kissed. Do not be displeased with me, for, with all your scruples, you would have done as I did. A thousand seductive attractions would not have been offered you in vain; like me, you would have wandered with delight

over so many charms with a caressing and curious hand, enchanted at the result of your researches; like me, you would have said in a whisper, lest your servant in the next room should hear you: "Charming spirit! How beautiful thy form! How soft thy skin!"

I repeated this very flattering compliment several times; I wished more than once to prove that it was sincere. Vain desires of a convalescent, if he can in a happy night! The same words are spoken again, the same actions easily repeated. The sweet combat just began; and it was not simply a matter of politeness; I remember only too well that my adversary was enjoying it. Alas! Faublas found himself too little prepared for it; Faublas was almost immediately vanquished. Even if the ghost, less taciturn, had been willing to speak familiarly with me; but she persisted in not replying a word. It was a sure way to put me back to sleep, I who, like everyone else, like to talk when I have nothing to do.

When I woke again, the sun was rising, and I was alone in my chamber. I recommenced my search, already so often made without effect. My two doors and four windows were fast, and the walls seemed incapable of containing a secret door, nor was there any opening in the floor, or sliding compartment in the ceiling. How, then, could this female spirit penetrate into my room? The doctor had neither wife nor daughter, and the house was only inhabited by men. From whence then came this tempting spirit, whose sex I had proved? Did Lisette journey from the other world into this, to be revenged of her poor Lucas?

A farmer's wife in my arms! No! I would rather believe myself the Titan of the timid Aurora, or the modern Endymion of some haughty goddess, who had clothed herself in a human form. Oh! My Sophia! It seems to have been predestined that thy husband should not remain faithful to thee, even for three weeks, but at least the incense which belongs to thee, has only burnt at the shrine of a divinity.

I was anxious to lay this adventure before the Count Rosambert, from whom it was very astonishing that I received no direct intelligence. I wrote him a letter of three large pages, the two first were occupied about Sophia, and I crowded into the third, the inconceivable history of my beautiful ghost.

I waited the night following, but it did not come until the eighth night. Impelled by an eager desire of knowing the nocturnal beauty who visited me, I demanded her appellation, for whether nymph or goddess, a name she must have. How long she had loved me, for without infatuation, I flattered myself that I had pleased her, in what place she had met me, for she treated me at least like an acquaintance. These questions, and several others less embarrassing, obtained me no answer. At last, of all the known means to make a woman speak, I employed the most decisive, but the malicious female demon, with an unshaken presence of mind, exhausted my resources without suffering a single exclamation to escape her.

I was mortified the more, as this impolite silence became, in consequence of circumstances, a species of ingratitude; I endeavoured to conduct myself in such a manner as to obtain some thanks. All my efforts, however, were useless, for I found with regret that the females of the other world, although very sensible to certain terrestrial joys, possess not, on the most interesting occasions, the tender prattle, and the affectionate converse of our earthly dames.

An enemy to the accusing day, my discreet spirit waited not the rising Aurora. When I heard her prepare for her departure, I endeavoured to retain her; but she

placed the forefinger of her right hand on my mouth, her left hand upon my heart, and on my forehead two kisses; then, slipping from me with a sigh, quickly escaped I know not where. I merely thought I could distinguish a cracking as if the wall opened, and the creaking of a hinge. I was, apparently, deceived, for I examined my walls again as soon as it was light, but the paper which covered them exhibited a smooth surface, and offered no signs of being opened; my doors and windows also were closely shut.

The same evening I found in my night-cap a second letter:

> I shall return in the night between Sunday and Monday if the Chevalier promises me, on the word of a gentleman, that he will make no attempt to detain me. Let him answer me through the same medium.

Ah! I understand! Through the night-cap. The next day my docile messenger was charged with my short dispatch which contained the promise required from me.

The much-wished Sunday arrives! And shortly the night surrounds me with her perfidious shades, that night so remarkable in the history of my life! Jasmin, who had been absent since dinner, returned towards dusk. As soon as he saw me alone, he informed me of the unexpected arrival of Rosambert. The Count had stopped at Luxembourg, from whence he had sent secret dispatches to Jasmin; for reasons which he himself would tell me, he could not arrive at Hollrisse until about an hour before midnight, as, it was of great consequence that no one should see him enter the house; I was, therefore, earnestly requested to open the little garden gate, precisely at twelve o'clock, with my own hand.

I followed my instructions punctually. M. de Belcourt, angry that I left him sooner than usual, made a remark about it to M. Desprez, with which I was not struck, but by what happened subsequently: "Let the convalescent go," he said, "I dare say he has some commerce with the spirits, which he does not wish us to know."

Instead of going to my chamber, I slipped gently into the garden. Rosambert was waiting for me at the little gate.

"Ah! How do you do, my good friend; where is my Sophia? What is become of the Marchioness? Have you any news of her father? Does her husband still live? How is my sister? What do they say of the duel? What think you of the stranger? How do you like my affair with the ghost? Why did you not write to me? How do you do?"

"A moment's patience, dear Noirval! What vivacity! What eagerness! You put me in mind of the little Chevalier de Faublas, about whom they talk so much in Paris. Let us, in the first place, sit down on this bench, and permit me to make my answers in a little more order than you put your questions. My vigilant emissaries have seen M. du Portail at Paris, and they will follow his footsteps until they have discovered the place of his daughter's retreat, of which they will send us a good account."

"Oh! My Sophia! Shall I then behold thee again?"

"Gently, my friend, you shall, do not interrupt me. Madame de B*** is, apparently, retired to one of her country residences, as they can meet with her neither at court nor in the city.

"Poor Marchioness, I shall never see thee again!"

"Perhaps not, do not be grieved at that, the Marquis, whose wound is not deemed mortal, only desires to be cured, that he may go and seek you wherever you are to be found. He vows to pursue you everywhere."

"But, Rosambert, have you no idea where she is?"

"Probably at one of her country seats."

"Yes, Madame de B***, but Sophia, I mean?"

"Ah! In Paris, most probably."

"Think you, my friend, that the Marquis will pardon her?"

"Pardon the Marchioness! Why not? The adventure is an extraordinary one I agree, but the evil is very common. It is only a little noise! Oh! A woman like the Marchioness can make him listen to reason."

"Tell me, Rosambert, without flattery, whether you think I can make him restore her to me!"

"What, force the Marquis to give his wife up to you!"

"No, my friend, it is of my own, and of her father that I speak."

"Du Portail! There can be no doubt but they will compel him to give her up."

"I shall never see her more! I shall never, never see her more!"

"On the contrary, since he will be forced to give her up, you will see her."

"I was thinking, Monsieur, on that unhappy lady."

"You are always the same, my friend, marriage has not changed you: but let me, in my turn, ask you some questions. In the first place, I see you are nearly recovered—"

"The hope of shortly seeing my Sophia! Yes! Yes! My Sophia! and then, that unfortunate lady!—the Marchioness; I assure you it is not my intention to go in search of her! It is true I sometimes catch myself thinking of her, but it is because—"

"Undoubtedly, Chevalier; I understand you; it is because you cannot help it. A young man of good birth, will, in spite of himself, recollect the kind offices of a young and handsome woman, who first initiated him into the mysteries of Venus?"

"You are eternally jesting, Rosambert! Tell me, have you, by chance, heard anything of the little Justine?"

"What! The *fille de chambre* also holds a share of your heart? Ah, that is because you had the pleasure of first instructing her in the rudiments of a Paphian education! But, stop! I think you told me that La Jeunesse had that honour?"

"Come on, Rosambert, I am wrong, say no more of it."

"No, my dear Faublas, let us speak of the spirit."

"Ah, yes! How do you like my affair with the spirit? Is it not singular that this woman never speaks a word, and is so wonderfully firm in her resolution? Is it not curious that this little demon should enter my chamber so often, and I cannot tell from whence—"

"Does she visit you every night, Faublas?"

"No, but I expect her to-night."

So much the better, and will we clear up this pleasant mystery? We shall know—but I amused myself in writing instead of getting my supper, while I was at the inn. I begin to be hungry, Chevalier."

"Stop here I will go and call Jasmin."

"What! And make a noise in the house? You must guard against that stop! I think I have got something in my chaise; I always carry some provisions with me."

He left me; and in a few minutes he brought half of a fowl and bottle of wine: I have brought two glasses, he said, because I intend you shall sup with me here, here in this garden, chevalier; we have much to say, and it will not be safe in your chamber. In the first place, let us drink the health of Adelaide, of whom you have only spoken once."

"Ah, my dear sister! I love her much, notwithstanding—how is she?"

"Very well; very well, and grows more charming than ever! I could not resist the inclination of seeing her before I left France. Amiable child! She looks more beautiful in her grief, and pines for the absence of her father, her brother, and her dear Sophia! Let us drink her health, Faublas: let us drink it instantly; I know that it is not fashionable, but we are in the country; and, besides, we are travellers! Stop! Eat a morsel; you know I cannot sup alone."

"I am delighted to see you, Rosambert: but why stop in the garden? Why this mystery?"

"Because I could not converse with you in private; because the Baron, who has already intercepted my letters to you, would have occupied all my time, and would have desired me to alter the news I bring according to his own wishes."

"You are right, Rosambert; and then the spirit! Do you think that I should not wish to speak about her?"

"Come, Faublas, I will give you the health of Sophia."

"I have not tasted a drop of wine for this month before; you wish to make me tipsy!"

"To the health of Sophia! You cannot refuse that, chevalier. Come, drink to Sophia!"

"Oh, my pretty cousin! It is not the first time you have made me lose my reason! This wine, Rosambert, is uncommonly strong! It affects my head! What think you of the stranger, who, during the ceremony in the cathedral—"

"Faith, I do not know what to say; let us talk of your new mistress, that nocturnal beauty who loves you with so much discretion. Is she pretty, Faublas?"

"Beautiful, my friend!"

"What! A woman who fears daylight? I'll wager she's ugly?"

"A hundred Louis that she is charming."

"Well! I'll take you at your word; but then I must see her."

"And then you will inform me—"

"Most willingly: but do you think I can be less curious than yourself. Since you wrote to me the account of your adventure, I have burnt with an ardent desire to develop the mystery. Permit me to assist you in this experiment: you must go to bed gently, and without a light. You must get into bed quick, and say not a word. I will remain concealed by your bedside, and am provided with a dark lantern, which will be of importance on this occasion; and, if the spirit is not a sorceress, we will see what kind of a face she has. Therefore, chevalier, let us drink one more health; you have forgot someone."

"Ah! Yes! The beautiful Marchioness! Oh, my faithful wife! I know well that I should not name her. Come on, then, give me two drops for the Marchioness!"

"You are jesting, my friend; for so charming a woman you must have it quite full."

This last glass finished me, and I sunk all at once into a delirium of intoxication. The surrounding objects already appeared to me in confusion. I spoke without making myself understood; or rather, I stammered instead of speaking. I presently became dull and stupid: my noisy joy now ceased, and I was overcome by the most invincible sleep. Rosambert, who perceived this, begged me to conduct him to my chamber, but to make no noise, and keep a profound silence. He told Jasmin, who waited my orders in the garden, to retire in the same manner. We went up with no other light than the dark lantern which we left in the passage.

As I entered, supported by Rosambert, I came in contact with a sofa, on which he stretched me, to the end, he said, that he might undress me with greater facility. I suffered him to act the part of valet de chambre, but he acquitted himself so slowly and awkwardly, that before he had finished I sunk into a most profound sleep.

An hour's sleep having dissipated the fumes of the strong wine which had taken away my senses, I was suddenly roused by a loud burst of laughter. "At length," cried Rosambert, "I am completely revenged; I am willing you shall kill me on the spot, if it is not her!"

At the same instant I heard a groan, which was followed by a long sigh. I was lying in such a manner on the sofa, that I perceived the feeble light of the dark lantern at the bottom of the passage. Prompted instantly both by anxiety and curiosity, I ran into the passage, and entered the apartment abruptly, with the lantern in my hand. I cast the trembling light on the objects before me: what did I see? Alas! Even at this day, how can I relate it without a sigh! I saw upon my bed, which he had taken possession of, and in my place, which he had usurped, Rosambert, almost naked, closely embracing, in the most unequivocal position, a woman! Oh! Madame de B***, how beautiful you still appeared to me, although you had fainted.

As soon as the Count thought I had properly scrutinised this exhibition, he rose from his victim, took his clothes in haste, and said, while laughing: "Adieu, Faublas! I leave you with this disconsolate fair one; I think you will have a very singular explanation! Persuade her, if you can, that you have had no share in this trick. Farewell! My chaise is waiting for me; I return to Luxembourg, and tomorrow you shall hear from me."

The cruel observations of Rosambert were as distressing to me as the action he had been guilty of. In the first impulse of my rage I was flying for my sword, to compel him to give me a reason for his infamous proceedings, when Madame de B*** rose all at once, and seized me by the arm. Rosambert had time to escape: the

Marchioness immediately took my hand, covered it with kisses, and bathed it with tears: "Oh, from what a weight I seemed relieved!" she said. "Oh, what a consolation it has been to me to learn that you did not participate in this infamous proceeding!"

Madame de B*** would have continued, but her extreme agitation would not suffer her. She sobbed for a long time, without being able to utter a word; at last, redoubling her efforts, with a voice interrupted by sighs, she resumed:

"If you had been capable, Faublas, of delivering me to this unworthy man, if you had so far despised me, this last misfortune, greater than all the rest, would have brought me to the grave. I find, however, that it is still possible to live, and not be quite destitute of consolation, since debased as I am, I can yet hope for your esteem, or at least I ought to reckon on your pity. If your bitter mortifications will be in any degree alleviated by knowing that I participate in them, let me assure you, my amiable friend. Oh!,I am wretched! My heart bleeds for you! How this perfidious man, aided by a fatal accident, has undermined my vain prudence! How has a single moment overturned my carefully concerted projects, and destroyed my dearest hopes!"

At these words the Marchioness sunk down on my pillow, her arms were stretched out and immovable, her eyes became fixed, and her tears ceased to flow. Insensible to my cares, deaf to my entreaties, she seemed overcome by despair, and penetrated with the horror of her situation. She kept this alarming silence for a quarter of an hour; and then, in an apparently calm tone, she said: "Make yourself easy, my friend; sit down near me, and give me all your attention; I am going to unbosom myself entirely to you, and when I have laid open the vain projects I had formed, and the immutable resolutions I am about to make, you will know precisely how far you ought to pity or to blame me.

"The Marquis met you accidentally in the gardens of the Tuileries, and your father exposed everything. My husband came off in a hurry, reproached me before twenty witnesses, and announced his approaching vengeance. Astonished at the cruel manner in which you abandoned me, at a moment equally fatal to my love and my honour, I could not help concluding that a more urgent interest, and a dearer object, occupied your mind. Justine went after you several times, but could not find you. I then charged Dumont, my oldest and most faithful servant, who takes here the character of Desprez: I charged him, I say, to go and wait for you in the environs of the convent of Mademoiselle de Pontis, and to watch your proceedings until the next morning. He saw you enter the convent, waited till you came out, followed you to the field of battle, and on the road as far as Jalons, where he lost sight of you. He returned not soon enough to be my first informer of the two elopements, the news of which was already spread through Paris.

"Dumont, on his return, found my preparations already made. I had got together my gold, my jewels, some effects in the bank, and dressing myself in a blue uniform, that you might not know me, I flew to Jalons. While I was interrogating the post-master, a man arrived whom I recognised, and who, without knowing me, indicated to me your route; it was Jasmin who conducted a post-chaise.<27> I continued to follow him at some distance, and arrived at Luxembourg the day after yourself. I went into the city as soon as it was light, and made inquiries in every quarter; I lost a whole hour during my researches, the most precious hour of my life.

"At length, I was informed that a marriage was performing in the cathedral, between a young gentleman and a lady he had stolen away. It was enough, I listened

no longer, I flew to the church, and rushed through the crowd. You were just married! A groan escaped me, but suddenly mustering up strength, I vanished from your sight. Too happy in being able to fly, I hurried I know not where. My affections, however, soon brought me back to Luxembourg, that I might know what was become of you. Indeed, Faublas, the pleasure I felt at hearing my rival was torn from you, was not so lively as the sorrow I experienced on hearing of the dangerous delirium they said you had fallen into. Animated by the double desire of watching over the life of my lover, and of keeping him to myself, and myself only, I immediately formed my plan.

"With Dumont, who accompanied me, I examined all the environs of Luxembourg, and, under the name of Desprez, he hired this house. I soon made some alterations, which were necessary for the execution of my designs. The Marchioness de B*** resolved to suffer everything, as long as she did not lose you, and shut herself up in a garret, in another part of the house.

"Your father had you conducted here, and I had the pleasure of lodging with my lover, almost under the same roof; of seeing him restored to life under my own eyes; of visiting him sometimes in the silence of the night; of inhaling his breath, and feeling the palpitation of his heart. I ought, undoubtedly, before I indulged myself in taking still greater liberties, and experiencing the most supreme delights, to have waited your complete recovery; but what means had I of resisting the continual charm of your presence? Or of combating my increasing desires? Alas! What am I talking of? Faublas, the moment was approaching when my designs were about to be accomplished; within three days I should have thrown off the almost magical veil with which I have been enveloped; I should have discovered myself to you without any mystery; I should have shown you the Marchioness de B***, regardless of the rank she had left on your account, desirous of nothing but devoting herself to your happiness in some secure retreat, and still have thought my fate an enviable one, had you but appreciated my feelings and approved my plan. But had you ungratefully resisted, my resolution was formed, Chevalier, to carry you off in spite of yourself, and to have taken you where should I say? Perhaps to the end of the world. Yes, I would have placed immense oceans between my perfidious lover and my more favoured rival."

The Marchioness, when she began, was calm; next she seemed to melt in tenderness, and at length she became impassioned, and expressed the last words in so energetic and emphatic a manner, that I could not help expressing some signs of astonishment, which she observing, "Be composed," she said, "you are henceforth at liberty, though I shall be forever enslaved. My tender moments of passion are passed! I can now only experience the most impetuous, the most implacable of all. Opprobrium has put love to flight. How, indeed, could you take back to your arms a woman who was dishonoured in your eyes and degraded in her own? Being brought into this unfortunate condition by the basest of treachery, the most horrid vengeance has taken possession of my heart, which is now rankling with its empoisoned gall! Faublas, I indulge an idea that I perceived you ready to execute my just resentment; but, Rosambert, in this combat, the success of which will not be doubtful, would still glory in his fall; and his death, being unattended with shame, would be too feeble a reparation for the irreparable affront I have received from him. No, Chevalier, his punishment belongs to me, and I swear to you that it shall be accomplished."

Madame de B***'s countenance was so much inflamed and her eyes bespoke so much fury, that I began to dread the consequences of her violent passions. My

unfortunate mistress saw that I was about to interrupt her, and hastened to continue her observations.

"You will endeavour in vain to change my resolution. A villainy too necessary for you to be astonished at it, or for me to shrink from any of the dangers it may be attended with. Alas! I have now nothing to lose! The perfidious wretch has overwhelmed me with dishonour, and deprived me of my lover! Let me repeat once more, Faublas, that I forbid you to espouse my quarrel; I will sustain it entirely by myself; I shall be driven to desperation if I am deprived of the pleasure of vengeance. It is well known what an enraged woman can do; they shall see what a woman like myself is capable of achieving. Yes, I swear by my disappointed love, by my lost honour, that you shall, in the midst of your astonishment, ask yourself whether anyone in the world could have avenged the Marchioness de B*** better than herself."

She remained for awhile in mournful silence. I ventured to give her a kiss, and my tears dropped on her naked bosom. She immediately repaired the disorder of her clothes, which, apparently, she had not observed, and in a less agitated, but not less mournful tone of voice, she said, "Oh, yes! Take pity on me! I have need of consolation. Tomorrow I must leave you; tomorrow we must separate, perhaps for a long time; I return to Paris"

"To Paris!"

"Yes, my friend. It was not fear that drove me from the capital; it was not to hide myself that I came to Luxembourg. Alas! I cannot, as I wished, consecrate the remainder of my life to your happiness? I am going to resume my fortune and my rank, since I am not permitted to sacrifice it. I return to Paris, make yourself easy as to my fate: for when a woman is not entirely destitute of mental and personal attractions, she can, if she chooses to take the trouble, bring back her husband, however justly incensed. To succeed in this delicate enterprise, two ways are still left me, but the most easy is not the best. Like many others, I can palliate some parts of my adventure, which are too much for his self-love to overlook; make an ingenuous confession of the rest, and exert that influence, which beauty still preserves even over him it has offended, to obtain a pardon which he will not refuse me. But this undertaking, however good it may be in a moment of trouble, is productive of many inconveniences in future. For M. de B***'s own repose, I would not arm him against myself with my own confessions, because I should be eternally tormented with his jealousy; he would suspect me of having been guilty of ten intrigues; when I have had but one passion, and, perhaps, contest with me the legitimacy of the only child I ever bore him. Besides, why should I humbly beg a pardon that I can boldly demand? No, no, I prefer rather to make use of that irresistible ascendancy which a strong mind ever possesses over a weak one. I shall not be the first who has been obliged, by improbable lies, boldly to deny a positive and proved infidelity. It may, perhaps, be less difficult for me than you can conceive, to make M. de B*** believe that the Chevalier de Faublas has always been Mademoiselle du Portail to me; and if I cannot persuade him, I shall at least embarrass him in such a manner as to leave him undecided.

"I am well aware that the public, far from being blind to real wrongs, are always ready to suppose them, and will not be so easily deceived as a credulous husband. I know well that I must expect the humiliating celebrity occasioned by gallant adventures, when they are of an extraordinary nature.

"The beaux esprits will make songs and epigrams about me, and the old dowagers will scandalise my character. In those circles which I shall be bold enough to enter, I shall see myself the object of affected whispers, of malignant looks, of artful sarcasms, and equivocal jokes. I must bear the impertinent airs of our silly fops; the cold contempt of our inexorable prudes; the pretended disdain of those loose fish who still preserve an external modesty, and the sisterly welcome of those beauties who have entirely lost their character.

"If I have the courage to appear at the theatres, and in the public promenades, I shall be surrounded by a crowd; a swarm of young rakes will buzz about me, whispering 'there she is; that is she.'

"Well! Faublas; this painful part, which many ladies of my rank have taken through choice, I shall fill through necessity. Like them, perhaps, bold in my appearance, free in my conversation, and stoically despising my ignominy, I shall accustom myself to repulse shame by effrontery, and blame by impudence.

"See, then, to what an excess of degradation I have been led by a passion, criminal if you will have it so, but, nevertheless, in many respects excusable. Ah, since it is true, that to avoid being unhappy we must fulfil all our duties with punctuality, why are so many difficult ones imposed on us? A girl who is ignorant of herself falls, at fifteen years of age, into the arms of a man she knows nothing about. She is told by her parents,<28> that birth, rank, and riches constitute happiness; you cannot fail of being happy, since, without ceasing to be noble, you become more rich; your husband cannot be otherwise than a man of merit, since he is a man of quality. The young wife, too soon undeceived, finds nothing but folly and vice, where she expected agreeable talents and brilliant qualities; the luxury which surrounds her, and the titles which decorate her, afford but insufficient and fleeting amusement to dissipate the listless langour of her life. Her eyes have already, perhaps, discovered and her heart received an impression from the mortal who is wanting to complete her happiness. Then, if the imperious master to whom she has sold herself presumes to use the rights of Hymen; if she submits to the repulsive embraces of custom and necessity, the unfortunate victim, doting on the image of her lover, even while in the arms of her husband, sighs at being forced to prostitute herself to one who profanes what another undoubtedly deserves, and would duly appreciate.

"If the fickle husband, after having long neglected, ultimately abandons her, must she submit herself to the rigour of a premature celibacy, or is she to expose herself to the perilous pleasures of a connection so anxiously desired. Restrained by her duty, but still under the influence of her passion; tormented by her fears, but earnestly solicited by love, will she be long able to submit to her painful privations without some indemnification? Suppose she resists the voice of nature continually prompting her, may not chance preserve for her, as it did for me, some all-powerful seduction, some inevitable temptation? Unfortunate woman! In a single moment she will lose the merit of many years' resistance, she is lost forever, for after the first *faux pas* what woman will stop? She will adore the man who made her commit it. Satisfied with taking some useless precautions, she neglects those which are more necessary; her danger becomes imminent, and she becomes more careless. Presently, betrayed by some unforeseen event, or, perhaps, sacrificed by some cowardly enemy, she loses forever the object most dear to her heart, and finds herself publicly defamed. This, my friend, is the lot of woman in that very France where it is pretended they reign!

"It was thus I beheld myself sacrificed, and for a long time struggled with mortification and disappointment, and thus was seduced by the sight of you. The day after that fatal, yet delicious night, who could have foreseen that I had opened under my feet an abyss, at the bottom of which Vengeance, Opprobrium and Despair were waiting for me?"

She finished, and I said, "My friend, I must leave you; and what will become of you?"

"Alas! You burn to be re-united to my fortunate rival. Oh! That you may find her, and continue ever faithful to her! May she, at least, escape misfortune! I leave you, Faublas, for a time under Rosambert's perfidious insinuations; be careful of listening to him, if my memory is dear to you; if you love Sophia: the Count will ruin you, you will acquire in his society a taste for futile occupations and pernicious pleasures; he will teach you the detestable art of seduction, of perfidious villainy and cowardly treachery. Perhaps it may appear strange to you to hear Madame de B*** giving a lecture on morality, but this is one of those singularities which your happy destiny and my unfortunate stars have reserved for you. I will freely acknowledge to you, Faublas, that it is not without the most poignant regret that I see you wasting, in the bosom of corrupting idleness and humiliating debauchery, those valuable gifts of which nature has been so prodigal to you, and which I had the happiness of developing. Ah my friend, how many common men are able to corrupt those beauties whose wish is to yield. I am certain that, whenever you choose, you may overcome them all, and become the idol of our sex! But does it not become you to be ambitious of success more worthy a noble heart. A young man like yourself might aspire to excel in everything. The sciences invite you; literature demands your attention, and glory awaits you in our armies: follow her career with giant strides: that your enemies may be reduced to silence, and your rivals be compelled to admire you. Your first success will bring relief to my sorrow; and I shall think I have obtained the eulogiums which you will merit; the fame you will acquire will restore me to my own esteem; your virtues will justify my weakness your glory will bring about my re-establishment the day may come when I can say: 'Yes, I confess I am dishonoured, but it was for him.'"

Madame de B***'s addresses kindled in my breast the noble enthusiasm with which her own was inspired. Urged by a powerful impulse I attempted to throw myself into her arms, but she restrained me.

"Adieu, Chevalier, you may always depend on me. I shall always remember with tenderness and gratitude, though my youth was tormented with the most cruel pains, I had, nevertheless a few happy days, for which I was indebted to yourself. But do not deceive yourself as to the nature of the sentiments I entertain for you. This accident, the most fatal and least foreseen of all my misfortunes, has enlightened me while it overwhelms me with trouble; I find, by sad experience, that I must not hope for happiness in an illegitimate attachment. The weak Marchioness de B*** exists no more. You now behold a woman capable of some energy, but solely occupied with the care of insuring her vengeance, and forwarding your advancement. Adieu, Faublas, it is your friend who embraces you."

She gave me a kiss on the forehead, and retired by the chimney. Yes, it was by that she entered my chamber; the back of the fire-place was so constructed as to move on hinges, and to open wide enough to admit her through it. How many people, for want of knowing better, would attribute this contrivance to the invention of the

Marchioness; but in an age fertile with inventions, and long before Madame de B****, a chimney was thus opened by an amiable duke for a captive beauty, whose name has acquired a lasting celebrity.

XIV.

The day which succeeded this unfortunate night brought me some consolatory intelligence; I received a letter from Rosambert which at first I refused to open. No one was with me except Desprez when it was brought. "Here, Dumont, is a handwriting which I recognise, do me the pleasure to take this letter to Madame de B***; tell her I will not open it, and that she may do as she likes with it."

Dumont took it, and returned in about a quarter of an hour. The Marchioness wished to speak to me a moment in her own apartment, I went up to her, and should probably have broken my head against the ceiling of her chamber, if she had not taken the trouble to warn me several times that I was in a garret. I saw no one but Madame de B***, who appeared very pale and melancholy. I asked her how she had spent the remainder of last night:

" "Alas!" she said, "as I shall pass hereafter many others!" And she handed me a paper bathed in tears; adding: "Behold the worthy epistle of my cowardly persecutor: I have cast my eye over it once, but wish to hear it read. Read it out."

"Must I?"

"It will be a cruel complaisance on your part; but I require it."

"Permit me—"

"Faublas, do pray grant me this last request."

"Nevertheless—"

"Chevalier, I really wish it."

My DEAR FAUBLAS. You must now look up to me as your master. You saw me strike a bold stroke which I had meditated for more than a month. Read and admire. I learnt that on the day of your marriage a stranger came into the church and witnessed the ceremony: sometime after you wrote me that a spirit, at once discreet and familiar, paid very interesting visits. Being well aware of Madame de B***'s enterprising disposition, I conjecture, I suspect, I inquire, and finding that she left Paris on the day of your flight, I conclude that she is in the same house with you, without your knowledge. One does not easily forget the wrongs received from so charming a woman.
For ten months her piquant infidelity had rankled in my heart.

"My infidelity! As if ever the insolent coxcomb—. But proceed, my friend, proceed."

I conceived a scheme for accomplishing my revenge in a manner as complete and agreeable, as difficult in execution; I hastened my cure, and started in a post-chaise. To bring about the gallant catastrophe it was necessary to make you a little tipsy, and I was obliged to employ that little trick which I doubt not you will pardon.
This morning, however, I was uneasy; what did she say after my departure? What did she do? I would wager that, ever expert in making the best of circumstances, she has put on the most touching grief, the most affecting despair, and the most interesting repentance.
I will wager also, that, ever credulous and compassionate, you have sincerely participated in the grief of your innocent mistress, so traitorously violated. I will wager also, that the ungrateful Chevalier does not yet feel the obligation he is under to me: nevertheless, I have snatched him from the woman who led him astray, and

restored him, with undivided affection, to the wife who loves him.
By a just decree of fate, Madame de B*** returns to her first master.

"To her first master!" interrupted Madame de B***, "that is not true!"

I was enslaved by her magical powers for ten months; the spell is now broken: the enchantment is dissolved, and I am free. Do you also, Chevalier, assert your liberty, and fly from the charms of this sorceress. Sophia expects her liberator; Madame de Faublas groans within the walls of the Convent de ——, Faubourg Saint Germain, at Paris: you will guess why I did not give you this important news yesterday. Go, my friend, disguise yourself, fly to the capital, and when you embrace your charming wife, do not forget to tell her that she is indebted to Rosambert for the pleasure of seeing you so soon.
I am, your friend, etc.

"My wife in the Convent de —— at Paris!" cried I, on finishing the letter. "Oh, my friend! How happy am I at this discovery!"

"Cruel child!" answered the Marchioness, in an emotion of passion which expressed her love and her despair; "It is from you, Chevalier, that I am to receive this last fatal blow!"

I was going to fall on my knees, to beg her to pardon my rashness, but her grief being instantly dissipated, she asked me, with more firmness than I could have expected, what I intended to do? And what services I expected from her friendship?

I told her I felt a most ardent desire to return to Paris. She felt alarmed at the dangers which awaited me there, and the uneasiness my flight would occasion the Baron. I observed that I should probably not be absent from my father more than a fortnight, and that, by taking some prudent precautions, I hoped to escape the perils my return to the capital would bring upon me. Madame de B*** did not seem satisfied.

"My friend," I said, "my wife, plunged into despair by my absence, may perhaps die; I know no danger more appalling to myself than that which menaces her, and it is my first duty to fly to her relief."

"It is not for me," replied the Marchioness, "to blame the imprudent actions which the most powerful of all passions impels us to commit. May I, now become the confidant of your rash enterprises, never regret in secret the times when I hazarded similar ones! Go, my dear Faublas, and, amidst a thousand dangers, search for this young Sophia, whose beauty has cost me so many tears. Oh, what a strange destiny! I must now take as much pains in order to re-unite you, as I have heretofore given myself torments in endeavouring to separate you. Doubt not but my anxious friendship will watch over your inconsiderate love. I go, as much as possible, to ward off the dangers by which you are surrounded, and to pave the way to that pleasure and happiness which is promised you."

"Of all other precautions, the first and most necessary is that of your disguise; I therefore undertake to provide you with the most commodious and convenient one, as well as to make all the necessary preparations for your departure. My own, which was fixed, shall be put off till tomorrow on your account. Leave me, my friend. Tell Desprez to come up and speak with me, and expect me in your chamber in the middle of the night."

She came as she had promised; and, for this time, she entered by the door. In the first place, she made me take off my coat, and from a parcel, mysteriously opened, she drew a large black robe, in which I was presently muffled up. My neck and breast were covered with so much art, that the kerchief seemed to envelope the treasure of a rich plump bosom, modestly concealed.

Over my bashful forehead, already bound with a white bandeau, a thin white veil was thrown, through which, with timid glances, I endeavoured to meet the eyes of the officious fair one employed in disguising me. I saw her blush and tremble; and, with a mixed sensation of pain and pleasure, I heard her stifle a tender and mournful sigh. How frequently were her eyes filled with tears, and cast down to avoid coming in contact with mine, as with quivering hands she continued to adjust some part of my dress which did not set to please her.

How often was I prompted by desire to allay my own ardour and her regrets, in the raptures of a last embrace! Oh, my Sophia! In no moment of my life was the remembrance of thee more necessary to my tottering virtue! And yet I must confess, that had I thought Madame de B*** had been as weak as myself, I should have tried the experiment; but, in short, I did not attempt to convince myself of it and you ought, my charming wife, to be happy that I did not put the courage of the Marchioness and the fidelity of your husband to so critical a trial.

When Madame de B*** saw that nothing more was wanting to my disguise, she could not restrain her tears; and, in a feeble voice, she said: "Adieu! Begone! Re-enter France: fly to Paris; I will follow you in two hours, and be in the capital only two hours later than yourself. Faublas, we shall arrive, as it were, together! The same city will contain us; yet we shall see each other no more! But I shall watch over your safety, and prevent or ward off the dangers which threaten you! You shall see if I am not a real friend! Get down in *Rue Grenelle, Saint Honore, à L'Hôtel de l'Empereur*; you need not remain there a minute, someone will come to you from me, in whom you may place all your confidence. Listen, Chevalier, to his advice; let your conduct be governed by his directions; and, above all, let me beg of you to commit no indiscretions. You have but one way of recompensing me for all my care and trouble, and that is this, not to spoil their effect by a foolish temerity. Oh, that it was permitted me to accompany you on the road, and partake of the dangers which perhaps await you! Here, my friend, at all hazards take your pistols. As to this weapon, she added, pointing to my sword, which hung at the head of my bed, it can never form part of a nun's equipage, therefore permit me to take it myself.

I reached it down, and presented it to her. She seized it with transport, drew it immediately, appeared to take a pleasure in examining its fine temper, and then returning it to the scabbard, she took my hand, which she squeezed with more force than I thought her capable.

"Grant, O Heaven," she said, in a vehement tone of voice, "that I may be worthy of this present!"

Without waiting for my reply, she conducted me to the staircase, which we descended in silence. We crossed the garden without making a noise, the little door was opened the moment we appeared, and I saw a post-chaise waiting for me. I wished to thank her for her kind attentions, but my mouth was stopped by several kisses. I hoped, at least, to return her tender caresses; but, quicker than lightning, she tore herself from my arms, shut the door after her, and bade me a tender "Adieu!"

I started, I set out to rejoin thee, my Sophia but how many misfortunes, how many enemies and rivals were still to retard the moment of our re-union!

It was very near five in the morning. We entered, at day-break, into the French territories. Every man who travels in a country where he has committed any dangerous act, imagines that everyone who looks at him recognises him, it seems impossible to him but that the cause of his inquietude is written on his forehead, and can be read by everyone who passes: besides, a nun travelling by herself in a post-chaise, was calculated to excite observation. This is what I was saying to myself in the environs of Longwy, the first place on the frontier, where I thought I perceived that I was noticed. After these fine reflections, I gave myself up to the deceitful sweets of a sleep, alas! Too short! For in a little time my chaise was surrounded, and I awoke through the noise produced by opening the doors. Before I had time to look about me, they got in, seized me, and bound me; but either too respectful, or too inattentive, or out of consideration for my sex, or my habit, or imagining there was nothing to fear from a nun, who was unarmed, they neglected to search me; the sacriligious troop, however, dared to profane my holy garb by throwing a soldier's cloak over me, and their chief seated himself cavalierly by my side, ordered the postilion to go forward.

"Where are you conducting me?"

Apparently deaf and dumb, the discreet satellite who guarded me was as little touched by my questions as my complaints. A kind of napkin, with which they had covered my head, admitted too faint a light to enable me to distinguish anything. The noise of a cavalcade struck my ear, from which I judged, that for greater security, I was escorted by soldiers. Once, while the troop stopped, seemingly to take fresh horses, I heard someone pronounce distinctly the name of Derneval and myself.

Where are they conducting me?

The cursed post-chaise went on perpetually; but we did, at last, come to our journey's end. From this I calculated that we must have been on the road about thirty-six hours: truly, six ages could not have appeared longer! What dreadful anxieties agitated me! To what cruel reflections was I a prey! I saw myself surrounded by judges! I heard the terrible sentence pronounced, and beheld the fatal scaffold! What a situation! It was not for myself alone that I groaned; no, my father, I thought of the letter which I had left for you on my table, in which I promised to return to you soon. Alas! Your son, perhaps, is doomed never more to embrace you!

It was not for myself that I regretted my life, no, my young wife, no; I thought of thy still increasing attractions, of our nuptials so short, and of our bonds so soon broken. In supposing that my deplorable end should not bring you to a premature grave, I was at least confident that you would remain faithful to my memory; no one would boast the happiness of marrying the widow of Faublas. Oh! My Sophia! I melted over the fate of a girl of fifteen condemned to the fate of a widowhood, that might last for more than half a century; and compelled all the while to regret the fleeting pleasures of two nights.

At length the chaise stopped, and they took me out. Where they had brought me I could not divine. I could not examine the place through the cloth with which my face was covered. For want of my eyes, I exercised my ears, and listened with as much curiosity as anxiety.

I heard the flapping of doors, the noise of bolts, the rattling of iron gratings, and the hasty steps of several persons on all sides. The place in which they put me

appeared cold and damp. I was seated on a large wooden armchair; at some distance from me, I heard some words muttered, but I did not understand them; my ears were only struck by that hollow, prolonged echo, common in large vaults.

Someone approached me, and inclining towards my ear, addressed to me in a very mild tone, the following words, which were both terrific and consoling: "Great God! What will become of you? Oh, that I could save you!"

The next moment I heard a bell tolling as for a funeral; it seemed as if a number of people came in and surrounded me. To the tumultuous buzz of a great assembly, all was at once succeeded by a profound silence, which lasted for some time. My soul was troubled, my image ination laboured: I felt a something I had never felt before. Alas! I must acknowledge it was fear.

A shrill and squeaking voice at length broke the profound silence, and ordered me to say an Ave Maria. An Ave Maria! I tried three times to fulfil this strange commandment, and three times my trembling tongue refused to obey: for I could not in my extreme distress recall a syllable of the prayer in question. Someone then sung it, that I might repeat it word for word. After which began the short interrogatory, of which the following is verbatim.

"From whence do you come?"

"How should I know? Ask those who brought me here."

"What have you done since you went from hence?"

"Here! Perhaps I have never been here. Where am I?"

"Have you not seduced Mademoiselle de Pontis?"

"Mademoiselle de Pontis! Oh, Sophia!"

"Yes, Sophia de Pontis: do you not know her?"

"I have heard speak of her. "

"If I had known her I would have adored her, instead of seducing her."

"Do you know Chevalier de Faublas?

"That name has reached my ear."

"Do you know Derneval?"

"No."

"This 'no," repeated by several voices, circulated through the assembly.

"Is not your name Dorothea?"

"No." This made a still greater effect than the other. The voice which interrogated me, replied: "Let them take away the napkin, and lift up her veil."

The order was immediately executed, and what a spectacle met my astonished sight! Before an altar, and on a circular bench which surrounded me with an extensive sweep, were ranged in rows more than fifty nuns. Did my eyes deceive me? No, it was not a dream of my distempered imagination. The more I looked about me, the more certain I was that I had been examined by fifty nuns: I heard them exclaim, unanimously: "It is not she!"

"It is not she," repeated the one who appeared to preside over the assembly. "The affair is embarrassing," she continued, after a moment's reflection; "we must write this evening to our superiors. Tomorrow we shall receive their answer; in the meantime, let her be put in the dungeon, and let one of our sisters watch near her."

Four young nuns seized me, and took me away. I did not care to resist; in the first place I was bound, and in the next, I found my carriage sufficiently agreeable. Moreover, all the women followed me: and I took a pleasure in looking at them. Amongst so many females I perceived some very respectable on account of their size; and others very precious for their antiquity. There were some of all colours white, grey, yellow, green, more or less marked. This one was common, that was singular, another ridiculous: But I also got a side glance at some who were modern and pretty! And the sight of them seemed to defer the gloomy ideas which were presently about to strike a terror to the very bottom of my soul; and though my situation was still very uneasy, I thought no more of it. I am so constituted, that in no circumstances of my life, however embarrassing, if I saw but some pretty women, my troubles were entirely forgotten.

In the meantime, they took me by torch-light through a long passage underground, at the end of which I perceived a chapel. Close to that they opened a chamber, which was a dungeon only in name. It was a kind of a cell, in which I found a bed, upon which they put me. A lamp was lighted, and a chair given to sister Ursula, whom the venerables on retiring, begged to pray fervently by me until the next morning.

Oh! My happy stars! How I thanked thee! Of all the pretty faces which I had distinguished amongst them, that of Ursula was the most charming. What a companion! What freshness! What brilliance! What sweetness was there in her timid look! What innocence in her open and ingenuous aspect! With the exception of Sophia, she was the most delightful creature in the world; and from the day that Sophia de Pontis, in the arms of her happy lover, became the most beautiful of women, Ursula ought to be proclaimed the most handsome of maids.

Although a prisoner, I had no other inquietude than what was necessarily excited by the presence of so interesting a beauty. Although very much fatigued, I no longer experienced the want of sleep; and, then, would it have become thee to sleep? Here, Faublas, the gallant companion of Rosambert, the docile pupil of Madame de B***, here was an opportunity of proving thyself worthy thy masters. The triumph may appear difficult to thee, but the field is open, and I see that the prize which chance proposes at this moment to your eloquence, is worthy thy best efforts; for what greater excitement canst thou need than a charming girl and liberty? If ever seduction was excusable, most assuredly this is the case.

Let the curious bishop who shall devoutly peruse this wicked book when alone by his fireside, and if he possesses as warm an imagination as its young author, compose what ought to fill the next six pages; but take care of the censorship, for they will not suffer everything to be printed.<29>

* * * * *

I now proceeded to tie Ursula's pretty legs together, and to bind her hands with the bonds which bound my own, I prepared with regret the handkerchief which was to cover her mouth.

"One moment," she said, "one moment more. I wish to repeat to you your last instructions, which you must take care to remember. Guided by the feeble light of this lamp, you will enter the subterraneous passage, which we came through. After a few steps you will turn to the left, and presently arrive at the trap-door we had so much trouble in lifting up: close by there, under a shed in the little court, you will find the gardener's ladder; finally, with this key you will open the garden gate, which you know, and may heaven preserve you from all danger. But stop, I have still forgot one necessary precaution; I forgot it, because it only related to myself, that it may appear less doubtful, as to force being employed in effecting our escape, I wish you to drop one of the two pistols, which the marshals have so fortunately left you. Now begone, my angel, it is already late. Adieu, divine young man; thy words are sweeter than the honey of the bee; the fire of thine eye has pierced my heart; and my soul reposes in thine. Cover my face, and make haste to quit this place."

It was with difficulty that I obeyed her, but I was obliged to decide. I tied a handkerchief over her beautiful mouth, and arranged everything in such order that they might think the face of the poor nun had been enveloped in this manner to prevent her cries from being heard. Having done this, instead of wasting the time in useless thanks, I quitted my liberatrix, tolerably easy as to her fate, whatever might happen, but still full of anxiety on my account. Judge what was my joy, when, after I had passed through the vault, got out at the trap door, crossed the little court, opened the gate, I found myself in a garden which was so familiar to me, and, no doubt, is fresh in the memory of the reader. I placed the ladder against that part of the wall which Derneval and myself had so often scaled together; and on the other side was the street by which I reckoned to escape. There was the pavilion and the covered walk; my heart palpitated, and my eyes were filled with tears. I again beheld the cherished spot where my Sophia used to sigh. What feelings did I experience? A religious awe and a sacred veneration, mingled with the most tender considerations of these places, so full of the reminiscences of our amours. I thought of the day when I sung my rondeau; the spot where she fainted, and the bench to which I carried her. Upon that bench where she used to sit in her hours of recreation, that we might see each other through the blinds of my pavilion. Near there was the place where we met of an evening, and in mutual embraces mingled both our sighs and our tears. Further on—yes, there it is! I saluted with an exclamation of gratitude the propitious chestnut tree, that tree consecrated by her last struggles, and my triumph! I kissed its tutelary branches, and cut my cypher and that of my wife on its trunk. Of my wife! Ah! We were then lovers, and were united—we are now married, and languish apart! I fly to her. Great God! The day begins to break, and if I am discovered here, I am lost.

I ran to my ladder, which I mounted with difficulty, on account of the length of the gown with which Ursula desired I would remain muffled up. Nevertheless, I was already on the coping of the wall; I perceived a party of patrol marching up and down, and came back precipitately, very much embarrassed to know by what means I was to get out. I could not think of going to my old landlord of the pavilion, who knew me too well, and I knew not who inhabited the house which was next to his; but whoever was the proprietor, no sojourn could be more dangerous than my present: I determined, therefore, to plant my ladder against the wall which led to the last-mentioned premises.

In order to make my perilous excursion with greater facility, I was going to divest myself of my cumbrous gown, which impeded all 'my motions; but I heard a slight noise, and was alarmed: instead of losing time to undress myself, I climbed up

as quick as possible, and striding the coping, I drew up the ladder to plant it on the other side. At the moment I had it up in the air, I thought I perceived someone at the gate through which I had passed into the garden. My alarm increased, my hand shook, and the ladder slipped from me. Reflect on me in that inconvenient equipage, astride on a high wall. Happily, I was not frightened at a leap of ten feet, and having no time to deliberate, I precipitated myself down.

At the noise of the double fall of myself and the ladder, a young girl came from behind some shrubs, where she had hid herself. At first she was coming directly up to me, but suddenly stopped, as if she was as much embarrassed as surprised; and she covered her face with her hands before I was near enough to her to distinguish her features. I went up to her, told her she had nothing to fear, and begged her assistance. I kissed alternately her two pretty hands, which I wished to remove, in order to see her face, which was apparently pretty.

"A nun!" exclaimed a voice; "it is a man disguised thus. Ah! You scoundrel! I will teach you to come and court my mistress."

As I turned round to see from whence came this threatening voice, I felt a shower of blows on my shoulders. Without respect for my gown, they were regaling me with some strokes of a stick. I had received several before I had time to pull out my pistol; but I will leave you to judge whether my honour, thus involuntarily outraged, was not sufficiently revenged by the reparation I obtained from my abrupt aggressors.

There were three of them. Each of whom suspended his blows, and recoiled some steps backwards, when I produced the redoubtable instrument with which I was armed. The firmest of my adversaries, which I noticed was scarcely fourteen or fifteen years old, I recognised to be one of those impudent grooms, who, when mounted majestically on the top of a lofty carriage, amuse themselves by making grimaces at, and insulting those who pass on foot, and are splashed by the wheels. I gave but a glance at the second; he was one of those strapping, insolent and idle scoundrels that luxury has taken from the plough's tail, and paid for playing at cards, for sleeping in antechambers, swearing, and drinking, mocking their masters in the kitchens, and playing with the maids in the garrets. The third attracted all my attention; his attire was at the same time simple and elegant, decent and pretty; he had an air of grace and nobility in his manners, and there was something imposing about him, even in his terror. I deemed him the master of the other two.

"Monsieur," I said, "if you dare to take a step; if you make only a sign, if your servants attempt the least resistance, I shall fire upon you. Do me the favour to answer me: are you a gentleman?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Your name?"

"The Vicomte de Valbrun."

"Monsieur, I shall not tell you my name, but you shall know that I am your equal. Do you think this adventure, the beginning of which is so disagreeable for me, will be terminated comfortably for yourself? It is probable that I am not the person you took me for, but it is I who have received so unworthy an outrage. Monsieur cannot be ignorant that offended honour calls for blood. Unfortunately I am pressed for time, and have but one pistol, nevertheless we will, if you please, settle our

differences without leaving this spot, but first of all I beg you will send away your footman and your jockey."

M. de Valbrun made a sign, and the two servants retired. I immediately presented my closed hand to him: "I hold some pieces of money," I said: "Odd or even. If you guess right you are to fire at me: if you guess wrong, Vicomte, I declare you are a dead man." *Even* he said; I opened my hand, and he was correct.

"Adieu, my father and my Sophia! Adieu, forever,—"

M. de Valbrun, in taking the pistol which I presented to him, exclaimed, "No, Monsieur, no; you shall again see your father and your Sophia!" He discharged the pistol in the air, and fell down at my knees: "Astonishing young man," he continued, "what nobleness of mind, what intrepidity; I should have been inexcusable if I had voluntarily insulted you: consider that my fault was accidental, and deign to pardon me." I wanted him to rise. "Monsieur," he replied, "I will not quit this posture until you have assured me of your forgiveness."

"You ask my pardon, Vicomte, when you have given me my life! Believe me I retain no resentment, but shall be charmed to obtain your friendship."

"To whom have I the honour of speaking?"

"I cannot tell you, I cannot make myself known till under more happy circumstances than I am in at this moment; will you permit me to retire?"

"What! In the garb of a nun? Go into my apartments, I will order you some clothes; it will be but an affair of a moment."

Indeed it was impossible for me to have gone out in the state in which I found myself, therefore I accepted the Vicomte's offers.

The young woman who had occasioned all this disorder, still remained at a distance without saying a word. M. de Valbrun called, and she approached with her hand remaining over her face. "What modesty!" said the Vicomte, "how interesting it is! I am no longer the dupe of that affectation, and do not choose to have a rival in my footman. Since it is this fine gentleman who pleases you, let him pay you; from this moment we separate, Justine."

At this name, which sounded so sweetly in my ears, I interrupted M. de Valbrun.

"Is she called Justine? It is very singular. Will you permit me, M. de Vicomte, to remove my doubts. He assured me that I should do him a favour. I approached the young girl, put aside her hands, and discovered her to be the pretty little Abigail whose remembrance had sometimes given me uneasiness.

FAUBLAS. What, is it you, my dear?

JUSTINE. Yes, Monsieur de Faublas, it is I.

THE VICOMTE DE VALBRUN. M. de Faublas! He is handsome, noble, valiant and generous. He thought he was on the point of death, and named Sophia! I have a hundred times wished to meet with him. (He came up to me and took my hand.) Brave and gentle Chevalier, you justify in every respect your brilliant reputation. I am not astonished that a charming woman should have risked her fame for you. But tell me, how have you come here? How, after the noise of that unfortunate duel, dare you appear in the capital? It must be some powerful interest

that has drawn you here. Place your confidence in me, Chevalier, and look upon the Vicomte de Valbrun as your most devoted friend. But, first of all, where are you going?

FAUBLAS. To the Hôtel de l'Empereur, Rue de Grenelle.

THE VICOMTE. A public hôtel, and in the most frequented quarter of Paris! Have a care, for you are well known there, and must not show yourself by daylight. You cannot stir twenty steps without being arrested.

The Vicomte, perhaps, was right; but I only thought of hastening the moment of my reunion with Sophia. I insisted on leaving him; "Well! Be it so," he said, "but permit me at least to see if the coast is clear, while you put on some clothes. Justine, conduct Monsieur to my dressing-room, open my wardrobe, and see that he wants nothing."

As soon as the Vicomte was gone, I asked Justine what was her precise employment in the place where I found her. She stammered, and made an evasive answer. "I understand you," I said; "in this temple of pleasure, you are the idol that is worshipped: I assure you, Mademoiselle, that I think your charms deserve it."

"M. de Faublas is full of compliments."

"How is it that your fortune has improved so much in so short a time?"

"The adventure of Madame the Marchioness procured me some degree of reputation; and of all those who paid their court to me, M. de Valbrun seemed the most amiable. And you have already been playing him some queer tricks."

"I! Not at all, I assure you: it is only his jealousy."

"But the valet? For shame! Can you think I would let a creature like him—"

"But what brought you so early into the garden?"

"To take the air, merely for a walk. Besides, if M. de Valbrun is angry, so much the worse for him, I shall have no difficulty in finding another place."

"Yes, as a kept mistress, I suppose you mean?"

"What! Would you have me be a servant all my life-time? I prefer being the mistress of a nobleman."

"But you are quite forgetful of our amours."

"Oh! No, she replied," in an affectionate tone, "I am delighted at your return; and enchanted with this meeting. M. de Faublas may always be sure of being loved, every time it pleases him, and I shall never show myself at all interested in any concerns without him."

"Very prettily spoken, but I have some doubts. Has La Jeunesse ceased to officiate?"

"Do not speak of him."

"Yes, let us speak of him, and tell no stories. Recollect, he was to marry you. Have you inhumanly sacrificed your intended?"

"Surely," she said, "I would not marry any but persons of quality."

I was about to reply, when M. de Valbrun entered. "I would not advise you to go out, he said, the street is certainly guarded. I have seen a party patroling in the neighbourhood, and a number of ill-looking fellows lurking about. You had better spend the day here. I will go out and assemble a few friends, and in the middle of the night I will return. If you will do me a real service, you will accept in my house an asylum which shall not be violated. You, Justine, in my absence, do the honours of the house; treat Monsieur as you treat myself, and I forgive you, on his account, your morning walks. I will leave my jockey, and La Jeunesse at home, to wait upon you."

"Ha! Monsieur, was that strapping fellow who accompanied you in the garden, La Jeunesse!"

"Do you know him?"

"Yes, if he formerly lived with the Marquis de B***. Pray, Justine, is it the same?"

"Yes, Monsieur de Faublas, a steady fellow; an excellent servant."

"It was you, I suppose, who recommended him to the Vicomte?"

"Yes, Monsieur de Faublas."

"'Twas good, my dear, very good, you made him a valuable present."

The Vicomte, when bidding me adieu, desired me to barricade all the doors, and gave orders that they should be opened to no one.

As soon as we were alone, Justine asked me timidly how I meant to amuse myself during the morning. "I would willingly breakfast, my dear, had I not now a great need of sleep. Let me go to bed, and wake me when dinner is ready."

She turned pale, sighed, almost cried, and, in a pitiful tone, said: "You are, then, angry with me?"

"No, my dear, I am not angry, but I have much need of repose." She sighed again, and taking me by the hand, conducted me to a convenient bedroom, elegantly fitted up, and gay as the boudoir of Madame de B***. I also sighed myself at this moment, but it was not the result of any present desire, it was a reminiscence. Justine remained with me, looked at me a great deal, and appeared full of thought. I was obliged to ask her to retire two or three times before she obeyed me. When she went out, she gave me so painful and cutting a glance, that it convinced me of the poor girl's disappointment and mortification more than if she had uttered a thousand reproaches.

I had not been long in bed when they brought me a cup of chocolate. Sensible of this attention from the mistress of the house, I thought of thanking her in person, when I saw her enter the chamber, covered only with a slight gauze dress. Already as voluptuous as a lady of quality, and less delicate in the refinement of her pleasures, she ordered the shutters to be closed, so that not a ray of light should pierce through. The curtains of yellow taffeta were let down, wax candles were in the girandoles, and the incense vase was kindled.

All this was done without their deigning to make a single answer to my questions. As soon as the servant was gone, Justine told me her first duty was to obey the orders of M. le Vicomte, and her most anxious wish was to make her peace with the Chevalier. Having said this she sprang towards me quicker than lightning, and

lavished on me the most flattering caresses. In less than a moment I had forgot her affairs with La Jeunesse, and—fear nothing, my charming wife, for I will not mention your revered name near one so contemptible.

I think I hear the reader murmuring, and detailing the variety of motives I had to resist all these luxurious fascinations; but you do not speak of the means. To your hundred thousand reasons, I oppose but one, the enterprising Justine had me in her bed. If it is true that you would not yield to temptations so close and so pressing, tell me how you would avoid it.

Peut-etre come je fis, helas ! vous laissez echapper l'occasion, apres avoir multiplié d'inutiles efforts pour la saizir. Quelle injure je fis a tes appas qui le méritaient plus que jamais, jolie petite Justine! et assurement ce ne fut pas ta faute: tu te montras complaisante, patient, impresse, autant que tu me trouvas faible languisant et malheureux. Pour se voir reduit à cet exees d'abbattement qui faisait alors ma honte et le desespoir de Justine, il faudrait avoir comme moi couru la poste pendant trente six heures, cahoté dans une mechant voiture, tormenté de mille inquietudes, nourri seulment de bouillon ; il faudrait surtout avoir soutenu durant toute la nuit suivante une entretien tres vif avec une nonne charmante—et Bavarde, bavarde comme l'on est au cloitre en pareil cas!

Ah ! dit enfin la pauvre enfant, d'un ton qui marquait sa confusion et sa surprise, "Ah," Monsieur de Faublas, "que je vous trouve changé!" Il me parut que si cette exclamation, echappée la tendre veracite de Justine, renfermait, l'amere critique du present, elle offrait aussi, dans son double sense, l'obligeant eloge du passe , mais, comme je me sentais aussi peu capable de meriter le compliment que de me justifier du reproche, je pris le sage parti de m'endormir sans observations preparatoires.

Justine me laissa tranquilment reposer bien convaincue apparemment que, si elle prenait la peine de me reveiller, ce serait tres gratument pour elle. Cependant elle demeura constamment pres de moi, puisqu' en me reveillant, je la sentis a mes cotes, je ne la vis pas, car les bougies etaient eteintes: il y avait vraisemblement longtemps que je dormais. Il me sembla qu'il etait temps de diner. Je sentais le vif aguillon d'une faim gloutonne; mon premier mot exprima mon premier desire. Elle se preparait de me quitter, quand je me supris quelque velleite de reparer mes torts enverse elle; je crus meme qu'il fallait commencer par-la, et je lui fis part de ce seconde reflection qui me parut lui etre plus agreable que la premiere. Elle accueillit ma proposition avec une petulance qui ne lui etait pas ordinaire; ce qui mi fit presumer que sans doute elle imaginait qu'il n'y avait pas de temps a perdre. Quelque diligence qu'elle fit pourtant, elle ne se pressa pas encore assez; il etait decide qu'apres avoir essentiellement manque a tout le beau sexe des petit-maisons, dans la personne d'une de plus gentilles creatures qui jamais s'y fut trouvee, je me verrais contraint de quitter ma dessolée compagne, avant d' avoir pu retablir sa reputation et la mienne a la fois compromises.

[Perhaps just as I did, alas, you too could let the opportunity slip away, after many futile attempts to seize it. What an insult I did to your charms, which were more deserving than ever, pretty little Justine! And surely it was not your fault: you showed yourself accommodating, patient, impressed, as much as you found me weak, languid and unhappy. To see oneself reduced to the condition which then caused my shame and Justine's despair, one would have to have, like me, travelled post-haste for thirty-six hours, jolted in a nasty carriage, tormented by a thousand anxieties, fed only on broth; one would have to have sustained throughout the following night a very lively

conversation with a charming and talkative nun, chattering as one does in the cloister in such a case!

"Ah!" said the poor child at last, in a tone that showed her confusion and surprise, "Ah! Monsieur de Faublas, how changed I find you!" It seemed to me that if this exclamation, which escaped Justine's tender veracity, contained the bitter criticism of the present, it also offered, in its double meaning, the obliging praise of the past. But, as I felt as little capable of deserving the compliment as of justifying myself from the reproach, I wisely decided to fall asleep without preparatory remarks. Justine let me rest peacefully, apparently convinced that if she waited till I woke, it would be very gratifying for her. However, she remained constantly near me, since when I woke, I felt her at my side, I did not see her, because the candles were out: I had probably been asleep for a long time. It seemed to me that it was time for dinner. I felt the sharp sting of a gluttonous hunger; my first word expressed my first desire. She was preparing to leave me, when I felt an inclination to repair my wrongs towards her; I even thought that it was necessary to begin with that, and I shared with her this second reflection which seemed to me to be more agreeable to her than the first. She received my proposal with a petulance which was not usual for her; which made me presume that she doubtless imagined that there was no time to lose. However diligent she was, she still did not hurry enough; It was decided that after having essentially failed the whole fair sex of the *houses of pleasure*, in the person of one of the nicest creatures that had ever been found there, I would see myself forced to leave my desolate companion, before having been able to re-establish her reputation and mine, both compromised.]

At the very moment when this attentive girl so worthy of recompense was about to receive the price of her generous cares, I was much alarmed by a great noise at the street door; they continued to knock exceeding loud, and La Jeunesse rushed into my bedroom, to tell me that they demanded to enter in the name of the king.

"Go, my dear," I said to Justine, "run and see that the door is not opened, until I have time to escape."

"Escape! Where?"

"I know not, but keep the door shut."

"Stop, fly to the garden; I will send you a ladder, scale the wall on the right, and if our neighbour, the devotee, Madame Desglins, is tempted to receive you as well as I have done, endeavour to recompense her better."

"Hear me, Justine."

"Well?"

"Try to inform Madame de B*** that I am in Paris. I know not what will become of me, that is no matter, let her know I am in Paris, and that you have seen me."

During this short dialogue they brought me a light, I immediately seized the most essential part of male attire, but which good manners prevent me from naming, and which I shall call, if you will permit me, the *necessary garment*. As I was preparing to put it on, I heard the noise redoubled, and expected every moment that the door would be opened by force.

I had not time to put on the clothes which Justine had prepared for me; therefore, seizing M. de Valbrun's sword, which I brandished in one hand, and

carrying the necessary garment instead of a buckler in the other, I rushed downstairs, crossed the courtyard, and flew to the bottom of the garden.

La Jeunesse followed me with a ladder, planted it, and I mounted. At this moment I saw several men enter the courtyard, with flambeaux in their hands. I found I had no time to lose, and without considering the ground I was to come upon, which, moreover, I could not perceive, on account of the darkness of the night, I leapt boldly from the wall into the adjoining premises, and received but a slight bruise on my leg.

It is true, I found myself on a soft sandy place, but I conceived that it was at least ten o'clock at night; I was completely enveloped in darkness, in a strange garden, with no covering but my shirt, which was a poor defence against the wind, which blew with violence; I was tormented with a thousand anxieties, and perishing with cold! But why should I lose my courage? At Paris, as elsewhere, there is no condition so desperate but a wretch may be extricated from it by the aid of money; and why not a young man of family, when he has a purse full of gold, and a sword in his hand? Come on, then, Faublas, and examine the house which thou seest a few steps from this basin, into which thou wert so near tumbling.

I advanced with caution, and rapped gently at the door; which was at length opened to me; and, as I saw no light, I entered with confidence.

"Is it you, Chevalier?" whispered a female. I immediately disguised my voice, and speaking as softly as possible, and in a tone as mysterious as her own, I answered that it was me. She put her hand out, which accidentally came in contact with the hilt of my sword.

"You have your sword in your hand"

"Yes."

"Were you pursued?"

"Yes."

"Did you enter through the breach?"

"Yes,"

"Do not tell my mistress so; it will frighten her."

"Where is she?"

"Who? my mistress?"

"Yes."

"You know very well, she is in bed. You can spend the night together, for my master is gone to Versailles, to deliver a woman of quality, and will not return till morning."

"Very good; lead me to her."

"You know where she is."

"But I am afraid; my head is giddy; lead me there, take hold of my hand."

I had scarcely taken four steps, when the *fille de chambre*, opening a second door, said: "He is come, Madame.

The mistress of the house said: "You come very late my dear Flourvac."

"It was impossible for me to come sooner."

"Did they detain you?"

"Yes. Very well; but where are you?"

"I am coming."

"What hinders you?"

"I am undressing."

You know I had no need to undress, as I have already stated my left hand to contain my only garment, but you can easily perceive it was necessary for me to proceed with caution and gentleness in a strange room where, fortunately for me, there was no light. At length, having reached the foot of the bed, I placed my necessary garment on the ground with my sword, then lifting the bed clothes fell into the arms of the unknown, who immediately began to give me the most tender kisses.

"Oh! How cold you are," she said."

"It freezes so hard!"

"My dear Chevalier—My sweet friend—will not the rigour of the season prevent your coming here often?"

"Certainly not."

"Every time Monsieur Desglins sleeps out?"

"Yes."

"Bathile shall always send you word as she did today."

"Very good."

"Was it not ingeniously contrived, to light the little lamp in the window."

"Yes."

"And that part of the wall which I ordered to be pulled down."

"Yes, I passed through the breach."

"And you may pass through it again, for our neighbours the magnetisers will not repair it this winter."

"Are you not happy that you came to lodge with them?"

"Very happy. You know, my dear Flourvac, that my husband is gone to Versailles?"

"Yes."

"We can, therefore, pass the whole night together."

"So much the better."

"I was sure you would be glad of it, my dear Chevalier!"

"Oh, my dear friend!"

"You will always love me, Flourvac?"

"Most tenderly."

"And I confess to you, my angel, that I was much vexed this afternoon."

"Why?"

"Because you did not meet me at church."

"It was impossible."

"But this morning I was very well pleased; and you?"

"Quite ravished! But did not the mass seem long to you?"

"Oh! No! What pleasure I felt in looking at you!"

"And I!"

"You did right to put your chair beside mine; but you did wrong in speaking to me."

"Why so?"

"What will all the ladies who know me and respect me say, on seeing me talking in church with a young officer? You must not meet me any more, my love."

"Why not?"

"Because it is not right. My conscience reproaches me."

Good!"

"To make love even in the house of God."

"It is true."

"And a military man too!"

"And why not?"

"If you were an Abbé it would be more excusable! *Apropos*, my dear angel, have you executed my commission?"

"What commission?"

"Have you forgotten it? What! You know I am always ill during the fast of Lent."

"Well?"

"What, Flourvac, do you not remember that I begged you to consult—"

"Oh! Yes, the physician."

"No such thing, a priest."

"Yes, I remember now"

"To demand of him permission—"

"He has granted it to you."

"To me?"

"To whom then?"

"Did you mention my name?"

"No; one of my relations."

"Ah, that was right; and so, my dear, I shall be able to eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays."

"Yes."

"Ah, how happy I am! How much I am obliged to you."

The impassioned kiss which the devotee now printed on my lips, was more fervent than any she had yet given me. I had received several others before, but was occupied with the care of sustaining a conversation in which I was obliged to confine myself to answer, in simple monosyllables, the numerous questions which the deceived unknown multiplied upon me. In the meanwhile, her charms, although still defended by a modest night gown, began to act most powerfully upon my very susceptible frame; my blood began to circulate through my veins, and I found myself in the happy disposition which some moments before Justine would have profited by, if we had not been interrupted by such disagreeable intruders. I immediately began to prove my gratitude to the hospitable beauty, but I met with the most serious resistance.

"Be quiet; let me alone, Flourvac, you know our agreement. It was not so. No—no—I will not suffer it—I will not."

Greatly surprised at the strange caprice of this unaccountable woman, who had expected her lover to scale the walls in the most dreary winter's night, to come and sleep peaceably with her; I laid down by her side, and presently fell asleep. In the course of a little time I was awakened by her sobbing, and continuing my disguised voice, I he askedr what was the matter. "What is the matter," she replied; "why you are ungrateful, and love me no more! You forget our agreement: You remain motionless by my side: My embraces appear no more desirable to you, than if they were those of vulgar, immodest, and wicked women."

She said many other things, but I could not penetrate their meaning at length she explained herself very clearly, both by words and gestures, and taught me, perhaps what you will be surprised to learn. *Mes desirs avaient eté repoussés d'abord parceque j'avais malhonnetement exprimé mes desirs, parceque d'une main profane j'vais voulu soulever l'unique voile dont les pudiques attraits de cette beauté, toujours modeste devaient rester envelloppes. Il fallait, sans ecarter, sans deranger la fine toile artistement ouvert; il fallait le moins indecement et le mieux possible, embrasser de toutes les femmes la plus vive et la plus chaste en meme temps.* [My advances had been rejected at first because I had immodestly expressed my desires, because with a profane hand I had wanted to lift the nightdress in which the attractions of this beauty, always modest, must remain enveloped. It was necessary to do it, without removing, without disturbing the fine, artistically open cloth; it was necessary, to embrace, in the best and least indecent way, this woman, who was of all women both the most lively and the most chaste.]

And you, whom nature has only half-favoured you, who have a very fine head upon a very ordinary body, do not ridicule my Jansenist. If you had prudently employed the same means that she used, your husbands, perhaps, would not so soon have abandoned you, and your lovers remained longer faithful.

I must confess, nevertheless, that a woman should not resort to these means but when she has no other; and I acknowledge, for my own part, that I do not like them.

En vain la devotée, d'une voix entrecoupée, begayait dans mes bras ces mots inusié s, quoique expressifs: "Divins transports! bonheur des elus! joies du paradis!" Je ne partageais que mediocrement cette joie, ce bonheur, ces transports si vantes. Peu curieux de rechercher encore une demi-felicité, je reprends a coté de Madame Desglins une place que je suis presque fache d'avoir quitté.

[In vain the devoted one, in a broken voice, stammered in my arms these unusual, though expressive, words: "Divine transports! Happiness of the elect! Joys of paradise!" I shared only feebly in her joy, this happiness, these much-vaunted transports. Not very anxious to seek another half-happiness, I resumed beside Madame Desglins a place that I was almost sorry to have left.]

I was now only occupied in devising some clever lie, in order to obtain, without having the candles lighted or the servant called, something to satisfy my voracious appetite. But I might have saved myself the trouble of racking my invention, for it was decreed that I should go from there to get my supper.

"There is a noise!" she said: "What can it be? I hear a voice! It is like his! But that cannot be! Yet it is! Good God! Yes it is the voice of the Chevalier! My love!—How can this be! A stranger in my arms! Oh, I am undone!"

At the first noise that I heard, at the first word that she uttered, I jumped out of bed. I seized my necessary garment, and put it not as formerly over my left arm, but on its proper place. I took my sword, and guessed my way. I pushed a door which stood ajar, and I calculated that I ought to be in the place which the *fille de chambre*, who stood sentinel, first received me in. What confirmed me in this conjecture was, the noise I heard made by a man outside, who, in a great passion, kept repeating very distinctly: "Bathile, open the door." In the meanwhile, Madame Desglins came out of her bed-room, and called to me. Instead of replying to her I stood still and thought she would pass me without touching me. "Whoever you are," she said, at least hear what I have to say: "do not ruin me, but fly before the Chevalier sees you, and I will pardon you if you keep the affair a secret."

This was my intention: I reckoned to shoot out as soon as the door should be open; but the unfortunate devotee opened too slowly. After she had turned the key twice, and M. de Flourvac was pushing against one of the folding doors, Bathile, who was not yet in bed, was drawn hither by the noise, and appeared with a light in her hand. What a spectacle we presented to each other!

The scene occurred in a kind of dining-hall. Towards the end of it, and to the left of me, the unlucky *fille de chambre* surveyed us alternately with her large eyes, which she rolled about in astonishment. In the front of me, and on the step of the door which led into the garden, I perceived a young officer, who seemed panic-struck with what he beheld. In the intermediate space, Madame Desglins, overcome by the alarm, had sunk into a chair, and concealed her face; not so quickly, however, but I caught a sight of her features; and still entirely occupied with the object which concerned me most, and always incapable of dissimulation, I exclaimed: "Upon my honour, she is handsome!"

"Perfidious woman! Scrupulous devotee! So you must have several!" said the young officer in his rage.

I wished to speak, I wished to justify Madame Desglins; but the young man, perhaps too hasty, drew his sword, which was immediately met by my own. At the very first bout I discovered he was not equal to myself at the sword; I therefore

pressed him a little closer, and obliged him to retreat a few paces, and the garden became the theatre of our combat. As I wished, above everything, to gain ground, in order to secure a prompt retreat, I did not cease to advance on my adversary, who, astonished at being so vigorously pushed, still retreated. We arrived at the entrance of a walk which appeared spacious; and there I quitted him abruptly, and endeavoured to escape. My adversary, as courageous as he was unskilful, pursued me and the darkness not permitting me to run fast, he soon overtook me. I turned round, and our swords were again crossed, but my enemy's being wielded by too weak a hand, I gave it a blow which carried it ten paces distant. The two women ran out, and seized the vanquished one; I, the vanquisher, slipped behind the hedge, and escaped.

I ran by the wall, to search for the breach of which Madame Desglins had spoken to me; I found it at length, I passed through it, and behold me in the premises of her neighbours, the magnetisers!

As it is necessary to interest the compassionate reader, I ought not to omit a circumstance which then augmented the danger of my situation. You no doubt remember my complaining of the bitter piercing wind about a quarter of an hour back? It was now still more powerful; and, to add to my misfortune, it snowed fast and thick, and my shirt was but a poor defence against it. Have pity, fair ladies; have pity on a young man, who could be reproached with nothing but the excess of his love for you: think at what a time of night, and in what a costume he was reduced to take such painful promenades from garden to garden.

I found my progress in the yard of the magnetisers stopped by a gate, which was fast. I immediately began to rattle the gate with my sword. The noise which I made roused a dog, whose barking resounded through the neigbbouring building, and relieved me from my prison, where I might otherwise have remained until the morning, though not perhaps alive. A man ran out and opened the gate. "Oh, here is another of them!" he exclaimed: "How strangely he is dressed for winter: And then, that fine blade! Does he think to kill flies with it in the month of November? But what an odd whim to sleep standing, as if our ancestors had not invented beds to lie down on. Get you gone, Monsieur Somnambulist, get into your dormitory again, and leave a poor porter to take a little rest. There, go along with the others."

While I was considering about a reply, a woman came out and abused the porter, saying that I could not find the staircase without a candle, and should break my neck.

I mounted, at all events, and searched for some corner sufficiently convenient and solitary to repose my wearied limbs. I proceeded, until I arrived at the second storey, where, in a large hall, lighted by lanterns, I discovered long rows of beds, but none of them appeared to be empty. At last I discovered one which was unoccupied, and pulling off my necessary garment, I jumped instantly into it. I placed my sword and all my treasure under the bolster. I took my shirt off, as it was quite wet, and hung it on a chair, wiping my body with a corner of the bed-clothes. I felt myself more comfortable on my hard mattress, than in the superb bed of M. de Valbrun; so true is the vulgar adage, that pain begets pleasure. Yes; but frequently, when the moment of most poignant grief is past, a crowd of minor troubles attack you, and the pleasure is instantly destroyed. As soon as the warmth caused my blood to circulate, as soon as I could move my limbs without pain, mental anxieties succeeded the fatigues of the body, and I reflected with terror on the dangers which surrounded me, undoubtedly pursued without, and perhaps my life menaced within. I knew not to what kind of a

house my destiny had led me, nor what sort of people inhabited it; but how was I to remain there? or how get out? and, above all, how was I to satisfy my craving appetite? for, during the whole of the preceding day and night I had taken nothing but a cup of chocolate. Oh, my Sophia! Without doubt thy fate demands my tears! Thou groanest, separated from the object of thy tenderness; but, at least, thou knowest the prison in which thou languishest, and art not deprived of victuals and clothes. Thy unhappy husband is still more to be pitied! How can he preserve himself for thee without nourishment? How can he come to thee without linen, without clothes, and without shoes?

I remained a prey to these painful reflections, until several persons entered abruptly, and immediately surrounded my bed. What was I to do in this perilous situation? Since I had no means of flight, I determined to shut my eyes, and pretend to be in a profound sleep, of which luxury I was very far from tasting. Imagine to yourself the alarm I must have been in when, to examine me more minutely, they held a candle close to my eyes; and think what must be my astonishment when I heard four or five persons discoursing tranquilly, as follows:

"I do not know him."

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"Nor I," said a female voice; "but stop, I think I do recognise him. It is a newcomer."

"What, to-night?"

"Yes."

"So much the better.

"He has not a bad countenance. By no means."

"Indeed it is a very good one, but a little fatigued. That is not to be wondered at; have you prescribed the necessary medicines for him?"

"Yes," she replied.

"And the diet?"

"Undoubtedly.

"Is his sleep natural?"

"We have only to ask him."

"Yes, if he will tell us."

"Well, try him."

"My dear youth," said the female, "do you sleep well?"

"He does not answer."

"Put another question to him, Madame."

"Young man," she continued; "Why are you come here?"

"Come along, he will not speak a word."

Well, let us perform the operation on him, Madame."

"I think it will be proper."

"And I am of the same opinion.

"I agree perfectly with you."

At the word operation I shuddered, and a cold sweat came over me when I felt them lift the bedclothes. "Ah! Good God!" she exclaimed, throwing them back again, "He is quite naked!"

"He is quite naked," they repeated. "See, here is his shirt on this chair. It is all wet, as if it had been soaked in water!"

"So much the better, it shows he has perspired."

"It is the effect of a crisis. A very happy crisis. If it had not been for us, he would have had an inflammatory fever."

"Putrid."

"Or an apoplexy."

"Or a catalepsy."

"Or a palsy in the chest or a sciatica in the head."

"And he ran great risk!"

"He would have been lost!"

"He would certainly have been dead."

During more than a minute, and while I was beginning to take courage, they continued to repeat in chorus "He would have been dead."

One of them interrupted this dismal chorus, saying, "It is, nevertheless, to you, Madame, that the honour of this cure belongs."

"In truth, I believe it," she replied.

"Since it has gone on so well, why not begin again."

She replied: "Most willingly, but put a shirt on him."

After they had put on me a shirt which was brought immediately, they raised me in my bed, in such a position that I found my two feet, which at first hung down, supported on the rail of a chair, upon which sat the lady whom they begged to commence the operation on me. She immediately began by pressing my two legs between hers, and running her hand (which I found very familiar) over several parts of my body; and in a very delicate manner, rubbed her two thumbs against mine. Too prudent to testify how much this operation pleased me, I feigned to be still asleep.

"What a very obstinate sleep!" Exclaimed someone.

"Yes, 'tis like a lethargy," said a second. "So much the better, it will the more surely bring on the somnambulism. Let us try if he will speak now. You had better interrogate him Madame."

"Charming young man," she said, "does the magnetism act upon you?" I did not reply a word, but I thought the question almost impertinent. To ask if the

magnetism acted on me on me, whose imagination is so quickly on fire, and whose mood is so easily inflamed!

The waggish female who put these malignant questions to me, could not be ignorant of the effect of magnetism on me. With a single glance of her eye she perceived proofs, by no means equivocal, that it had taken effect; for all at once she I exclaimedn a tone of triumph to those around her: "Gentlemen, in eight days, or a little better, I will guarantee the radical cure of this young man. I will return and question him in about a quarter of an hour, and I will undertake that he will be then in a state of somnambulism, and will reply to me."

As soon as the physicians were retired from my bed, I opened my eyes to look at the young lady, who, before she left, seemed to squeeze my hand. Her voice was by no means strange to me, but I could not recollect where I had heard its sweet accents. Unfortunately for me the lady turned her back, but I could not help thinking even her elegant figure was familiar to me.

I kept my eye on her until they came to inform her that Madame Robin wished to see her. She ordered her to be shown up, and then turning to those who were about her, said: "Gentlemen, Madame Robin is an excellent lady, there is every reason to believe that it is she who sent us that fine turkey and truffles this evening, with which we shall regale ourselves tomorrow."

Alas! At a time when I would have been happy with a morsel of dry bread, they were talking of a turkey stuffed with truffles!

"Good evening to you, Madame Robin;" she said to the lady who entered.

The other replied: "Your most obedient, Madame le Blanc."

"You come, Madame Robin, to see your beloved daughter!"

"Yes, yes, Madame."

"Walk into my chamber."

This closet was in the front of my bed; they left the door open, I listened and heard: "Are you asleep, Mademoiselle Robin?"

She replied in a gentle and mysterious tone: "Yes."

"You speak, nevertheless?"

"Because I am a somnambulist."

"Who has initiated you?

"The prophetess, Madame Le Blanc, and the Doctor D'Avo."

"What is your complaint?"

"The dropsy."

"What must be the remedy?"

"A husband."

"A husband to cure the dropsy?" replied Madame Robin, the mother.

"Yes, Madame, a husband; the somnambulist is right."

"A husband in less than fifteen days," resumed Mademoiselle Robin; "for if I remain a maid any longer I am lost. A proper and capable husband; I know many who

only bear the name. None of your old beaux, thin, dry, infirm, grumbling fools and cripples."

"Peace, hussy!" said Madame Robin, "you must have what is chosen for you."

"Hold!" said Madame Le Blanc; "whatever the somnambulist says, we must hear and say nothing."

"These worthless wretches," continued the young lady, "have no other merit than to take a young girl without a dowry; they make a poor virgin tremble when they talk of marrying her. But a young man of seven and twenty, with brown hair, fair skin, black eyes, round face, vermilion lips, fresh complexion, five feet seven inches high, well-made, active, and lively!"

"Ah!" said Madame Robin, "it is the exact portrait of our neighbour Killbullock's son, who is a poor devil. Ah! My child, if I had but a fortune to establish you!"

A noise was heard, and all at once Madame Le Blanc said: "Silence! The God of Magnetism has possessed me, and I feel inspired with his holy flame! I read the past, the present, and the future! Silence! I see in the past, that Madame Robin has sent us this evening a turkey stuffed with truffles."

"It is true," she replied.

"Peace, then, Madame. I see then, that within a fortnight, you wished to marry your daughter to some decrepit old fop."

"A very amiable man, nevertheless"

"Peace, then, Madame Robin. I see that your daughter has fixed her eye upon the young Killbullock, five feet seven inches, well-made, active and lively."

"Yes, but so poor!"

"So poor! Peace, Madame I see in the present, that Madame Robin conceals, in the bottom of her drawers, five hundred double—"

"My, God! Do not finish!"

"Five hundred double Louis in twenty bags."

"Why have you let it out?"

"Peace, then, Madame Robin. I see in the future, that if Madame Robin, does not, within a fortnight, dispose of eight bags—"

"Eight bags!"

"Peace, Madame Robin, of eight at least, for the establishment of her daughter with the son of her neighbour Killbullock; I see—the future frightens me! Poor Madame Robin! Poor Mademoiselle Robin, what an unfortunate couple! Oh, how I pity you!They will open the drawers of the mother, and break the heart of her daughter, they will steal the money of the mother, and ravish the virginity of the daughter; the mother will die of grief at being robbed; and the daughter will go into some foreign country to be delivered of a boy!"

"Ah!" cried Madame Robin, seized with terror, "I will marry her; I will marry her next week, she shall espouse the rascal Killbullock."

Madame Robin having thus made her determination, retired, and one of the doctors attended her politely to the door.

What a scene was I thus accidentally rendered the witness of! On one side what a compound of impudence, extravagance, and charlatanism; and what ignorance and imbecility on the other! It is true, then, that men are but great children.

I went on moralising to myself, but, as a starving man is not the most rigorous casuist, I began to blame myself for not turning their knavery to my own account. Why had I not replied to their interrogatories? It was very hard to escape from the fury of the elements to die of hunger in an hospital, instead of making use of my ingenuity and address, in order to procure me a repast, which was so necessary, and, perhaps, also an agreeable night. It must be agreed that the obliging prophetess assisted me wonderfully in the execution of this laudable project. I am certain that Madame Robin could scarcely be at the bottom of the staircase, when Madame Le Blanc told the doctors to return to my bed. I closed my eyes at their approach, and the prophetess commanded silence; and, affecting an imposing and oracular style, said:

"Some Superior Being transports me above the skies! I soar in the immensity of space! I can take in the universe at a glance! My knowledge embraces the past, the present, and the future! I see in the past that the young man that lies here has always been inclined to libertinism and good company; that, not content with having, at the same time, a beautiful lady and a pretty girl, he has even dared to chouse<4> the Baron, his honoured father, out of a most amiable nymph. I behold in the present that this spoiled child is called *Blasfau*. I divine, as to the future, that he will not be long ill, and that he will presently be in a state of somnambulism, and reply to my questions."

At the sound of my real name, which the prophetess disguised by the simple transposition of the two syllables of which it was composed; on hearing the history of my amours, of which she made an abridgment: and, above all, the little secret anecdote which she so malignantly brought to my recollection, I at length recognised do you know who? No; Well! I will not tell you yet. I wish you in the first place to hear the answers I made to the questions of Madame Le Blanc.

"Charming young man! Are you asleep?"

"Yes, but I speak because I am in a state of somnambulism."

"Who initiated you?"

"The most amiable of women, she whose pretty hand I hold, the prophetess"

"What is your malady?"

"Excessive fatigue and uneasiness in the morning, and in the evening a most voracious appetite."

"What must we do to you?"

"Give me, as soon as possible, a bottle of champagne, and some turkey stuffed with truffles."

"Ha! Ha!"

"And that in the apartment of the prophetess, whom I beg to grant me a private interview."

"Ha! Ha!"

"I will reveal to her several things very essential to the propagation of Magnetism."

"Ha! Ha"

XV.

O Venus! Venus! It was thy will that, for the amusement of the fair sex, and of my long minority, there should be united in Faublas, at the age of seventeen, many qualities considered as incompatible. With the pretty face of a young girl, thou gavest me the complete vigour of a man; thou gavest me gentility and spirit; sprightliness and the graces; the wit of the day, and the eloquence of the moment; the address which gives birth to occasion, the patience which watches for it, the boldness which faces it; a thousand various charms, of which one more foolish would have been more proud, and, perhaps, made less use: thou knowest how my conduct has always proved nq gratitude, how dear thy worship is to me, how upon thy adored altars have I been prodigal of sacrifices. Yet, if thou hast reserved me for labours more than human; if taking pleasure to multiply temptations and obstacles upon my road, thou wilt that from the convent of the Faubourg Saint Marceau to the convent of the Faubourg Saint Germain, I am stopped from house to house, and without relaxation, forced to choose there between a passing infidelity, or an eternal separation; goddess, I declare to thee, that I am ready, that nothing shall astound me; that, were I to perish, I would try to go to Sophia: but, oh! be just as thou art beautiful, in proportion to the means and the difficulties, and to the extreme labours of thy favourite; thou hast not yet sufficiently endowed him: Venus, thou knowest it; he does not require either the perishable charms of your effeminate hunter,<30> or the conjugal efforts of thy lame blacksmith<31>; it is needful that he who should run my brilliant career, possess the prodigious powers of your immortal lover<32>, or the fabulous talents of the husband of fifty sisters.<33>

But no, it is not this which Faublas asks of you, oh, beneficent divinity! You are not only the Queen of Pleasure, they call you also the Mother of Love! A young married couple, while they are lovers, cannot appear unworthy of your protection. From the height of the empyrean, look down without jealousy on a mortal beautiful as yourself; she sighs, she prays to you, she expects me. Honour her knight with a favourable look, come to my succour, overrule my dangers, disperse my enemies, conduct me to the desired asylum; deign to re-unite me to the more dear half of myself! Then I will burn, under your auspices, a delectable and pure incense; then there will be made to you, in heartfelt thanks, a delicious sacrifice, equally worthy of the minister, of the victim, and of the idol.

Whilst I made this poetic invocation, the prophetess finished her circuit in the dormitory; she descended to her own apartments, and sent to seek me; it is useless to say that I put on the necessary garment, and that I left my sword.

"Ah, good evening, my amiable son-in-law!"

"Good evening, my charming mother-in-law!"

"Faublas, tell me then by what chance—"

"Relate to me, Coralie, by what metamorphosis—"

"Monsieur, I am married."

"I am married, Madame."

"But this event makes me fear for the honour of M. Le Blanc."

"But, oh, my Sophia! I fear much I shall be conquered by opportunity."

"Hold, my pretty boy, fortunately thou arrivest *apropos*, for a husband is a foolish thing, and I am in want of a lover."

"Hold, Coralie, I find thee again very happily, for the meeting a pretty woman can never displease me; and besides, I want an asylum, a dress, and a supper."

Madame Le Blanc made her attendants give me a nightgown, and commanded them to wait on me. They brought me the so-much needed wine, and the food I was so impatient for: I drank with the eagerness of the most sober musician, who, after playing three hours by the clock, without ceasing, in some fine house, has found, till then, no leisure moment for refreshment. I ate with the persevering avidity of some hungry author, who admitted regularly on a Monday to the table of some fat bookseller, makes it last him for the rest of the week. Whilst I employed my time thus in the most useful manner, Coralie told me her history in a few words.

"Some days after the comic catastrophe which deprived me at the same time of both father and son, a grave doctor was brought to my house. M. Le Blanc paid court to me, fell seriously in love, and offered me his hand; I could not refuse, because he is rich. I married him, Therefore—"

"Thou art married to him!"

"Yes, I married him at the church! And I will tell thee something even more strange; I have been faithful to him for these three months; but it begins to be unpleasant to me; oh, I own it, I am not made to be the monthly routine of old men."

"Madame, in this case, I fear very much I am not come to your house quite so *apropos* as you did me the honour to make me believe."

"Good! Are you in want of compliments? Do not be so modest. Chevalier, to return to M. Le Blanc, I married him. He brought me into this house, which I find full of imaginary sick persons and quack-doctors. My husband, who gets richer every day by magnetism, teaches me the famous doctrine, which I practice very well, because it amuses me. Thou knowest, my friend, that I was born a laugher, and that I am always diverted at the expense of those I deceive. Besides, they raise me upon trestles, and somnambulism is always a public comedy. Upon my honour, as to marriage, my new condition does not displease me. Coralie dances no more, but she magnetises; she foretells instead of declaiming; thou seest that there always remains a part for me to act, and that, in fact, I have only changed the theatre."

"Very well, Coralie; but now that I have supped, let us talk seriously: you will not send me back to the dormitory?"

"Certainly not."

"Thou consentest to pass the night with me, notwithstanding Hymen?"

"Notwithstanding Hymen! Say on his account. Chevalier, thou hast wit, and I am obliged to tell thee that he who pays and the husband are both alike; and then I have learnt somewhere, that one always has a taste for one's first trade. I have not forgotten mine, Faublas; I know too, that respectable women have, of late, become interlopers, and I assure thee, that none of them engage in it more willingly than myself, or for a more amiable gentleman than I now embrace."

I gave Madame Le Blanc her kiss, and resumed the conversation, which it had interrupted for a moment.

"Thy husband, where is he?"

"At Beauvais, on some family business."

"And your maid, will not she talk?"

"You are right; what a blockhead I am! We must entrust her with the secret."

At these words, she rang the bell; the servant came; the mistress said to her: "Hold! Here is a Louis d'or, which I give you, but it behoves you not to tell my husband that this gentleman has slept with me: for I shall prove that you told him a lie; I shall tear your eyes out, and turn you away; go."

After having pronounced, with the most majestic air, this truly heroic harangue, Madame Le Blanc got into her bed, where she soon received me.

Alas! It was useless: magnetism, always deceitful, did not keep its promise, and Venus, apparently, did not hear me. In vain, to bring the happy moment of which she had conceived the hope in the dormitory, Coralie exhausted all the resources of her old trade and of her new art; like Justine, she finished by making, in her despair, this bitter reproach to my heart:

"Ah! M. de Faublas, how changed I find you! Upon my honour," she added briskly, "I should not have prophesied this."

And I, who did not care to enter into the details of a very long justification, did with Madame Le Blanc what I had done with Mademoiselle de Valbrun; I slept without answering a word.

Now, fastidious critic, who complainest that this history contains no moral, see how sublime and profound a one this is, which flows from the depth of the subject itself! Admire with how much justice, with what inevitable fatality, the two most unworthy rivals of Sophia are found, one after the other, and in the same manner, precisely punished by the way in which they had offended.

Yet, as the first duty of an historian is to be faithful, should this work appear a little less moral, impute not to the famous doctrine a blame which does not belong to it. Let us say, for the honour of the science, that it was, more than anything, by the help of magnetism that at the break of day the prophetess obtained from her patient the first proof of convalescence. But also, since it was necessary to be rigorously exact, let it be added, that the female doctor, apparently restrained by the fear of compromising her art, dared not attempt to initiate me a second time.

It was nearly light in the morning when Madame Le Blanc made me put on a large black dress, which she had just chosen from the wardrobe of her husband. Before I determined what part there remained for me to take, it was needful to let M. de Valbrun know the asylum my good fortune had procured me. The commission was delicate; Coralie would execute it herself; but she had not been gone five minutes, when I saw her return. She entered abruptly, shut the door, bolted it, and with a frighted air, told me, that on going out, she had beard in the street the voices of a crowd of men; one of them, on taking hold of the knocker of the great gate, had said, this nun cannot be far off; it is necessary to search the neighebouring houses. You run to look over that of Commissary Chenon; thou, Griffart, guard the middle of the street, and these gentlemen will enter here with me; we have no want of permission, because it is a public house. Coralie, in giving me this dreadful news, had led me to a

secret staircase. "Chevalier," she said then, "you cannot go by the court, because the agents of the police are there already."

"They are there, Coralie?"

"Yes, my friend. While giving his orders, the life-guard knocked, my porter drew the cord, I had only time to fly here to tell you of your danger."

"But by what way then shall I escape?"

"By this, Faublas: mount to the top of this little staircase, climb on the roof, and I beg of you to take care not to break your neck."

"Do not be afraid."

Immediately I dart off, I mount, I arrive at the roof. I pass through the window, I leap over a gutter, and I walk with the timid precaution that the night and the irregularity of the way would naturally inspire me with. I had been some minutes, walking from precipice to precipice, when, in one of the gardens on which my sight fell, I discovered a man who, having seen me, gave the alarm. I hastened to seek an asylum in a little paltry room, which was only defended by a bad sash window, with paper panes instead of glass. There, upon some trusses of straw, a young man lay groaning, who, with a feeble voice, said to me: What are you come to do with me? What do you want with me? Always a victim of the unjust scorn of men, I have then vainly hoped to screen my last moments from their insulting pity! Answer, indiscreet stranger—answer—why dost thou come to augment, by thy presence, the horror of my last awful hour!"

"Unfortunate man! What do you say? I am far from wishing to augment your griefs. Oh, that I could but soften them—that I could but bring you some consolation!

"I will receive none. Leave me. I am too happy to die, if I can die without witness."

"You make me tremble! Have you a grief so shameful that you can avow it to nobody?"

"Yes—one shameful—cruel—insupportable—but a thousand times less so, than the humiliating avowal that thou in vain wouldst attempt to tear from me. Leave me."

As he spoke, a child, whom I had not perceived, which laid near him, awoke, held out its arms to me, and cried: "I am hungry."

"Why do you not give it something to eat?"

"Why!" answered the young man, "Why!" and, with a mournful tone, with that tone which pierces the heart, and tears the entrails, the child cried to me again; "I am hungry!"

"Ah! poor wretches! what poverty!"

"Poverty! Interrupted the young man; poverty! It is true that it can blast everything—everything—even virtue itself! Is it my fault if, thrown by chance of birth into the most indigent class, I have seen an infancy tormented with a thousand wants, and condemned to all privations? Is it my fault if, making afterwards useless effort to soften ungrateful fortune, I am only delivered over to labours badly paid, because they were painful; to enterprises vain, because they were honest; to dangers ignoble, because they were unfruitful; and, when at length I became elevated to the

bar, and believed a caereer open to me, at once useful and glorious, am I culpable for having encountered only compeers interested to impede the talent they were apprehensive of, only attorneys incapable of appreciating a merit which had not been boasted of; only friends in too low a situation to lend me ten Louis to purchase a *great cause*?<34> Am I culpable for having taken to myself a companion in misfortune, because I have felt the lively goad of that sensual appetite, which is the pleasure of the rich, and the want of the poor? Shall I be blamed because, flexible to the call of nature, and unpractised in that destructive act by which your fine ladies baulk her first object, my faithful wife gave me this child, by whom our poverty was so much augmented! Am I to be accused of spending too much for her sickness, who died soon of her malady, because she had no physicians? Alas if my life has been, in its miserable course, crossed by a thousand accidents, agitated by innumerable chagrins, devoted to torments of every species, who dares to say the fault is my own! Yet, I have seen myself the object of their derision, ridicule has pursued me, humiliations have been heaped upon me; it has been necessary to endure menace, and pocket affronts; I have been loaded with curses and opprobrium; all, in fine, have kept me at a distance, all have fled from my approach, as if my proximity infected them, as if I carried on my detested forehead the sign of public reprobation. Thou great God who has tried me so much; powerful being, who readest the hearts, thou knowest if ever my conduct has justified the scorn of men; thou knowest if I have not always done the best I could to make my poverty respectable."

"What! Has nobody succoured you?"

"Once only, impelled by extreme distress, determined by the peril of this infant, I did myself the violence to go and implore the assistance of a man who called himself my protector. If you knew with what a cruel tone he pitied me, with what barbarity he raised his voice, as he threw me his alms amidst a crowd of valets!

"Without doubt I have merited that they should treat me in this manner: I have suffered one to take the title of my protector! I have sought benevolence in the palace of a rich man; I have only found charity! I have soiled, by a baseness, a life hitherto irreproachable.

"Thou who art now listening to me, if nature has endowed thee with a strong soul, if thou hast preserved that pride of character which the consciousness of a pure life gives and justifies, thou wilt know that I could not, however pressing were my wants, receive without ignominy any aid so accorded; thou wilt feel that all my affronts, the most insupportable would be the last; that death became my only resource.

"No, generous unknown, keep thy gold, it is too late for me. I returned here desperate—For six and thirty hours three potatoes have sustained my child.—No, generous unknown, keep your gold, I tell you it is too late. But, I own it, your grief consoles, your tears soften me. Oh! My child! If like me thou art reserved for more painful trials, if like me, thou shouldst have to combat incessantly between opprobrium and famine; without doubt it would be better that thou go with me into the tomb; but heaven sends thee a deliverer. Oh! my son! I feel myself more tranquil, I leave thee to thy adopted father; he is, I see, feeling and benevolent. Sir, watch over his infancy, and leave me to die."

"Why to die? What blind delirium precipitates your youth to the tomb! Embittered by resentment for the injustice done you by an unfeeling man, is your

heart susceptible to that little vanity which refuses all succour from a stranger with disdain; which rejects proudly him who presents an unknown hand? Or would you suspect me of insulting interiorly those griefs over which I have shed so many tears?"

"No, the most tender interest reigns in your discourse and looks: I believe there is yet upon earth a man capable of some human sentiment."

"Well, then, live for society, whose injustice towards you has not deprived it of the right to reclaim your talents, the exercise of which may become useful; live for your son, whom your premature death would deliver without defence to those strokes of fate which have outraged you so long; live for me. Yes, assuredly your child shall be mine, yes, I will see him again; but I will see you both: my friend, do not be obstinate in keeping a dreadful resolution, do not refuse me.

"Listen to me. For more than a year, thrown into a new world, continually distracted by the pleasures of a too dissipated life, I have neglected duties that nothing could dispense with my fulfilling; I own it, occupied entirely by myself, I have always forgotten such of my fellow creatures as ought to have been perpetually in my remembrance. And how many honest families, now ruined without resource, I could perhaps have supported by a part of the money prodigally spent in vain amusements! And how many unfortunates have, perhaps, perished that I could have saved from their despair! My friend, deign to help me to repair this fault, which I will never pardon myself for committing. I do not pretend to offer you a feeble succour which will take you only for a moment from the horror of your deplorable situation, two hundred Louis are in this purse; borrow the half of them of me."

"The half!"

"Borrow them, I beg of you; one hundred Louis will provide for your more urgent wants, and will help you to bring your public talents to perfection, will give you time to wait for occasions to show them, in fine, to make you known; a hundred Louis will perhaps be a germ to your fortune! Well! My friend, when you shall be at your ease, you will go also to seek misfortunes to console; and the first time that an unhappy being shall owe his life to you, you will be acquitted of your debt to me."

"Oh, beneficence! Oh, generosity!"

"Come, my friend, receive this money; take courage, let us embrace, and console yourself. Go, I know well, poverty is only shameful when it is the fruit of bad conduct; and almost always a donation, while it honours him who gives, makes the eulogium also of the receiver."

"Oh, my redeeming angel!—It is Providence—Yes, it is God—It is God himself who has sent you to save us.—Go, each day I will be at the feet of his altar.—I will thank the Eternal—I will—I will call down on you the blessings of heaven."

His voice was broken by sobs, and the child moved his little hand caressingly over my face bathed with the tears of his father. Oh, moment full of charms! How inexpressibly delicious wert thou!

"Sir," resumed the young man, whose voice began to be strengthened, "deign to acquaint me to whom I owe my life."

"I cannot."

"You refuse to tell me! Take back your gold, sir."

"But—"

"You wish to hide yourself from my gratitude! Sir, I do not accept your money."

"But first know my reasons."

"Sir, I will not accept it."

"Well! I am going to give you proofs of a confidence without bounds. I call myself the Chevalier de Faublas."

"The Chevalier de Faublas! 'Where will so much virtue find a niche!'<35> How—Oh, my benefactor! I ask pardon a thousand times, I offend very involuntarily."

"My first adventures have made some noise in the capital, and you condemn me immediately; perhaps you are a little too prompt, a little too severe. Oh, my friend excuse the follies of inexperience, pity the passions of youth, and to judge of me, stay some time, you do not know me yet."

"Ah! Do you forgive an exclamation without doubt indiscreet. I know you, and you have a right to all my esteem, you will correct yourself, I am sure of it; with an excellent heart, it is impossible to be long misled."

He took my hand which he kissed many times. Embracing him, I asked his name. He said, "Florval."

"Florval," I love your noble frankness; are you sincerely disposed to honour us with your friendship?"

"What a question!"

"I shall see you then in a happier time?"

"What!"

"Florval, it is necessary for me to hide myself, I do not know what is to become of me, they pursue me."

"They pursue you! May your enemies waste themselves in vain researches! May their rage be confounded! But why this dress? They have already seen it perhaps? Why do you not take another?—

"Which?"

"See, in that corner are some rags. They are my robe, and the only moveable which it was essential for me always to preserve. This morning I resolved on going to sell it, but I have not had power to reach the staircase. And then what would they have given me for it? It is so bad! Take it for your own, it can disguise you perfectly; hide your dress underneath, and over it let your floating locks fall in all their length, they are still sufficiently powdered."

While occupied with my dress, I allowed myself to ask several questions of Florval, to which he eagerly answered.

"So you are an advocate, Florval?"

"Alas! Yes, sir."

"I have always believed this profession as lucrative as honourable."

"Ah! Sir, what a profession it is to force a poor devil to pay you beforehand in order not to be obliged to summons him! To engross for an attorney, cases at two-pence a page! Every morning to tell lies to little audiences for a crown! Ah sir, what a trade! What a trade!"

"Yet there is so much business at the courts that you ought to be always occupied."

"People think so; but then the *associated order* is there for renown. I have seen a brother who was in fashion, caressing fortune who smiled upon him, but neglecting the glory he might have hoped for, in the same day draw up petitions, compile consultations, hurry up cases, make up memorials, plead in all the courts, and by this murderous avidity suck the blood of fifty impoverished clients, and devour the substance of fifty famishing brothers at the bar! Oh sir! What a profession!"

"Never mind, Florval, try to make yourself known, and—"

"And the way, sir! If you knew how disgusting it is to me, with how many delays they will wear out my patience, with what address will they environ my first efforts with difficulties almost insurmountable!"

"Florval, better luck is in store for you, doubtless. Think of celebrated orators; they have, like you, had obstacles to vanquish."

"What do you say, sir? All push back rising talents, the sublimity of some great models makes one despair, but nevertheless how disgusting is the inconceivable success of certain people so unworthy, so very unworthy of it! Do you believe there is in literature anything but usurped reputations? At the bar, sir, as elsewhere, timid merit blushes and hides itself, while audacious mediocrity comes forward, solicits, manoeuvres, sermonises, gains its point, and enjoys a glory which is not always ephemeral. Why, when yesterday, with rage in my heart, I regained this garret to expire with famine, why did my brother E——, during all his life drunk with success, die of an indigestion under gilded roofs? Ah! sir, what a profession! What a profession!"

"So there's none amongst you then who deserves his reputation!"

"One might mention many, whose talents in reality do honour to the bar; would to heaven that the bar always honoured them, that no secret hate, arising from daily rivalries, and base envy, the sure followers of success, did not dog their steps to work their ruin, and to blight their glory! Ah! Sir, what a profession! What a profession! I have seen it too near. Ah! Who would follow it, if be did not now and then, at distances of time, meet some wretches to defend, at the risk of being erased from the list."

"Florval, my friend, Florval, misfortune sours you."

"It is true, he answered almost laughing, it is true that one does not look at the prettiest side of things, when one has been without food two days. Chevalier, you are nearly dressed. I cannot descend into the street. You have done nothing for me if you do not also take the trouble of sending me some food."

"My friend, I fly to do it."

While he spoke, I arranged the robe so that its age was a little less remarkable. Each of the sides were torn below; I was careful to turn them up elegantly on each side, as if I was afraid of the mud in the streets, I stuffed one of the lappets in my fob,

I held the other under my arm. A long rent left my breast discovered; I made a grand fold and put pins in it like an artist. As to the back, the holes were hid under the plaits; so all was in the best manner, and the young advocate ready to disappear. I had the air of a judge advocate. Adieu Florval; if by chance you are questioned—"

"I will sooner suffer the last extremity than expose you to danger."

"But will it be long before I see you again?"

"I know nothing about it, Florval."

"Oh, I will seek for you, I will enquire after you; M. de Faublas, deign not to forget him who owes all to you."

"Florval, I will not forget my friend."

"Adieu, my benefactor I delivering angel, adieu!"

And, as I was at the end of the corridor, the child called out with its little clear voice: "Adieu, papa!"

His papa! And the father calls me his delivering angel and I have saved two victims from death and my eyes are yet moist with the sweetest tears which I have ever shed! And my heart is full of a delicious sentiment! Oh, what ineffable pleasures those taste who perform good actions! Oh, supreme happiness, of which I have only a feeble idea! But what is it to give money to a confidential person to distribute? We should go ourselves! Oh, my Sophia! One day we will mount together into garrets: we will penetrate into the little cabins of the poor. There, we shall be able to discover misery which shrinks from observation, to prevent its painful avowals, to apportion our help to its wants, and to calm its doubts by our consolations. There, my charming wife, twenty unhappy beings, supported by thy gifts, shall return thee homage acceptable to thy heart. Oh, how much more beautiful wilt thou appear to me, when I shall have seen thee weep over their secret troubles! When thou shalt return, proud of their benedictions! They will scarcely see me at all, they will only look at thee! It will be thy hand which they will kiss: it will be thee whom they will call delivering angel! Thou hast the appearance of one; each of thy features attest a soul divine! Oh, my Sophia! Thou wilt sustain the fathers of families, orphans, poor widows, cast-off daughters, widows! Girls! Faublas, fly from the horrible idea which is arising! Respect unhappy beauty, which you have succoured, or renounce every sentiment of honour, and remain forever loaded with the just execrations of mankind.

I went on reflecting thus, even to the street door, where the perils which surrounded me, fixed my ideas upon different objects. I had scarcely quitted the hospitable threshold, when many men already followed me. One of them in particular frightened me with a very scrutinising glance; then, with an air, half irresolute, half decided, conveying alternately his squinting eyes over my pale countenance, and on the broad faces of his vile companions he seemed often to consult, and often to say: "It is he!" I saw the moment of my danger at hand. Persuaded that I could not escape but by drawing upon impudence, I made my deportment very assured, and my memory serving me, *apropos*, I repeated, in a loud voice, the name Madame Le Blanc told me. "Griffart," cried I.

"Who is that?" he said to me. "Do you know me? I know you not exactly yet."

"And you, gentlemen?"

"Worse than not knowing you exactly," answered one of them, "we do not know you at all." Then I took a noble look of disdain over my shoulder, and reviewed the whole troop. I measured the chief from head to foot; then I let fall these words:

"What, my fine gentleman, you do not know the son of Commissary Chenon?"

At his revered name, you should have seen these knaves, seized with respect, suddenly take off their woollen hats, or cotton bonnets; with an air of quality, grip their fore-tops, gently throw their right foot behind, and make me, in this manner, with the most humble excuses, their obeisances. With a nod of the head, I motioned that I was satisfied; and addressing myself to Griffart:

"Well, my brave fellow, is there anything new stirring?"

"Not yet, sir, but a long time cannot pass before there will. I believe that we have squinted on her upon a roof. The fine girl must come down if she breaks her neck. She has taken the dress of our sex; but that's all one. I'll warrant she don't deceive Griffart. Both ends of the street are guarded, and no one can pass without being examined.

I then said: "Hold, my friends, go to breakfast at the public-house; thou, Griffart, I charge thee to carry immediately a loaf of bread, a piece of roast meat, and a bottle of wine, to one M. Florval, who lives there—in this alley, the fifth floor. What remains of my six francs, take with thee to the public-house, and drink with thy companions."

All these men exhausted themselves in thanks more gross than energetic, and I found their gestures as disgusting as they were ridiculous; and their joy made me sad, it was ignoble as themselves. This pretended nun whom they pursue has taken, they say, the dress of a man; if I could disguise myself as a woman, I do not know but I might escape. Ah! ah! Who is this engaging damsel, who, from the window of the second floor calls politely to those who pass! Let us go there. Perhaps with money—Let us go there, we shall see; I can at last change or not; if I cannot do better, I must go to the street to present to the inspector the commissary's son. Let us go up."

"It is bad company, Faublas; but faith, let him save himself that can."

I entered quietly into the room of the poor girl, who had left the door half open. She saw my black gown, and believed me to be the devil. The piercing cry she gave could have been heard by all her customers in the neighbourhood. I, who could not think of running the gauntlet with this modern Aspasia's crowd of lovers, hastened, in order to re-assure her, to take off the dreadful gown. Her mortal fear disappeared as soon as she heard me protest I was not the commissary. It was another thing when she saw me draw from my purse a double Louis, the sweetest hope shone over her whole face, now perfectly serene.

"Mademoiselle, these two Louis are for you."

"I am very willing" she said, and quicker than lightning she ran to the door, and closed it, to the window, and drew over it a worm-eaten cloth, that people less diffident would call a curtain; and to the recess where her bed stood.

"Come, come, my too complaisant and too lively girl, if you would have heard me to the end, you would have been spared these useless demonstrations, which may cost your self-love as much as your modesty. In reality, child, thou hast wrongly

construed my intentions. For the two Louis which I offer, I want only that you should furnish me with woman's clothes, and that thou shouldst help me to dress."

"I am willing," she answered.

"That is charming! You are willing to do everything one asks you!"

"By the Virgin! I must act up to my profession!"

"What do you give me, here?—A petticoat that should be white, full of splashes from top to bottom?"

"That is only because I came the other night from the play when it rained."

"And this handkerchief is torn?"

"I did it on last Monday in belabouring an attorney's clerk, who would not pay me."

"And this dirty handkerchief?"

"An old man tumbled it."

"And this morning cap, all brown?"

"That was my lover, in a fit of jealousy, threw it in the fire?"

"Never mind, miss, take your rags again, I will have none of them. Stay, child, give me your best clothes; I will pay you what you ask for them; the two Louis are for keeping the secret."

"Who will say a word, I wonder! Upon the word of an honest girl, Fanchette is going to give you the gayest things she has, her Pantheon-dress; stop, I will let you have them at the cost price: four Louis; and over and above, you shall have this large black hat with its plume of feathers, and these proofs of my friendship if you will, because you are very genteel."

"For the robe and the hat, willingly; very much obliged for the rest."

Still I wanted a shift. Fanchette has much trouble to find me one moderately good; she had more trouble not to outrage my timid shame-facedness in putting it on. The gown she put on afterwards, went on as well as if it had been made for me." How well this dress fits you," said Fanchette: "Ah," she resumed, after a moment's reflection, "I ask no better; for thou art the prettiest man I ever set my eyes on!" And if I had not been in a hurry to put myself to rights, she was going to embrace me very indecently.

"No, mademoiselle; no, I tell you. Stay, Fanchette, here are the six Louis that I owe you. Do me the favour to go and get a hackney-coach, and bring it here to me. You will accompany me in it to the gate of the Luxembourg. In leaving thee there, I will give thee, besides, four half crowns for thy ride; but, pray make haste; and, above all, do not say a word to anyone."

"I promise you I will not: I love you, because that—"

"Go, Fanchette; make haste."

She had not been gone five minutes, when I heard the key turn in the lock. Judge of my surprise and alarm, when, the door opening, I saw a stranger enter, who, not less familiar then if he had been in his own house, said: "Good day!" without looking at me, and threw his cane and hat upon the bed. I saw that his shaking legs

bore him contrary ways; that he frequently deceived himself; that he ran against the furniture; and knocked against the walls. His mouth opened with difficulty, his tongue scarcely articulated, his hair was deranged; he took a chair and sat down on one side: then, in rising, he made this judicious remark to himself: "I was cheated!" He added: "Fanchette, I am sure thou hast been uneasy that I did not return home before this morning; it has displeased thee, as it had a right. Ah, it was because there was such a world of people at the English hotel. What pleasure there is in that place! How many people ruin themselves there—with such glee!—It is charming to see them!—but they are contented!—There has scarcely been a quarrel—so you may judge!—excepting one, in one of them was killed; the other—but that is all."

At these words, he rose, to come straight to me, but, without intending it, he went the other way, and fell against the sash, some panes of which he broke. After many circuits, he at last got to me; and during some seconds, he stared full at me, with an air which would have amused me greatly if I had had less inquietudes.

"It is I," he resumed at last; "It is thee! it is thy chamber; and thy handsome gown! But I am drunk! Oh, yes, I am drunk! Thou hast black eyes, and I see them blue; Thou art fair, and yet seemest to me brown! Thou art little, and appearest large to me! Yes, I am tipsy, that's certain! But what of that! I will persuade thee that thou art genteel, and I am thy lover!"

He approached, I retreated; he followed me, I repulsed him, he held me; I made a menacing gesture, he struck me with his fist; I gave him two for one; he threw himself on my plume of feathers; I seized him by the hair; and his fall drew me down. The Chevalier de Faublas, stretched upon the floor, rolls in the dust with the vile lover of a girl of the town! What seemed likely to turn the fall in favour of my adversary, in this unworthy combat, was, my being dressed so inconveniently for a game of fisticuffs. Yet victory would not have been long uncertain because there was, in our manner of fencing this difference, to my advantage, that, without saying a single word, I tried to parry rather than to thrust; instead of which, the wretch, swearing like a coachman, neglected parrying, and only sought to strike, and to hold me. One may judge, then, that the most noisy was not the least beaten; but before I was able to disengage myself, the neighbours ran in to see the occasion of so great a noise. Charmed to find this opportunity to get rid of their odious lodgers, they began by loading us with imprecations and blows. In the end, they separated us. We descended, and were both of us delivered over to the guard, without being searched.

Two soldiers put the handcuffs on my companion, two more gave me their hands, the people hooted me, and the boys followed me. At the end of the street I passed triumphantly through the middle of the police scouts, who did not expect, under these gaudy clothes, and with this honourable escort, their pretended nun dressed in man's clothes. But how many streets were we made to walk through! What mud, collected in the way, soiled the beautiful pantheon dress! What indecent discourse I heard on the road! With what brutality my uncivil conductors handed me along! Ah! poor girls, God keep you from the Parisian guard!

God preserve you also from the commissary! A justice of the peace, acting the magistrate, condemns without hearing! A stupid corporal recounts facts of which he is ignorant, his soldiers bear witness to what they have not seen, many witnesses cried out that I was a girl of the town, who fought with my lovers; the expeditious clerk, comprehending little, but writing all, closed the commitment before he even deigned to inform himself if we had any means of defence; and all at once, from the despotic

tribunal of the proud citizen, came this decision, without appeal: "The profligate to the Hôtel de la Force: the girl to Saint Martin."

To St. Martin! It is then true that I am to be conducted there! It is then true that the most precocious youth, he who many times, in certain cases, has shown himself so superior to many grown men, he whose success in gallantry yet occupies the astonished town, the Chevalier de Faublas, in fine, proclaimed a girl by a public judgment, sees himself shut up in the chapel of ease of an hospital, in order to wait there apparently till some leisure day, when the head of the police will cause him, with a hundred prostitute companions, to be transferred to the metropolis.

And why do I let myself be taken to this frightful prison? Why! Would not the avowal of my sex at the commissary's, have drawn upon me a number of questions, which it would have been very embarrassing to me to answer. At all events, will not this hazardous means always remain a resource! And ought I not to flatter myself that a thousand others, almost as easy, will spare me the danger of it? With address and with gold I shall force the gates of Saint Martin more easily than those of the Bastille: but I ought to make haste; an instant may ruin me. In the suburb of Saint Marceau, become for the second time the theatre of my glory and my misfortunes, a thousand accidents may discover traces the Chevalier de Faublas has left of his route. Come, quick, let us call some friends to my aid. Friends! I have only acquaintances at Paris. Rosambert, he has played me a dirty trick: Rosambert! And then he is far off. Derneval is further yet: Madame de B*** is perhaps not yet arrived. Besides, how shall I give her news of myself without exposing her! But my friend, my love, my wife!

It is she! Yes, it is to her that I must send. No, du Portail is there, who, without doubt, has his eyes open. He may intercept the dispatches, and carry me off again. No, I will not use a name which may deprive me of the sight of my Sophia. The Vicomte de Valbrun remains. It is not to his private house that I must send; I know not where his hôtel is; the commissioners will inform me; let us write to the Vicomte.

What I tell you in thirty lines, was the result of two hours' reflections; so my letter to the Vicomte was not finished when they came to call Fanchette. Seized with alarm, I only resolved to do my best, and gained the first wicket. There I saw an elegant woman who, having cast upon me two or three disdainful glances, ordered me, in a severe tone, to follow her. The door of the prison opened, my proud protectress mounted gravely into her carriage, and by a motion of the head, told me to take the place opposite. I obeyed, and we drove off. Then, addressing myself to the unknown, I said: Madame, how many thanks—"

"You owe me none," she interrupted; "it is true that I have taken you from this fine place, where you were not badly placed, I think; but it is not to oblige you personally, I assure you."

"Yet, Madame—"

"Yet, mademoiselle, I beg you to believe me."

"Why will you refuse the just homage?"

"Good God! What fine words! I like them not, mademoiselle. Let us not talk toegether, I beg of you."

There was a moment of silence, during which I asked myself who was the uncivil deliverer, who did me so great a service, and treated me so ill, where this adventure would bring me, and what was going to become of me?

The beautiful lady who had ordered me to hold my tongue, soon commanded me to speak.

Do you know how to read?" she said."

"A little, Madame."

"And to write?"

"Yes, though not much."

"You can dress hair?"

"Woman's?"

"To be sure; certainly."

"Tolerably, Madame; is this all that is necessary?"

"And enough too, mademoiselle; you forget that it does not become you to question me."

The carriage soon arrived before a very fine house; the unknown, having made me traverse superb apartments, finished by leaving me to my reflections in a sort of cabinet for dressing in, where I remained alone some minutes, which appeared to me to be ages. In fine, my deliverer appeared; she brought me clothes herself, for which she desired me to change mine, for I disgusted her, she said; and without waiting for an answer, she began by taking off my handkerchief. "I rather guess," she said, throwing into my bosom a scrutinizing glance, "that this courtesan, who looks so pretty, has some secret defect. Faugh! this is as flat as my hand."

To the surprise which seized me at first, soon succeeded a more painful sensation. This great lady, so proud, so imperious, and yet alert as a waiting maid, and an experimental observer, made me as uncomfortable with her help as with her observations, and distressed me as much by her kindness as by her severity. I tried to get rid of her good offices; she found my attempts to do so very impertinent, and what she called the grimaces of pretended modesty were of no avail.

There was a knot; she undid it very dexterously, and at the same time disembarrassed me of my first petticoat. "

"Good God! Madame, you lower yourself to wait thus upon a servant"

"Well," she answered, "but if I choose to support the shame and the trouble?"

"Madame, I will not permit it; I cannot bear it; you are too good."

"And is that a reason for you to show yourself so ridiculously modest, so obstinate!"

She spoke with quickness; yet her tongue went less quick than her hand; so that I saw, almost immediately, notwithstanding my vain precautions, my second petticoat fall; alas! It was the last.

At least there remained yet one safeguard, the wretched chemise of which I hoped not to be easily despoiled.

"What obstinacy! What foolish reserve! said the irritated lady. "Without doubt, if I was a man, mademoiselle would make less to do."

Scarcely had she said this, than she passed behind me, and instantly, with a rapid cut of the scissors, from my reins to my shoulders, she cut in two the unfortunate chemise, of which it became easy for her to take the pieces away.

Oh, readers, judge of my trouble! You see here the poor Fanchette very succinctly undressed, and so much the more embarrassed, as the only veil which remained to her having been dragged in the mud in wallowing in the streets of Paris, I cannot, in conscience, deny that I was in want of clean linen. So the obliging person who presided at my toilette, hastened to throw over my head a fine shift, that she ordered me to put on. It was, above all, the operation that I dreaded, and for the completion of the mischief, every instant rendered it more difficult. How will ever this young girl so excessively awkward, in this most critical moment of all, have the dexterity necessary to hide from these quick eyes the too apparent youth! I know not by what fatality my imagination, till then asleep, awoke more ardently; it electrified me, it inflamed me for the charms of this stranger, whose prompt and light hand I can yet fancy myself feeling, whose look always pursues me, whose all-powerful look, awakening dying desire, suddenly produced in me the most unexpected effect, the effect in general auspicious, but now unfortunate, the effect that, two hours before, Coralie dared not hope for, even with the aid of magnetism. What shall I do, then! What is going to become of me? By what means shall I keep my secret?

The part I took will astonish the reader, he will laugh at my expense; but never mind. As I boast sometimes of my prowess, I must also own my defects. Know then, that, imagining there was nothing better to be done, I had the weakness to turn my back to the enemy.

"This behaviour is not polite," she said, "I own to you that these manners are not such as I am accustomed to."

From the tone in which these words were pronounced I could perceive that the offended person, far from giving way to movements of impatience and anger, experienced a mischievous satisfaction, and was merely ironical. A slight glance which I hazarded, confirmed me in this idea. I saw that she repressed with difficulty the emotions of violent laughter. It was then, and yet to my shame I avow it, it was only then that it came into my mind that I had been a long quarter of an hour her dupe, that for a whole quarter of an hour my protectress quizzed, entirely at her ease, an innocent young man, whom she pretended to believe a girl of the town. This discovery filled me at first with spite; but I consoled myself almost as soon, by thinking of the sweet vengeance my mishap promised me.

"Ah! Whoever you are," cried I, "you are not formed for such incivilities. Yes, I am sure of it, you ought not to be more accustomed to suffer, than I am myself to permit them: and it is very sincerely that I beg your pardon."

"Pardon!" repeated she, laughing at last most heartily; "but if one grants it only to boldness, do you believe you merit it?"

"Assuredly not," I replied, a little stunned with this reproach.

"Well then," she said with a force of wit little known, "I wait till a real offence—"

I did not leave her time to finish, for her air, her discourse, and above all, her deportment, spoke a rare assurance, which she summoned up to astonish at first the most intrepid, but afterwards to give courage to the most timid; so precipitating myself before her, in this humble and formidable posture, so convenient for a lover, so menacing for a mistress, I made, in the most decided manner, this declaration of love and war: "Upon my word, madam, I believe that you will not wait for it long."

Without any emotion, she replied: "Whatever you may say, I do not believe you have such temerity. Besides, I inform you that I am not one of those women who are frightened at a word; they are feeble beauties who believe in all menaces."

The answer was clear: acts, and nothing else would do with this lady. I could not reasonably doubt that she knew pretty well who I was, that the danger of my presence and of my very slight attire, nevertheless, did not astonish her; in fine, that the Chevalier de Faublas could without indiscretion, and even ought to, declare himself.

She received the avowal with infinite grace. This complete triumph was disputed only just enough to make me know that it was of some value. I was yet in the lap of victory, and upon the point of seizing the fruits, that the conqueror himself contributes to, when a carriage made the pavement of the court resound beneath it. "The Vicomte already!" said my unknown; "let us make haste, let us make haste and finish this nonsense.

She made haste in reality; and as if I had not had myself some interest to do so, she, as one may say, obliged me to do it.

Thanks to my promptitude, and above all to her own, what this original person called our nonsense, was over; but the third intruding person, to whom all this would not have appeared so very pleasant, soon made himself be heard near us; and my proud protectress, who had no desire that they should know how she amused herself with her protegée, did not confine herself to putting herself to rights, but gave me a sign to collect my scattered clothes, and to escape into a neighbouring closet.

I threw myself into it; when the intrusive cavalier, whose too sudden visit sent me off, entered. "He is changing his dress there," she said.

"Without the help of your maid?" he demanded.

She answered: "If he cannot do without it, we will call her; but why, except there is an absolute necessity, should we put a third person in possession of our secret."

He then came in to me; it was M. de Valbrun. "Good day, my dear Faublas," he said, embracing me. "Are you not pleased with the zeal that the Baroness de Fonrose has shown in your favour?"

"Pleased!" I exclaimed; "It is, in reality, too little to say."

"Ah! I have been very troublesome: your dear Faublas," she interrupted, laughing; "ask him what he thought of it; ask him if I have not already begun the vengeance of my sex." Come, gentle knight," she added, "there must be no rancour, you see in me only a friendly fairy, who comes to carry you away from the enchantress; and as soon as you are dressed, come respectfully, and in token of gratitude, to kiss my hand."

Whilst she spoke, I observed her face reflected in a glass on the other side of the room. Her deportment had so much changed, that there only remained a cold dignity, and the perfect calmness of her face, seemed to announce the absence of all passions. I saw that the Baroness was an excellent comedian; but whatever pleasure I took in seeing her in her new part, I could give to it only a short attention. All the feminine accoutrements in which it was necessary to muffle myself up, caused me not a little embarrassment. It was to me a labour without end; I believe that it would have lasted till night, if Madame de Fonrose had not come at the repeated invitation of the Vicomte, to help to finish it. In the end, but always to oblige him, she carried her complaisance so far as to put in order, with her noble hand, my disordered locks. She was still dressing my head, when I cried out:

"M. de Valbrun, let us go."

"Go where?"

"To see Sophia."

"Sophia! Is she in Paris?"

"In these suburbs even, at the convent of —— in —— Street."

"So much the better; but for an instant, moderate your impatience, listen to me; I ought to tell you what I have done; and to consider with you on measures which must now be taken."

"I should by right, have begun, M. le Vicomte, with assuring you of my gratitude."

"Are you anxious to prove it to me?"

"Do not doubt that I am."

"Well, do me the pleasure to hear me."

"With all my heart; but let us go."

"What impatience! Pray, hear me."

"My Sophia—"

"We will speak of her presently. Chevalier, in the middle of last night I returned to my private house, as I had promised you. Justine, in recounting to me what had passed, gave me great uneasiness about you. Not knowing what was going to become of you, and wishing to remain at hand, to give you aid if any occasion presented itself, I determined to remain with Justine. This little girl, who appears very fond of you, was continually at the street window. Twice in the morning she thought she saw you, and in two different dresses. In two hours she came to me, saying, that the guard were bearing you away, that she knew you very well, notwithstanding your new dress. So she got a faithful emissary to mingle with the crowd that followed you; and return, as soon as possible, to tell me what had become of you. On his return, I was not less enchanted than surprised, to know that a dreadful judgment came to send the pretended Fanchette to St. Martin. Then I flew to Madame de Fonrose."

"At first," she said, "I could not but interest myself much in the fate of a young man like you. I hastened directly to demand the mandate, at the hôtel of the police, and you know what a quick use I made of it, which set you at liberty."

"Madame, accept my warmest thanks."

"M. de Faublas," answered the Vicomte, "hear me to the end"

"Sophia waits for me."

"We will speak of her; hear me to the end. Whilst the Baroness went to the police, I returned to the suburbs of St. Marceau, to learn what I could. There was no longer any enquiry about Dorothea; the Chevalier de Faublas only is spoken of everywhere."

"Now! Already!"

"Can you be astonished at it? The declaration of a nun named Ursula, who has, she says, been ill-treated by the ravishers of the nun, proved nothing against you; but what has discovered all, is the complaint of a certain M. de Flourvac, who he said was attacked in the enclosure of the magnetisers, by a young man, who escaped in his shirt, sword in hand; and the resistance which was here made to the officers of the police by Madame Le Blanc, who chose rather to let them break open the door of her apartment than to open it; also the deposition that the true Fanchette has been forced to make, who, returned to her hôtel, has been interrogated upon facts and articles. The meeting together of so many extraordinary events has betrayed you: the most astonishing events have been brought about, upon account of the most astonishing young man. In two hours, perhaps, they will go to seek you at St. Martin's, in order to transfer you to the Bastille. Madame will no doubt be troubled about it, but she is well with the minister: so that, if they do not find you, I am easy about all the rest. The friends of the Comte de G——, whom one of your seconds has killed, call loudly for vengeance; but I have friends also; I enjoy some credit, we will smother up this affair. In the meanwhile—"

"In the meanwhile, I will see my Sophia if I ruin myself."

"You will ruin yourself, without seeing her."

"Without seeing her!"

"If you dare to put a foot out of doors, you will be arrested. It is not to be doubted that the most vigilant agents of the police are upon the watch. Pray wait some days."

"Some days! Day are ages!"

"Will you find them less long in a state-prison, and when you will even lose the hope of ever seeing your mistress again?"

"She is my wife, Vicomte—-

The Baroness interrupted us: "Chevalier, if what you say is true, I wish you joy of it."

"Very true, they will search long enough before they find one who merits to be adored like her."

"I believe you."

"One more worthy of the tenderness and respect of her happy husband."

"Chevalier," resumed the Vicomte, "permit me—"

"One who—"

"Pray, time is precious; let us come to some resolution. Promise me not to expose yourself."

"Alas! I shall not see her then today!"

"Think that your affair may now be arranged; but, if you were once a prisoner, I could answer for nothing. Chevalier, you will consider—"

"Ah! Vicomte, you see me penetrated with gratitude; in a more fortunate hour, I shall have less, and shall express it better; it is to-day, that to give you one proof, I surrender myself to your counsels. M. de Valbrun, regulate my conduct, and I will obey."

"Chevalier, I cannot now offer you an asylum at my house, because they will certainly come there to find you."

"Why should he not remain here?" said the Baroness.

"Because he will no longer be here in safety, Madame."

"Do you think so, Vicomte?"

"I ask you yourself what you think?"

"I—I see not too—"

"What! Madame, after what you have been doing!"

"Oh, but Vicomte!"

"You astonish me, Madame," he replied with an air of some displeasure, "excepting that, if you really desired to take care of the Chevalier, I would not oppose it, and only now from my anxiety for him; you know that I am not jealous."

"Yet I like," she said, "the rather piqued tone in which you say so; it proves that you have more attachment to me than you are willing should appear. Gentlemen," she added, "it is late, let us go into the dining-room, where we shall not stay long, and, during dinner, all three will think upon the means of saving this amiable young man, the friend of all women, and the true lover of his wife."

Madame de Fonrose presented me her hand, which the Vicomte seized more promptly than myself; we went to sit down to table. The Baroness, who did not come out of her profound meditation, only to look steadily at me from time to time, broke silence by a loud burst of laughter. The Vicomte asked her the cause of this sudden gaiety.

"I shall explain it to you in the saloon," she said, rising.

I was afflicted by this sudden freak, for the lively appetite which remained, made me feel that I should have liked to finish my dinner.

"I have found for this young girl," she said to us, "a place that will suit her marvellously in all respects."

"A place!" cried the Vicomte.

"A place! Yes. Female factotum, she will be lady-companion, secretary and reader at Madame de Lignolle's."

"The young Countess?"

"Yes."

"A lady-companion to the young Countess! It is laughable!"

"What matters, Vicomte? She wants one; and the one I provide her with will be better than any other, I believe."

"But on account of M. de Lignolle."

"M. de Lignolle! M. de Lignolle is a very ugly man, to whom I have wished such a thing a long while. One of my intimate friends accuses him of faults; of such faults as a woman never pardons. Mademoiselle du Portail," added the Baroness, turning towards me, "I recommend the little Countess to you; she is young and pretty, a little careless, very lively in person, and uncommonly capricious also. I know a fancy that she affects: it often happens that she wishes to be a prude for a quarter of an hour; then, pretending the profound ignorance of the most unpractised virgin, she will not understand the commonest pleasantries; and, the instant after, you hear her hold, with an indifferent air, a very licentious discourse. Besides, she has whims that will ruin her if she does not take care. At her age, she flies the world; nobody meets her anywhere; and few people have the good luck to find her at home. I believe that her ugly husband is not displeased at this economical retreat; but it is not he who exacts it, it is she who insists on it. M. de Faublas, I charge you to form this child, for it is absolutely necessary to get her into society."

"Ah, my Sophia! Baroness, my Sophia!"

"Yes, yes, your Sophia, you rogue, no less fortunate than dangerous, if public report has not deceived me in your character and talents, Sophia, since she is absent, will not save the Countess. I will only say a single word to you about her stupid husband. He is a heavy man, badly proportioned in his body, and his large face, which was perhaps handsome in his youth, had never any expression. They say that many women tried to please him, but nobody can tell of one whom he has loved. This gentleman has consecrated his time to the muses; he is of the number of those little *beaux esprits* with which Paris swarms; of the noble literati who expect to go to the Temple of Fame by sonnets periodically printed in the public papers. He will be passionately fond of you, if you take pains to declare against modern philosophy and to find out enigmas."

"That, Madame," said M. de Valbrun, "is a portrait painted by the hand of a master; I discover the pencil of an offended woman."

"Vicomte," she answered, "I have not told you it was myself who had reason to be offended with him."

"Now! I swear it," he replied; "but tell us of what you are thinking.2

I interrupted both to make this observation: "Instead of being woman to the countess, can I not be woman elsewhere? Would it be impossible for me in this dress to penetrate into the convent of my Sophia?"

"Now!" replied the Vicomte, "the danger would be extreme! And the means to remain there?"

The Baroness interrupted him: "Stay, for I interest myself in this young woman. Chevalier, you give me the idea of a project of which the success is infallible. Tomorrow, yes tomorrow, I promise you, I will go myself to this convent, to inquire if there is not room for a young widow, a friend of yours, whom you will take upon you to bring after tomorrow, Baroness?"

"After tomorrow, no, but at the end of the week."

"O, my Sophia!"

"Don't leap so!" said Madame de Fonrose, "your head-dress will come off." She added: "I admire this stratagem, as much as I approve it; nobody would believe it was a husband who thought of it."

"Madame," said the Vicomte, "we can go, it is dusk; but do you believe that Madame de Lignolle will take her companion in this evening?"

"Yes, sir, I will make it my business."

"And M. de Lignolle will not oppose this fancy of his wife?"

"You know that he has no will of his own when she has spoken; you know very well that when the Countess has pronounced the fatal *I will*, the Count must will it. Let us go, Chevalier," she added, "you will call yourself Mademoiselle de Brumont."

We descended; as I got into the carriage I saw that they placed a trunk behind. "It contains your wardrobe," said the Baroness. I begged the Vicomte to come and see me next day at M. de Lignolle's; he promised that he would come in the evening to inform me what Mad. de Fonrose should have done. Then leaning to his ear, to speak confidentially, I said, "I believe Madame de B*** has returned home; could not Justine give her news of me, and send me word of anything relative to herself?"

"Yes, I will take charge of that. That is to say, you are still interested about Madame de B***?"

"No, not in the way you mean; no, upon my honour; but I am very impatient to know how the Marquis has received her."

"I will manage to bring you word tomorrow."

M. de Valbrun, though he pretended not to to be jealous, only quitted us at the door of the Count's hôtel.

M. de Lignolle was with his wife when we were announced. The Baroness, in presenting me to the Countess, said, "I bring you this young person, in whom you will find all the qualities necessary to the triple charge with which you honoured me. She reads, writes, and talks well. She has the reputation of having studied deeply, but that is her last merit. I know her to have an honourable mind, praiseworthy inclinations, and, above all, talents more solid than are usually found at such a tender age, and with such a pretty face. Do not believe that I exaggerate, Countess; you will soon become the intimate friend of your amiable reader, and you will discover a treasure in her, for the acquisition of which you will thank me."

"I thank you beforehand," said the Countess; "upon your recommendation, I do not hesitate."

"Many of my friends wish to have companions like her," said the Baroness; "but I felt that I ought to give you the preference, and to say the whole truth, she is a present that I wished to make M. de Lignolle."

The Countess renewed her thanks to the Baroness, and said that from this evening then—

"From this evening," interrupted the Count, "wait a little."

"Sir, I shall not wait."

"But"—

"No *buts*, sir, I have longed for this companion these three days; and if it is necesary for me to wait longer, I shall fall sick."

"The world will think it ridiculous."

"What is that to me, sir?"

"They will blame you, Madame, for—"

"I knew very well there would come one of these *fors*, with which you are always teasing me, and which are insupportable to me, particularly when you contradict me, from this evening, sir, mademoiselle."

"But Madame, I would observe to you."

"Oh! how unhappy I am!"

"I would observe to you that if—"

The irritated Countess took a proud attitude, looked at M. de Lignolle with majesty, and with the most imperious air, said to him, "I will have it so."

"Since you take it in that way, Madame," answered the Count, "it must be so: why did you not explain yourself at once. The Baroness must permit me to examine her protegée a little, for they often talk of deep studies, and God knows what to understand from it. I have seen those little gentlemen that have been praised up as prodigies! They had gained the prize at the university, and could not find the secret of an enigma. Judge, then, what they would have done, if they had been asked to make one! Mademoiselle, I do not doubt that you are well educated, but—your face,—your manners—What is your name, mademoiselle?"

"De Brumont, sir."

"You are not a philosopher, I hope?"

"No, sir, I am a virtuous girl."

"A fair answer! Mademoiselle, superb! Superb! You are of a good family, apparently?"

"Sir, I am a gentleman's daughter."

"Good! Good again! Good! I see that we shall sympathise wonderfully. I own to you that you are come here in a particular minute; when they introduced you, I had finished the last verse of my riddle"

"Oh! it is a real riddle, this—"

"Listen, I pray you, to my riddle, and try to find it out."

It is certain that to find it out, more than common trouble was necessary. The Count was not happy in the art of defining, but in revenge, each expression, thanks to the situation which he gave it, became an enigma.

"She has guessed it," he cried; "a proof that the riddle is well made. Baroness, you are right, she is really an astonishing girl!"

"I was very sure, sir," said Madame Fonrose, "that you would find her so; but it is particularly in the eyes of the Countess that I would have her show herself."

"Upon my honour, an astonishing girl!" repeated he; "she has guessed my best riddle! One, of which the plan only, cost me five days of meditation! Of which I have laboured the style nine days and a half! Indeed, I have changed the first verse eighteen times—Yes, eighteen times. I have varied it in my sleep—"

"As Voltaire did, Count."

"Ah, Mademoiselle! Voltaire has never made riddles, and then he was a philosopher. To return to my work, how do you find it?"

"Very spirited, sir, and full of charming antitheses."

"Of charming—You call antitheses so? I know very well I can make antitheses, yet I never learnt rhetoric perfectly; but there are things that some people do not want to learn. It is nature which gives antitheses. Ladies, these are called antitheses."

"No, sir," answered the Countess, entirely occupied with what the Baroness said, "these are what they call bolsters."

"How, Madame! Bolsters?"

"Yes, sir, these little cushions that we put upon our hips to make our petticoats stick out are called bolsters."

"Ah, Madame," he cried, "what an answer!" He returns to me: "Hold, Mademoiselle Brumont, I do not say that to you, for upon my honour you astonish me; but women are so trifling with their fiddle-faddles! When you shall have gained the confidence of the Countess," he added in a lower tone, "try to give her taste for things of more importance. Instruct her; teach her the great art of riddles and antitheses."

"Let me alone, Count, if I have only the happiness to please her."

"You will please her."

"Do you think so?"

"You will please her; I am sure of it"

"Well, I will teach her many things."

"Of that I do not doubt, I give you my word, and you will do me a great service, for which I shall be very grateful."

"You are too good, sir; another would thank you, but I am tempted to obey your wishes. Elsewhere I have for a time occupied the situation which I am wanted to take in your house, and no husband has desired me to fill any department with respect to his wife which I have not imposed on myself, if the exercise of it was even disagreeable to me. My services to the Countess shall be, as far as concerns you, always disinterested, I swear to you.

"To return to my work: you find it—?

"Surprising! Of a simplicity! Sublime! But, sir, how do you make verse?"

"Easily," he interrupted; "my longest verses never take me more than fifteen days. For the measure, I count it on my fingers; for rhymes, I take Richelet's Dictionary; and the meaning, I wait for three weeks, if necessary; so my verses are very easy."

"And your riddles have the merit of being made in *bouts-rimes*?<36>"

"Exactly; every poet has his way, and that is mine."

"You do not tell me so?"

"The deuce! It is my secret!"

"It is badly kept, Count, since all the wits of the day possess it. Read the crowd of their little works, which are born and die every week, under the proudly modest title of my *Whims, Recollections, Essays, Relaxations, Caprices, Leisure Hours*, etc. Read the little familiar songs with which they regale their friends in the gay days of a festival, and which they afterwards address to posterity in those almanacs, presumptuously called poetical, which are bought on New Year's Day and forgot before the middle of January; read the ariettes<26> of our grand comic operas, and of our serious operas; read the tender madrigals of our fashionable comedies; read our frightful tragedies; read, M. le Comte, and you will see that they are all nearly after your own manner, and that modern poetry has the advantage of all other, of being made to rhymes chosen beforehand."

I perceived that he began to look serious, and I restored him to good humour by loading him with praises..=

"Then you are really delighted with my riddle, and you think that I might sign it without any danger?"

"Most assuredly, Monsieur, and you may reckon on the gratitude of the public."

He took the pen and wrote: By M. Jean Baptiste Emanuel Frederic Louis Chrysostome Joseph, Comte de Lignolle, Seigneur de —— et du ——, Lieutenant-Colonel of —— regiment, in garrison at ——, Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis, Paris, etc., etc.

"What! Monsieur, your names, your titles, and your residence!"

"It is customary, mademoiselle; there, you will read it in the *Mercury* next week."

The Count, intoxicated with my approbation, told the Baroness that she would see some of his productions in the public papers, and then addressing himself to the Countess, he said: "Madame, you may take Mademoiselle de Brumont into your family, for I assure you I am perfectly satisfied with her; she is a girl of rare accomplishments, whose merit you are not yet acquainted with."

"Monsieur," replied the Countess, "I am happy you agree with me, but it was an affair already settled."

M. de Lignolle next turned to me, and in a low tone said: "I have something to say to you, Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"Speak, Monsieur."

"I cannot doubt but your morals are good, because you are of noble blood and dislike modern philosophers; but, however prudent a young girl may be, she cannot help hearing and repeating almost every day some tales about gallantry."

"Oh, fie, Monsieur."

"Good; you understand me; I desire, therefore, that you will never enter into such conversations with the Countess."

"It will be very difficult to avoid, Monsieur, for young women—"

"Yes, yes; they love to talk of a thousand nonsensical things, which serve to corrupt their minds, and give them false ideas of the world, and I beg you, above all things, to avoid it as much as possible."

"I will be very candid with you, monsieur, and acknowledge that I cannot answer for—"

"Try, for I have good reasons for asking you."

"I believe so, Monsieur."

"Besides you will not have much trouble, for the Countess is very reserved on such subjects."

"I am not sorry for it."

"And then her reading is very select; she has good books on moral subjects, which do not afford much amusement, but are very instructing. No romances, no love stories, for in all those cursed works there is nothing but gallantry and intrigue."

"Yes, they are very pernicious."

"In my opinion, mademoiselle, love is as bad as philosophy; for, look you, philosophy and love——"

The Baroness, who rose at this moment to take her leave, interrupted the Count, and caused me to lose the fine parallel he was about to give me. "Mademoiselle," said Madame de Fonrose, in the tone of a protectress, "I leave you in a very agreeable house, where all kinds of pleasure await you. Consider that from this moment you belong to Madame de Lignolle, and you will not only execute her commands, but anticipate her wishes. In short, if you have occasion in certain points to disoblige Monsieur, it is your first duty to please Madame. I do not think you will find this either a difficult or a disagreeable task, and it will be highly to your credit to justify the very favourable opinion I have formed of you; endeavour, therefore, to deserve as soon as possible the good will of so charming a mistress; and remember that I yield to her all my right in you."

After having sermonised me in this manner, my august protectress kissed me on the forehead, and retired. As soon as she was gone, I begged the Countess to let me go to bed. M. de Lignolle insisted that I should remain, but a single word from Madame closed his mouth. The Countess herself conducted me to my little apartment. It was a kind of closet at one end of her bedroom. The Count bade me good night several times in a very affectionate manner, and Madame de Lignolle, in saluting me on the forehead, said, with great vivacity, "Good night, Mademoiselle de Brumont, get a good sleep; it is my desire. Do you understand me?"

XVI.

Behold me alone, and with a moment to breathe! I find myself in a safe house, where my enemies are not likely to search for me. For four days, what perils have surrounded me! What adventures, what anxieties, and what pleasures within the last forty-eight hours! Pleasures! Pleasures! When distant from Sophia! Happily, the space which separated us is greatly diminished. More than sixty leagues were between us, but now there is not five hundred yards. The same city, and even the same neighbourhood contains us; we breathe as one may say the same air.

Alas! I why can I not instantly join her? And I am this night to embrace nothing but her image, in my deceitful dreams, and to bedew my solitary couch once more with my tears! Come, M. de Valbrun, come tomorrow as you have promised me, for if you do not I shall go alone at all hazards to the convent to demand my wife. I shall be intoxicated with the pleasure of seeing her, with the pleasure of recompensing her tender solitude, and of consoling all her griefs. Yes, I will go, regardless of the danger, and look my enemies in the face. Yes, I shall be a thousand times too happy in forfeiting my liberty for a few moments of that supreme felicity and rapturous ecstasy I shall enjoy in her presence, nor will I complain of my lot, if they do not arrest me until I return.

Yes, I will go; the Countess shall not restrain me; a little brunette, very pretty, quite young, full of vivacity, but of an imperious temper! Oh, the little dragon! Is she witty? Does she love her husband? But what ideas does my ardent imagination continually prompt? Was it then to occupy myself with these trifles that I requested her permission to retire? Oh, my father, rest satisfied in having a son who loves you! It was to occupy himself with you that Faublas left a pretty woman! And Faublas thinks of nothing but the pleasure of at length being able to send you some satisfactory tidings.

I cannot here dispense with inserting the whole of my tender and respectful letter.

> MY DEAR FATHER,
> Perhaps at this moment you are accusing me of ingratitude and cruelty. I left you in the asylum you had procured on my account, but you know not the passion that consumed my heart, which you have rendered so susceptible; you know not what an unexpected blow it received from a man who called himself our friend. On leaving you, father, I proposed a speedy return, and then the chagrin which my absence occasioned would soon have been effaced.
> My wife groaned in captivity, like me, bemoaning our separation, and, perhaps, reduced to all the horrors of despair. It is true that at a distance from you I exist but in part, but I am not able to exist at all a distance from my Sophia.
> I knew that she was at Paris, and I flew thither; I did not bid you adieu, because you would not have permitted me to brave the dangers of such a journey. None of the evils which I dreaded have happened to me, but I have encountered more than one danger that I did not foresee. I have been in the capital three days, and this is the first moment of liberty I have enjoyed. I consecrate it to him who would be the most dear to me in the world, if my Sophia was not in existence.
> I intended to return to you, but beg you will come back here, as you have nothing to fear in Paris, but the dangers which menace me, and I shall shortly be free from alarm. I have already made powerful friends, which, united with yours, will, I hope, be able to hush up this unfortunate affair. Beside, I expect, in about three days, to take

refuge in a place of safety. Return here, I pray you. Oh, how happy will be the day for me when I embrace my much-loved father.
While I am waiting for that happiness, deign to write me a few lines, to ease my anxious mind. Address to the widow Grandval, at the Convent in —— Street, Faubourg Saint Germain. Imagine what will be my joy; your letter will find me under the same roof with Sophia. Therefore, let me again entreat of you to write immediately.
I am, with profound respect,
Yours, etc.
FAUBLAS"

P.S. I have not yet been able to see my dear Adelaide; but I shall send to her convent as soon as it is in my power."

Now that I have sealed this letter, and directed it to M. de Belcourt, it may be permitted me to examine my little apartment. This door goes into the Countess's bed-room; the other to a private staircase, which leads down into the court. My little chamber is certainly very convenient. If during the night it should take my fancy to visit Madame de Lignolle! How came that idea into my mind? Be tranquil, my Sophia. I wonder if she sleeps with Monsieur de Lignolle? What matters it? What interest is it to me? It is but simple curiosity; but it torments me, nevertheless, and I would know if they sleep separate. I see but one bed in the room: how shall I ascertain? Zounds, I will wait awhile, and look through the keyhole! Good! It is but seven o'clock, they will not sup before ten, they will not retire before twelve; and I must wait five hours by the clock? I shall die with fatigue. No; my charming wife, I will occupy my mind with nothing but you; and as a proof of it, I will now go to bed.

I did so instantly, and slept so well, that Madame de Lignolle was obliged to call me the next morning to assist her in dressing.

"How have you passed the night, Mademoiselle de Brumont?" she said, with great cheerfulness."

"Very well, indeed; and Madame?"

"I have slept very bad."

"Your eyes are nevertheless very bright and your complexion fresh, Madame."

"But I can assure you I have not slept well," she said, smiling.

"It is perhaps the fault of Monsieur the Count."

"How so? Answer me, mademoiselle, why you think so."

"Madame—"

"Explain yourself. I must know."

"I beg you will excuse me, Madame; I have perhaps displeased you with this pleasantry, though I meant no harm."

"Not at all, but I do not understand it; therefore explain it, and make haste, for I do not like to wait."

"Madame—"

"Mademoiselle, you put me out of patience. Speak, I will have it."

"Madame, I will obey you. It is true that the Count is nearly fifty, but Madame is, I understand, very young?"

"I am sixteen."

"It is true that the Count appears to have very indifferent health; but Madame is pretty."

"Without flattery, do you think so?"

"I feel confident I tell you no more than you are accustomed to hear."

"You are very polite, Mademoiselle de Brumont, but let us return to what you were speaking about"

"Most willingly. It is true that the Count is the husband of Madame; I think it is not long that Madame has been a wife."

"About two months."

"I concluded from that, that M. de Lignolle, still amorous of his spouse, had—"

"Well what has he?"

"Paid a visit to Madame during the night"

"No, Monsieur never comes to me during the night."

"Perhaps then you were together late in the evening, and the Count was teasing you?"

"Teasing me! And for what?"

"When I said teasing, I only meant such caresses as are permitted between husband and wife."

"What, is that all? And do you think I could not sleep soundly during the night because in the evening my husband had kissed me five or six times? I know not what madness possesses the world, but they are all talking to me in this singular manner!"

Having said this, the Countess went with her *fille de chambre* into her dressing-room, and told me she would soon return. Left alone, I began to reflect on the conversation which had passed between us. The woman astonishes me! But perhaps she amuses herself at my expense! But no; she must have spoken seriously, for she had such an air of innocence, and such a look of candour. Yet, it is possible that a young woman, married two months, should pique herself on being as ignorant of certain things as she was two months previously! My hint was so plain! why then so obstinately pretend not to understand me? Is it a polite manner she has adopted of repulsing a joke which does not please her? I doubt it. Imperious and lively as she is, she might easily have told me it displeased her; but, on the contrary, she insisted on an explanation, which was very diffi cult for me to give, and which, after all, she affected not to take in the true sense, and then made this equivocal reply: "*What, do you think that I should not sleep soundly during the night, merely because my husband may have embraced me five or six times in the course of the evening before?"*

Upon my honour, Madame, I am astonished at you, and confess myself at a loss to reconcile your new married state to your virgin airs and your conversation, either too innocent or too free.

Ilustration Madame de Lignolle, prompt in keeping her word with me, returned soon after in a very simple but elegant dishabille.

Madame de Lignolle, prompt in keeping her word with me, returned soon after, in a very simple but elegant dishabille. She passed into her boudoir, where she begged me to follow her, and ordered chocolate. We were just going to breakfast, when M. de Lignolle ran into the room in a great rage, exclaiming: "No, no, I will not pardon it, I will be forever inexorable."

"Good God! What is the matter with you?" said the Countess; "I never saw you in such a passion before."

"A most frightful circumstance, Madame!"

"What?"

"You slept tranquil this night, and a seducer was near you."

"You dream of nothing but seducers, Monsieur; but tell me what all this noise is about?"

"I discovered it by mere accident."

"But the accident has discovered nothing to me."

"The wretch would have ravished your honour."

"What should I have suffered?"

"Never trust any more in those who call themselves your friends. They are only pretended friends who have given it you."

"What! What is it?"

"Who have answered for—"

"Monsieur—"

"The prudence—"

"Will you explain—"

"Of their conduct.—"

"I shall lose my patience!"

The Count, whose motions I observed, far from addressing any of these injurious apostrophes to me, did not even look at me, and perhaps knew not that I was present. Nevertheless, some of his disagreeable reflections seemed so applicable to my present situation, that I was far from being at ease.

Madame de Lignolle, burning with impatience, rose hastily, seized her husband by the collar, shook him with great violence, and said to him: "You have put me beside myself, Monsieur! You have sported with my curiosity so long, I cannot bear it. Explain yourself, I insist on it."

"Well, Madame, you shall hear it all. I know not by what secret inspiration I was prompted to go just now into your antechamber and discovered a pamphlet lying open, I approached it, I read, and horrible to tell, Madame, I found it to be the most dangerous, the most abominable of books! A philosophical work!"

"Ah, let us see it!"

"*Le Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inegalité parmi lés Hommes.*<37>"

Being now satisfied on my own account, I ventured to interrupt M. de Lignolle, and to ask him what this treatise on the inequality of men had to do with the honour of women.

"Yes, yes," cried the Countess, "inform us if you please."

"What it has to do with it, Madame," replied the Count with a great deal of warmth, "do you not perceive it? What! A philosophical work read publicly in your house! All your servants become philosophers and you not tremble at the consequences?"

"What harm could that produce, Monsieur?"

"Every species of mischief, Madame. As soon as a servant becomes a philosopher be corrupts all his companions, robs his master and seduces his mistress."

"Seduce! It is always seduction with you, Monsieur, and why? I shall make a clear house in the antechamber? What! Will you turn away all our servants?"

"Yes, Madame."

"I do not understand that, Monsieur. If any one of them is in fault, I consent to your discharging him."

"I'll send them all away Madame."

"No, Monsieur."

"They are all contaminated; it requires but half an hour for a philosopher to corrupt them."

"I wish, Monsieur, you would cease to stun me thus."

"Yes! I confess that when I see in the hands of my servants, "*The Philosophical Thoughts*," or "*The Philosophical Dictionary*," or "*The Discourse concerning a Happy Life*," or the "*Essay on the Origin of the Inequality amongst Mankind*," etc., I am very much alarmed, and I think nothing safe in my house."

In the meantime the Countess, furious to see, though undoubtedly for the first time, that M. de Lignolle had dared to disobey her, ran and threw herself into an armchair; there giving way to the violence of her passion, she struck the ground with her feet, bit her hands, and continued to rave like a mad woman. Insensible to her comic despair, the comic enemy of philosophers proceeds with the following rhapsody:

"How many wretches of this class have been perverted by the philosophy of the age! It has produced more crimes and suicides of every kind, than were ever caused to be committed by misfortune and misery. I might, perhaps, while condemning his opinions and lamenting his errors, become the friend of a man who was a partisan of this false philosophy: but nothing shall induce me to keep servants who are philosophers."

"Monsieur," exclaimed the Countess with much fierceness, "you shall keep them notwithstanding, for it is my pleasure."

At this decisive word the good husband forgets his anger, and replies with great moderation: "Since it is your pleasure, Madame, it must also be mine, but at least permit me to make a few observations."

"I hope you will excuse me, Monsieur," she interrupted, and "I repeat it that it is my pleasure."

"Very well, Madame," he said, holding down his head, "very well, it shall be so, but you will see, you will see the consequences. Your servants will give you lessons enough; there is not one, I am sure, who is not a philosopher at heart; consequently they will become drunken, insolent and careless. Your groom will lame your horses; your coachman will overturn his passengers; your cook will spoil the sauces; your major domo will destroy your linen and your clothes, your housemaids will break your furniture, your stewards will rob you, your *fille de chambre* will betray your secrets and calumniate you, and your lady's-maid will become pregnant in your house."

He left us, and did well in so doing, for I should have been sorry to have burst into a fit of laughter before him. Whilst he was thus depicting to us future evils, a real evil happened to us; the chocolate had become cold. Judge my mortification when the Countess talked of sending it back, for I had but a poor dinner the day before, and went to bed without my supper. I trembled lest the chocolate should not come back again, and therefore proposed to warm it by the fire of the boudoir. "A good idea," said the Countess, "and in the meantime I will write a letter."

This letter was to a dear aunt who had brought her up from her infancy. I wrote at her dictation about thirty lines of respectful compliments, to which she added

twenty lines of tender recollections, and about twenty-five lines more of childish secrets. I thought I should never have finished. Mortified at the idea of beginning the fourth page of this epistle, I took the liberty of informing the Countess, that the chocolate must be warm, "I believe it," she answered, "but let us finish the letter first."

I may as well tell you everything which augmented the embarrassment of my situation, which was truly grievous. A wretched *fille de chambre* whom I could not look at a second time on account of her ugliness, kept loitering about the fireplace. There was a something philosophical about this girl, which made me tremble for my breakfast; a secret presentiment seemed to warn me, that her awkwardness would prove fatal to me, and her continual motion gave me continual distractions.

Madame Lignolle, whose letter did not advance very fast, perceived several times my badly disguised anxiety and restlessness, and at length, asked me with warmth if anything troubled me. At the very moment when the impatient mistress put this question to me, the clumsy blundering Abigail in brushing the hearth, rolled the chocolate pot in the ashes. I perceived the disaster; the pen fell from my hands, my eyes were lifted up to heaven, my head thrown backward by means of a convulesive motion, and I nearly fell over on the floor.

"Ah! Madame," cried I, "the chocolate! The chocolate!" But the Countess, after turning her eye first towards the chimney, and then towards me, with the greatest serenity, parodied the words of a hero, by saying: "Well, mademoiselle, and what has the chocolate to do with the letter you are writing?"<38>

Carried away by my despair, I replied in rather an indifferent manner. She then addressed the servant, and told her to take it to the kitchen, and order some more to be sent up. This generous order administered the balm of consolation to the very bottom of my soul; I felt my strength revive, my ideas brighten up, and my style become animated; and Madame de Lignolle assisting me, I concluded by saying an infinity of pretty things to her dear aunt.

The letter being finished, I closed the secretaire, and the breakfast once more made its appearance. They brought a little table, two cups are set, the refreshing beverage is poured out, the Countess came to sit down, I took my place opposite her, and I thought the happy moment was come!

But, oh, a misfortune more insupportable than the first! An unhappy footman brings a letter; the Countess noticed the postmark. "Besançon!" she exclaimed, and uttering a cry of joy, rose up precipitately. She struck her two thighs against the table, which was very light, and rolled it with what was on it into my lap.

I made a dreadful cry, but it did not proceed from any injury I received on the occasion, nor because the table was broken, the china scattered, the chocolate pot bruised, and my best petticoat spoiled! No! I thought of nothing but the chocolate, now running in floods upon the carpet.

While I remained motionless, the Countess, in a stooping attitude, with her eyes fixed on the much prized paper, her hands trembling, and her voice faltering, read:

> You may conceive, my dear niece, that after having experienced so much pleasure in educating you, how much I was hurt at not being able to attend at your marriage: but

the Parliament of Besançon have at length had a sitting; I have gained my lawsuit, and shall be with you as soon as my letter, viz., on the 15th instant.

"The 15th, that is to-day," cried the Countess, kissing the paper; "Oh, what good news! Oh, my dear aunt, I shall see you once more! Oh, how delighted I shall be!!" At this moment I perceived a remnant of the breakfast under a table. I darted forward, seized it, and kissed it, crying: Oh, precious little loaf, I am enchanted at having found you. I sat down in a corner to devour my insufficient prey, while Madame de Lignolle, by turns reading and kissing her letter, cut capers from one end of the dressing-room to the other.

At length she rang for the footman: "Saint-Jean, tell the porter that I am at home to-day to no one but the Marchioness d'Armincour. Mademoiselle Brumont, I disturbed you early this morning, but you may now dispose of your forenoon as you please. I made the Countess a profound reverence, and withdrew to shut myself up in my little apartment. The reader knows nearly all I could say to my sister Adelaide, to whom I wrote.

As I sealed my letter, the ugly *femme de chambre* came to dress my hair, by order of her mistress. I cursed her frightful face to myself, for spoiling my breakfast. You can easily conceive that, being naturally polite, I did not let her hear what I said. You will guess perhaps that during the operation which now took place, I yielded my head to her hands and shut my eyes.

I must, however, do justice to poor Jeanette, for though unfavoured by nature, she was endowed by art. She could dress with great taste, and handled her comb with wonderful dexterity. But how many acquired talents are necessary to counterbalance one natural gift? How much at this moment did I regret my little Justine!

When Jeanette had finished her task I did not retain her. Had it been Justine she would have remained without my asking her; at first perhaps she might have delayed my toilette, but with what promptitude should we have made up for lost time! I was now obliged to undertake the painful task of dressing myself as a woman from head to foot, which I at last accomplished, after having spent more time than an idle young girl, on a cold winter's morning, when she is going, against her will, to hear mass at a country church, with her grandmother.

In the meantime the clock struck three, and the Marchioness arrived. M. de Lignolle, apparently still in dudgeon, informed us that he would dine in the city. A servant announced that dinner was ready. At table the young Countess overwhelmed me with compliments. Their questions, sometimes embarrassing—my answers, sometimes equivocal—their credulity—my confidence—the praises with which I repaid their eulogiums—all ought, perhaps, to be related; but I feel matter of a more interesting nature pressing upon me.

Oh, Muse of History! Astonishing virgin! Who has been so often violated? Eloquent and truth-speaking goddess, who is made to lie with so little address! Maiden, respectable and wise by whom so many impertinent follies are transmitted to us! August Clio, it is you I invoke! Since you know everything, I have no occasion to tell you that of all the adventures which have amused my ardent youth, the one I am going to relate is not the least foolish; and the gallant recital I am about to make gives me real uneasiness. Where, at the same time, shall I find the gauze, decently to veil it, that the truth may not be left quite naked? I shall hurt the least delicate ear if I use the proper language; and if I soften it down I shall render it unnatural. How then, without

outraging any one's modesty, can I satisfy the curiosity of all the world? Oh, chaste goddess, cast a look of pity upon the most embarrassed of your servants! Descend from heaven to his relief; enter his chamber, and guide the pen he is now mending!

"Very well, my child," said Madame d'Armincour to Madame de Lignolle, "but, at present, let us be free; let us speak seriously. Are you satisfied with your husband?"

"Yes, Madame la Marchioness," she replied.

"Why do you call me Madame la Marchioness? Do you think I shall always call you Madame la Countess? It is right, to be sure, when persons are present; but between ourselves it is nonsense! You are a child whom I have reared, therefore call me aunt, and I will call you niece. Tell me candidly, shall you soon present me with a little nephew?"

"I do not know, my dear aunt."

"That is to say, you are not certain?"

"I do not know."

"Have you not perceived any changes in your health?"

"Eh? Plait-il, ma tante?"

"Tu n'as pas eu quelques absences?"

"Des absences! Est-ce que j'étais sujette à avoir des absences."

"Non pas quand tu étais fille; mais depuis que tu es femme?"

"Hé bien! Les femmes deviennent-elles folles?"

"Folles! Il n'est bien question de follié! Cela ne ports pas au cerveau, dans ce cas-là, ma nièce."

"Que me demandez vous donc, ma tante?"

"Je demande—je demande—pourquoi donc affecter? Mademoiselle de Dumont ne doit pas te gêner, elle est ton aînèe; une fille de vingt ans, quoiqu'elle soit sage, n'ignore plus certaines choses."

"Je ne vous comprends pas, ma tante."

"Ma nièce, trouvez-vous mes questions indiscrètes?"

"Non, sûrement; parlez, ma tante, parlez."

"Ecoute, mon enfant, si je m'en mêle, c'est par intérêt pour toi. D'abord, si l'on m'avait crue, tu n'aurais pas épousé M. de Lignolle; je le trouvais trop vieux. Un homme de cinquante ans."

"Je sais bien qu'à cet age là, M. d' Armincour était un pauvre sire—mais enfin on prétend qu'il y en a—Dis-moi, le comte remplit-il son devoir?"

"Oh, M. de Lignolle fait tout ce que veux."

"Tout ce que tu veux!"

"Et tous les jours?"

"Tous le jours."

"Je t'en félicite, ma niece, tu es forte heureuse. Ah cà, mais pourtant, ma petite, il faut prendre garde."

"A quoi, ma tante?"

"Il faut ménager ton mari."

"Comment?"

"Comment, ma niece. De ne faut pas vouloir trop souvent"

"Vouloir quoi? Ma tante."

"Ce donc il est question, ma nièce."

"Mais il ne semble qu'il n'est question de rien, ma tante,"

"De rien! Tu appelles cela rien, toi! Tu ne sais donc pas qu'à l'âge de M. de Lignolle, aller ce train-la, c'est s'épuiser."

"S'épuiser!"

"Sans doute. Il y a des fatigues que les femmes supportent, mais auxquelles les hommes ne resistant pas."

"Des fatigues?"

"Assurément, et puis vos ages sont tres-différents, ma niece."

"Mais que fait l'age?"

"Cela fait tout, ma petite, et ne va pas tuer ton mari.

"Tuer mon mari!"

Oui, le tuer, mon enfant; il n'est pas rare de voir des hommes en mourir."

"Mourir de quoi, ma tante?"

"De cela, ma niece."

"De cela! de faire lea volontés de leurs femmes!"

"Oui, ma niece, quand lea volontés de leurs femmes sont infinies."

"Eh bien, M. de Lignolle ne s'en porte pas plus mal."

"Tant mieux; ma nièce; mais, je vous le répète, prenez-y garde, parce que cela ne durerait pas."

"Je voudrais bien voir—vous riez, ma tante?"

"Oui, je ris, avec ton je voudrais bien voir! Que ferais tu, je t'en prie?"

"Ce que je ferais! Je lui dirais que je le veux."

"Ah! voilà du nouveau!"

"Vous croyez que je n'oserais pas! Cela m'est arrivé deja plus d'une fois."

"Et cela t'a réussi?"

"Certainement. Quand M. de Lignolle hésite, je me fâche."

"Ah! Ah!"

"Quand il refuse, je commande."

"Et il obéit?"

"Il murmure, mais il s'en va."

"Mais, s'il s'en va, il ne fait donc pas ce que tu veux?"

"Pardonnez-moi, ma tante."

"Il revient done?"

"Il revient ou ne revient pas, que m'importe?"

"Comment!"

"Pourvu qu'il obéisse"

"Mais—"

"Et que je sois la mâitresse"

"Mais—"

"De faire tout ce qui me plait."

"Ah ça, ma niece, il y a donc une demi-heure que nous nous parlons sans nous entendre? Savez-vous bien que cela m'impatiente?"

"Comment, ma tante."

"Eh oui, ma nièce, je vous dis blanc, vous me répondez noir; il semble que je vous parle hébreu."

"Ce n'est pas ma faute."

"Est-ce la mienne? Je vous fais la question la plus simple, et vous paraissez ne pas comprendre! Quand je parle des devoirs de M. de Lignolle, j'intends ses devoirs de mari."

"Fort bien, ma tante."

"Et quand vous me répondez qu'il fait vos volontés, je crois que vous voulez dire vos volontés de femme."

"Justement, ma tante."

"De femme marié."

"Sans doute, ma tante."

"D'une femme jeune, vive, et qui aime le plaisir."

"Précisément, ma tante."

"Ainsi, vous m'entendiez?"

"Oui, ma tante."

"Et vous répondiez à ce que je vous demandais?"

"Oui, ma tante."

"Vous répondiez que M. de Lignolle remplissait son devoir de mari?"

"Oui, ma tante."

"Tous le jours?"

"Oui, ma tante."

"Eh bien, ma nièce, je trouve cela fort étonnant et fort heureux."

["You have not experienced something missing?"

"Missing! Have I ever had anything missing"

"Not when you were a girl, but since you became a woman."

"Well! Do women become stupid?"

"Stupid! It's not a question of stupidity! It does not affect the brain!"

"What are you asking me, then, aunt?"

"I'm asking—I'm asking—why should I use euphemisms? (The presence of) Mademoiselle de Brunont should not worry you, she is older. There are certain things which a sensible woman of twenty should not be ignorant of."

"I don't understand, aunt."

"My niece, do you find my questions indiscreet?"

"No indeed. Speak, aunt, speak."

"Listen my child, if I bring this up, it's for your benefit. Actually, had I been listened to, you would not have married M. de Lignolle; I thought him too old. A man of fifty!"

"I know well that at that age, M. de Lignolle is a poor fellow–but some say that there are—"

"Tell me, does the Count perform his duties?"

"Oh, M. de Lignolle does everything I wish."

"Everything you wish!—and every day?"

"Every day."

"I congratulate you, my niece, you are very fortunate. But you must be careful."

"Of what, aunt?"

"You must take care of your husband."

"How?"

"How, my niece. Do not make him do it too often."

"Do what, aunt?"

"Do what we are talking about, my niece."

"But it's nothing much, aunt."

"Nothing much! So you say. You don't realise that at M. de Lignolle's age you will wear him out if you go on like that."

"Wear him out!"

"Undoubtedly. There are exertions which a woman can endure, but a man cannot."

"Exertions?"

"Just so, and also your ages are very different."

"But what has age got to do with it?"

"Everything, my niece. Don't kill your husband."

"Kill my husband!"

"Yes, kill him, my child; it is common to see men dying—."

"Dying of what, aunt?"

"Of that, my niece"

"Of that! Of doing what his wife wishes!

"Yes, my niece, if those wishes are infinite."

"Well, M. de Lignolle seems no worse."

"So much the better, my niece, but I say again, be careful, because it may not last."

"I'd like to see that! You're joking, aunt!

"Yes, I'm laughing at your *I'd like to see that*. What will you do, I ask you?"

"What will I do! I'll tell him I want it."

"Ah, that's new!"

"You think I won't dare. It's happened once already."

"And it worked for you?"

"Certainly. When M. de Lignolle demurs, I get angry"

"Ah! Ah!"

"When he refuses, I command him."

"And he obeys?"

"He grumbles, but he goes away."

"But if he goes away, then he does not do what you say?"

"Excuse me, aunt?"

"He comes back, then?"

"What do I care if he comes back or not?"

"What!

"Provided he obeys me."

"But—"

"And I will be the mistress."

"But—"

"To do whatever I want."

"Ah, my niece, we have been talking for half an hour, without understanding one another. Do you know how this irritates me?"

"How?"

"Now, my niece, I say white, and you say black; it's as if I were speaking Hebrew."

"That's not my fault."

"Is it mine? I ask you the simplest question, and you appear not to understand! When I speak of M. d Lignolle's duties, I mean his marital duties."

"Very well, aunt."

"And when you answer that he does your wishes, I believe you speak of the wishes of a woman."

"Exactly, aunt."

"Of a married woman."

"Undoubtedly, aunt."

"You answer that M. de Lignolle fulfils his marital duties?"

"Yes, aunt."

"Every day?"

"Yes, aunt."

"Well, my niece, I find that very surprising and very fortunate."

"But, my dear child, I shall repeat it over again, you must listen to reason; your husband is no longer young, and you will be the death of him."

"That is what I do not comprehend, aunt."

"How so I don't you comprehend that a man who is fifty years of age cannot, without endangering his life, gratify a young wife whose appetite is immoderate?"

"Appetite, aunt, is quite out of the question."

"Well, then, I shall say desires, if you will have it so."

"But who told you that my desires were immoderate?"

"Yourself, niece, since you pretend to keep the command in that particular."

"Well, aunt?"

"And that you compel your husband to act foolishly every day."

"Indeed, madam, you are quite out of temper today."

"You resemble all other young wives when they are contradicted upon this point."

"Would you wish then—"

"They think of nothing else in the world."

"Would you wish, I say,—"

"That is always for them the *summum bonum*."

"Do you wish to oblige me to clear the place?"

"I confess that it is one of the greatest gratifications this life can afford."

"Oh! How my patience is worn out!"

"Go on, go on, I am well aware of your being of a petulant disposition, but I am your parent, and you must listen to me."

"Great God!"

"You shall not take yourself off, stop here, and listen to what I have to say; I insist upon your promising not to compel Monsieur de Lignolle daily to obey what you term your will."

"Tell me, pray, Madame, wherefore should I suffer myself to be governed one day in preference to another?

"What a fine reasoning!"

"Why should I not do this day what I have achieved yesterday?"

"But according to your pleasant calculation, there would be no reason why it should not last forever."

"I understand it so, and I expect there will be no end to it."

"What queer answers she returns!"

"You may say whatever you please, aunt, I will not suffer my husband to offend me."

"She must be crack-brained!"

"Nor to rule me!"

"What nonsense!"

"I do not prevent his acting as he pleases."

"She is not in her proper senses"

"But let him allow me to do whatever I like."

"Allow you? That cannot be. It is only with her husband that a modest woman—"

"With him when it suits me; with another if it suit me better."

"For shame, niece, what principles!"

"The main object is, that I wish to be left entirely at liberty."

"Indeed, I don't comprehend your meaning."

"And that in every respect, I be left to act as I please."

"So then, Madame, you wish me to be gone."

"It is you, Madame, who wish me to leave the room?"

"How provoking!"

"I can't put up with her language!"

"Act according to my advice, my dear niece."

"Speak reason to me then, my dear aunt, I am no longer a child."

They both had left their seats, and were equally irritated. However, to the very plain questions of the old lady, her niece, with as much innocence as truth, had returned answers at once so candid, so ambiguous, and so extraordinary that I began to suspect strange things. I endeavoured to pacify Madame d'Armincour by saying:

"There is every reason to believe, Madame, that my lady Countess is not extremely happy in the particular case you mean her to understand. I would even venture to lay any wager that she is as far from deserving as from comprehending the sense of your reproaches."

"Do you think so? If that he the case, do you put questions to her, Mademoiselle de Brumont, and let us try whether she can he made to return plain, satisfactory answers."

I then addressed the niece: "Will my lady Countess allow me—"

"She did not give me time to proceed, but instantly replied: "Most willingly, mademoiselle."

"Does M. de Lignolle sleep in my lady Countess's chamher?"

"No."

"Never?"

"Never. Does he go there in the course of the night?"

"Never."

"He, perhaps, postpones going till the morning?"

"Yes, when I am up."

"Does he ever, in the course of the day, lock himself up with your ladyship?"

"No."

"Does he remain with you, Madame, to a late hour in the evening?"

"When our supper is over, he will stop at most five minutes."

"How does he spend those five minutes, pray?"

"In wishing me good night."

"How does he wish your ladyship good night?"

"He kisses me."

"In what manner does he kiss you?"

"As people generally do kiss."

"Where are his kisses applied?"

"Where kisses are commonly, I suppose."

"I would wish to know?"

"On my forehead, my eyes, my chin."

"Is that all?"

"That is all."

"Exactly so?"

"Exactly so. What would you wish for more?"

"Well, now, my lady Marchioness, what do you think of that!"

She replied: "I think it would be very incredible, and very shocking!"

She immediately ran up to Madame de Lignolle, saying: "Tell me, niece, are you a wife or a maiden?"

"A wife, since I have got a husband."

"Have you got a husband?"

"Certainly, since M. de Lignolle has married me."

"But, are you sure that he has married you?"

"Can you doubt it!"

"Where did he marry you?"

"At church."

"Nowhere else!"

"Are people ever married elsewhere?"

"Tell me, child, on your wedding day—indeed, I am very sorry I had it not in my power to come to Paris on your wedding day, I was on my guard against this Monsieur de Lignolle, this amiable gentleman of fifty, who seemed to me to exhibit no traces of intellect in his countenance: but I had expressly recommended that you should be provided with the necessary preliminary instructions. Then, tell me, my dear child, what happened to you on the wedding night?"

"Nothing, my dear aunt"

"Nothing. Mademoiselle de Brumont! Is it possible that the nuptial night had no incidents? Unhappy creature!" added the good-natured aunt, with a flood of tears, "how I pity your case! But give me an explicit answer, did not your husband go to bed to you, as is usual upon such occasions?"

"He did, aunt."

"Well, and what did he do afterwards?"

"Why, he wished me a good night, and then went away."

"What! Go and leave you on such an occasion?" exclaimed the Marchioness, in tears. "Ah, my charming little niece! Your youth and beauty merited not such treatment!"

"My dear aunt, how you distress me."

"Unhappy child! You are still a virgin, even after a two months' marriage! What a strange and wretched destiny is yours!"

"But pray explain yourself, my dear aunt, you terrify me with your apprehensions."

"I really cannot, my dear child, my grief suffocates me, and deprives me of utterance. Do you, Mademoiselle de Brumont, who express yourself with so much ease and perspicuity, do you explain the matter to my young friend. You are not ignorant on these subjects, I presume. You certainly must know something."

"Oh, my lady Marchioness, I have heard some conversations on the matter, and have read some instructive books."

"Then let me request you to instruct my niece. I authorise you so to do, and your compliance will confer an obligation on me."

I did not require the request to be repeated. I gave a full explanation, because she was ignorant of the matter; but, as for you, courteous reader, the intelligence would be no novelty.

Illustration: "A strange business!" rejoined Madame de Lignolle

"A strange business!" rejoined Madame de Lignolle, astonished at the declaration she had heard; "but are you really serious, or are you only joking?"

"I would take no such liberty with you, my lady Countess, I replied."

"But pray, my dear aunt, is everything that Mademoiselle de Brumont tells me exact and true?"

"Undoubtedly, my dear niece, she has fully explained the whole business to you, as if it had been the study of her life."

"But really, ought M. le Comte to behave to me in such a manner, after being married to him two months?"

"Oh, my dear niece! M. le Comte has insulted you! Yes, he has insulted you, and are you not ugly!"

She replied: "Not so; I do not hide my face, and as for my shape, it is visible, and is not amiss."

"Perhaps he thinks your arms are not well turned?"

"Again I say, it is not so! I shall take off my glove."

"But he may find fault with the shape of your foot?"

"There also he is mistaken, as you see—I have no shoe on."

"He may imagine that your bosom is not prominent; your skin coarse, and your legs ill-shaped?" To all these insinuations, she replied in the most decisive manner, and presented palpable evidence of a contrary supposition.

The frank and unguarded manner of the young Countess, and the warmth with which she resented the criminal coldness and indifference of her husband, induced me to engage more deeply in the conversation.

Being anxious to see how far her passions might lead her, in gratifying her resentment, I hinted that there might be some secret deformity in her person. Upon this, she discovered, by an expressive gesture, a motion as quick as thought, that she was ready to contradict the injurious supposition in the most unqualified manner, and treat it as a falsehood of the vilest stamp. But Madame d'Armincour, quickly perceiving the intention of the Countess, unfortunately for me, prevented its immediate execution.

"My dear friend," she said to her niece, the matter is beneath your attention. I have never lost sight of you since your childhood. I know that nothing is amiss, and Mademoiselle de Brumont may rely on your word. Besides, it is not worth your while to be angry."

"What! Not angry, when my husband tells an atrocious untruth?"

"Perhaps he is not so much to blame."

"He is an insolent wretch and a base character."

"Perhaps, niece, he has been ill some time?"

"Not for the last two months."

"But, perhaps, he has met with some family misfortune."

"None, whatsoever, for he was quite happy when he received me in marriage."

"It may he that some great calamity has taken place."

"Yes, the progress of philosophy."

"Perhaps he is engaged in some work of deep meditation."

"O, yes, the composition of riddles. But, my dear aunt, cease to take his part, for if you do, you will irritate me beyond all patience. I am now fully sensible of the vileness of his conduct, and as soon as he comes home, depend upon it, he shall give me an explanation, he shall fully apologise to me for his strange behaviour; he must marry me on the spot, or we shall see."

In the meantime, the day began to draw towards a close; and it was not without some difficulty that I obtained a moment of liberty from the Countess. I retired, however, to my apartment, and shortly after M. de Valbrun made his appearance. The Vicomte informed me, that a confidential person was dispatched to the Hôtel de B*** to deliver the letter from Justine into the hands of the Marchioness de B***. The answer was to this effect:

> She who sends you does me a great favour, I was rather uneasy about the person concerning whom she gives me information. Pray tell her to give me every information about the state of her affairs, as I am deeply interested in her favour. You may add, that M. de B***, who at first treated me rather coldly, has now acknowledged his error, and has received forgiveness. This is no secret, it may be communicated to those who may feel pleasure in my happiness.

M. de Valbrun then informed me that Madame de Fonrose was gone to the convent of Madame de Faublas. "Tomorrow morning," he said, "before eight o'clock, I will communicate to you what we have done."

After thanking the Vicomte in a proper manner, I put into his hands two letters; one of which I begged him to convey to the convent of Adelaide, and to put the other in the general post. As he left me, he gave me every assurance that he was going instantly to execute both these commissions. Oh! Fatal letter to M. de Belcourt! Ought I not to have had presentiment of all the uneasiness which thou wast likely to produce! But at the present moment, I may naturally ask why Mademoiselle de Brumont, having no other project in her head, than that of meeting with Sophia, felt, nevertheless, some displeasure at finding the old Marchioness, when she repaired to the apartment of the young Countess? But this emotion, douhtless, like many others of a similar stamp, arose from the circumstance that the Chevalier de Faublas, being summoned by love to atone for the endless injuries that matrimony continually inflicts on suffering beauty, felt himself invisibly attracted, while he only obeyed the impulse of his own imagination. I may ask, also, why the niece received the instructions of the aunt with listlessness and inattention, and fixing upon me, at intervals, glances that penetrated my inmost frame, did not show any strong desire to detain Madame d'Armincour for the rest of the evening, however highly she might esteem her in other respects. It was because, whatever the unfeeling philosophers of these modern times may assert, those sympathetic atoms, which they reject, issuing forth from the glowing person of a lively youth, and at the same moment, proceeding from the connubial charms of a young and interesting bride, approximate and coalesce to form their two persons into one. The lovely and gentle brunette, already felt this soft sway, and was sensible of the presence of an engaging young man; she was already guided by the powerful rays of that beneficent light, which I kindled in her eyes; and by that instinct which is so natural to the female sex, and which leads them to a decision in a way the most delicate, prompt and efficacious. Thus it is, certain subjects, and, in certain cases, a quickness of apprehension, rule the female soul in a way superior to the laboured deductions of reason. Madame de Lignolle felt undisguised contempt for the insignificance of a man who failed in his duty to her, both day and night; and, as it were mechanically, perceived in me one who could punish the offence, and satisfy the offended party. I might ask, why Madame d'Armincour, though favoured with long experience, never perceived that her presence was not desirable, and in spite of the ennui of her niece, kept her company till the return of M. de Lignolle. But these antiquated personages are doomed eternally to mar the enjoyment of the young, in

order, perhaps, to render their pleasures poignant by means of obstacles and interruptions, and thus secure to them more satisfaction from ultimate success. I do not desire however, to deliver my oracles of wisdom, or hold forth maxims of infallible truth, neither do I desire a blind submission to my precepts of morality. Often have I observed, that when woman enters into my thoughts, she introduces confusion into my imagination, and destroys the web of my arguments and calculations; hence it follows that when I wish to moralise, I deviate into pleasantry, and when I am eager to philosophise, I deliver a string of paradoxes.

At all events Madame d'Armincour favoured us with her company at supper. She spoke incessantly about the province of ——, where she brought up her niece; of her chateau which required to be repaired only once every year; of the keeper of the chateau, who performed the duty of her agent, whom she described as a most important individual; and whom she might be supposed to know best, without offending any other person. The conversation about this good André might have been prolonged till the next morning, but a little after midnight the Count's carriage was heard in the court.

XVII.

"A most disagreeable accident has hefallen me, cried M. de Lignolle, as he entered the apartment; you know the heautiful riddle that I have composed—"

"This, sir, is the Marchioness d'Armincour," said the Countess, interrupting him; "this is my aunt." The Count, being thus taken by surprise, commenced a long complimentary speech to the Marchioness, which she had not the patience to hear to the end. "Good night," she said abruptly to the Countess; "Good night, my dear Eleanor.<39> Tomorrow I will come at an early hour, and I hope I shall have the honour of saluting the Countess de Lignolle. Farewell, sir," she said, dryly, to M. de Lignolle, making a cold and distant curtsey, such as females usually reserve for men whom they disregard.

"You know my beautiful riddle," repeated the Count, as soon as she was gone.

"Mademoiselle de Brumont," interrupted the Countess, "please to retire to your apartment."

I complied without hesitation, but contrived to keep close to the door, and listen with the most profound attention.

M. de Lignolle began to repeat his observation about the riddle, when his lady interrupted him by observing that it was not his duty to make riddles, now that he was a married man, but to get children. "What, Madame!" he cried, with surprise.

"Why, sir," she replied, "is it my duty to tell you what a husband ought to do? If my aunt and Mademoiselle de Brumont had not informed me, I must have still been ignorant of these matters."

"My dear lady," he replied, "you quite misunderstand me; I know my duty as well as any other man."

"If so," she replied, "why do you not perform it? Perhaps you consider me to be ugly. During the last two months you have treated me with every degree of contempt. But why are you going to withdraw, sir?" On repeating these words Madame de Lignolle ran to the door, and secured it against his exit. "You must not quit this apartment, sir, until you have amply atoned to me for your insulting behaviour."

"Insulting behaviour! Madame."

"Yes, sir, I repeat the words; you have insulted me by not completing the marriage; you must perform your duty; I insist upon its immediate performance. If everything is correct, what I have heard is not a very unpleasing task; besides, it is your duty, and whether it is agreeable to you or not it must be performed. I insist upon its complete execution."

"But, Madame—"

"No buts, if you please, sir, it is the height of impertinence. Do you imagine that I am beneath your notice; that you have obtained a young and heautiful bride only to compose riddles for her amusement? *Vous me ferez un enfant, monsieur—vous m'en ferez un ! vous me le ferez ! vous me le ferez tout à l'heure!—tout à l'heure!—ici!—là!—à cette place-là!* [Give me a child, sir,—Give me one! Give me! Give me one now! At once! Here! Over there! In that place, there!"]

After this animated apostrophe, the Countess took her frightened admirer by the hand, and conducted him behind the curtains. I beheld the scene throught the keyhole by the light of a glimmering lamp; I beheld four feet moving up and down: Their position, which was no longer doubtful, gave me good reason to know that Lignolle was obtaining, or was on the point of obtaining, pardon for his sins.

What a strange character had I to sustain during this melodrama! The part of a spectator in such a case is most painful and mortifying, when he himself desires to be acting upon the stage. Ah! Cursed and curious creature, why did you not retire long before this critical moment? But what can you say for yourself, M. le Chevalier? Do you despair of your good fortune? Take courage, my good friend, your kind destiny still awaits you. Faublas is not doomed to act a secondary part in such an affair of gallantry. Listen to what the Countess has to say, and jump for joy.

"Excuse me, sir; perhaps I am in the wrong; perhaps my aunt, as well as Mademoiselle de Brumont, have only wished to have a little pleasantry at my expense. I was on the point of asking you to pass the whole night with me; but I perceive you would only take useless pains, and your best mode of proceeding is to retire to your own apartment."

"Madame, I heg your pardon; perhaps another time I shall he more successful."

"Another time! Sir, wait till I ask."

"Madame, I rely on your discretion."

"I make no promises, sir; I only request you to leave me alone."

As soon as he returned from her apartment, she came and opened the door, which he had shut. I instantly ran from my apartment, and repaired to hers.

"Madame, indeed, I am delighted."

"But why this foolish joy?" she interrupted.

"You can scarcely conceive, Madame."

"Mademoiselle de Brumont," she said, in a most serious and solemn tone, "if you had a correct notion of what sort of a man M. de Lignolle is, you would know that between him and me nothing has passed exciting joy and pleasure."

"What, no pleasure," Madame, cried I, "but what would you say if I told you how much rapture I feel at your disappointment? What would you say if I announced to you that your kind destiny has conducted an avenger into your apartment?"

"An avenger?"

"Yes, you now behold a young man at your feet—one who loves you passionately—who feels every sentiment of tenderness for you, and every degree of admiration for your charms!"

"You are really a young man, and you love me! But perhaps it is not love," exclaimed the Countess; "You are here, Mademoiselle de Brumont, but are you really a young man?"

"My charming Countess," I replied, "can have no doubt upon that head."

"Well, then," she said, "avenge my cause; be my avenger, marry me forthwith—I command you—I insist upon it."

"My dear Eleanor," I replied, "you need not command me. It is the most ardent wish of my soul."

The good soul had every reason to be displeased with her husband, but the good man was unintentionally the author of my success. He had actually done so little that everything remained for me to do, but in enterprises of this description every obstacle only serves to add new fuel to the flame. My courage increased with the difficulties opposed to it, and acquired force from the recollection of past success. A few half-smothered sighs, the forerunners of bliss, announced my approaching triumph, and a mixture of pain and rapture completed the conquest over a young and innocent heart. This triumph was indeed of a most delicious nature, in which the victor, highly pleased with the transports of his conquered antagonist, finds, in communicating pleasure, an additional relish for his own joys.

In justice to the quickness of apprehension possessed by this youthful Countess, I must state, that as soon as she recovered the use of her speech, she required to know who I was. I was prepared beforehand for this obvious question, which a female of less sensibility would have asked in the first instance, and hesitated not to declare to my charming Eleanor, that I was called the Chevalier de Flourvac; that the injustice of my parents, who were eager to secure a large fortune to my elder brother, had determined them to compel me to become a *Génovéfain*.<40>

"Ah!" she cried, "they wished to make you a monk; and then you would never have married anyhody! What a frightful state!"

"But, my dear Eleanor," cried I, "something secretly whispered to me, that I had not the slightest inclination for that holy state. I did not, however, indulge the fond hope that my destiny had reserved for me the peculiar privilege of consummating a marriage not my own, while I feel a native instinct for the matrimonial state. Under this influence, I fled from the convent in which I was confined: and my friend, the Vicomte de Valbrun, indignant at the selfishness of my brother, and the cruelty of my parents, has given me an asylum, has provided me with this disguise, and found me a more agreeable retreat than his own abode. I must therefore consider myself peculiarly fortunate, and return thanks to heaven, for conducting me to a young, beautiful, and delightful virgin, for the companion of my softer hours."

"Heaven has been equally kind to me, my dear Flourvac," replied the Countess, embracing me tenderly, "and you shall keep me company till your parents are dead."

"My dear Eleanor," I replied, "you have taken a heavy charge upon yourself, for my father is still a young man."

"So much the better," she replied, "we shall be longer together. Stay with me till the death of your parents, my dear Flourvac."

"That is my determination and my wish."

While I was amusing the Countess with my invention of a family dispute, I helped her to put off the incumbrance of dress, which it had not occurred to me to do before, so eager was she to be revenged, and so prompt was I in executing her reasonable demands.

But now, kind reader, speaking without disguise, would you not wish to be in my place; in the arms of the charming Countess; and in the nuptial bed prepared for

another man. I need not tell you that these were the happiest moments of my life, though I may communicate to you the pleasing reveries in which my sportive imagination revelled with uncontrolled delight. While engaged with my amiable pupil, I did not forget the more amiable preceptor who initiated me in the mysteries of love. In both instances, unexpected and extraordinary occurrences that prepared my happiness, had, almost under the eyes of an eccentric and ridiculous husband, thrown me into the arms of his charming better half! I found myself in the place intended for M. de Lignolle, instructing the Countess in the noble science which I had learned from the beautiful Marchioness de B***. under the auspices of her Marquis. But, alas! Of these two rare and precious females, to whom my kind stars had rendered me so dear, one was already torn from me, and the other was doomed to see herself forsaken and undone.

But it would he disgraceful to me to quit my interesting pupil, without completing her education; and what master has been more favoured by fortune than I have been, in such a pupil as Madame de Lignolle? The most charming creature, the dearest object of my heart, possessed of the most seductive graces, as well as the utmost docility, and the happiest disposition of mind! What sensibility, vivacity, and address, were combined in her formation! The same night began and finished her education, and rendered her experience complete: a night that must always he reckoned the happiest, as well as the shortest of my existence.

Not long before daylight, we hecame weary of our pleasing toils, and fell into a sound sleep. My surprise was great when I awoke, and looking at my watch, found that it had gone twelve. "Heavens!" cried I, "M. de Valbrun has been waiting impatiently for me since eight o'clock!" I then quitted my young Countess as quietly as I could, and left her in a deep slumber.

I ran to my chamber, half dressed, and opening the little door facing the stair-case, neither met nor saw anybody. Oh, my dear Sophia! A little scrap of paper in the key-hole, caught my attention. The Vicomte had scrawled a few words on the slip of paper with a red pencil, and I found some difficulty in deciphering them:

> I knock, and you make no answer. Where are you, Mademoiselle de Brumont? What are you doing? I cannot tell, though I can guess. What a pleasant piece of news for the Baroness! I return in less than two hours but, will the Countess be up at two o'clock?

I soon after awoke my young mistress, and took my place beside her. On opening her eyes, she cast a glance at me, full of more vivacity than tenderness, and I had reason to imagine that the caresses which followed it were not totally disinterested. A few incoherent expressions escaped her, mingled with half smothered sighs. These symptoms quickly intimated to me that my young pupil was prepared for another lesson, and was secretly wishing to complete her education.

Who, kind reader, could refuse her the favour, if he was still able to bestow it? I therefore recommenced my essays, when a loud knocking resounded at the chamber-door. I quitted my post on this alarm, and was preparing to get out of bed, but the

Countess made me a signal to remain where I was, and then enquired with a firm voice, who was at the door?"

"It is I," replied M. de Lignolle, "are you not getting up?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Madame, it is very late."

"Yes, but I am busy."

"What are you doing?"

"I am composing with Mademoiselle de Brumont"

"I wish I could take part in the lesson."

"That cannot be, sir; you are not clever enough; you would hinder us from doing anything."

"Pray, Madame, what are you composing?"

"I am performing what you will have the credit of, that is, I am finishing a riddle."

"A riddle, indeed; you are in search of the word?"

"Yes, wait a minute, I shall find it."

"Now," she said," in a whisper to me, "this is the moment of complete vengeance and satisfaction. I wish to play him a trick, the recollection of which will amuse me fifty years hence, if I live so long. My dear Flourvac, he has cruelly interrupted our pleasant pursuit."

She said no more, but a glance and a gesture, as well as a tender kiss, conveyed to me an order to resume the exercise so unfeelingly interrupted.

Pleasure rendered me docile and submissive, and I obeyed without any murmur or remonstrance. Then, in order to prove to me, after Coralie, that more than one woman knows how, in a critical moment, to engage at once in many difficult occupations, and can at the same time act and speak most consistently and distinctly; Madame de Lignolle raised her voice, and said to the Comte: "Sir, do you listen at the door?"

"Yes, Madame," he replied, "since you will not let me in."

"Well, here is my riddle."

"Amo'l primo mio." (Piano a Faublas abbracciandolo.) "L'amo di molto."

"A mo'l primo mio," ridisse il Lignolo.

"Signor si," soggiunse ella. M' ama 'l secondo mio" (Piano a Faublas). "M' ami. Ah! .m'ami ê verro?"

Non risposi; ma l'abbracciai teneramente, mentre che 'l Lignolo con grandissima attenzione ridiceva: "M'ama 'I secondo mio"

"Bravo, signor," disse la contessina, "e 'l mio intégrale benche eomposto da due. nondimeno fa più che uno (Piano a Faublas). Deh! non ê la— la verità?—la verità—ben mio."

"Ma," disse Ligaolo, "dunque in prosa lo fate?"

"Signor—si—in pro—" sta volta sulla labra della svenuta la parola mori.

[I love my first," (Softly to Faublas, embracing him.) "I love him very much."

"I love my first," Lignolle repeated."

Yes, sir," she added. "My second loves me" (Softly to Faublas.) "You love me. Ah! Do you really love me?"

I did not answer; but I embraced her tenderly, while Lignolle with great attention repeated: "My second loves me."

"Bravo, sir," said the Countess, "and my all, though made up of two persons, only makes one."(Softly to Faublas.) "Ah! Isn't it the—the truth? The truth—my dear."

"But," said Lignolle, "so you're doing it in prose?"

"Sir—yes—in pro—" This time on the lips of the fainting woman the word died.]

However she had full time to recover her senses, before her husband, who wished to guess the riddle, had ceased to repeat even once, *my all, though made up of two persons, only makes one.* "Sir," replied the wild young Countess, more delighted than if she had composed an epic poem, "as it is a virtuous action, I must in conscience, acquaint you with a very essential point: My riddle is a species of enigma, consisting of two words. I must be frank with you, and declare that I will never tell it to you, and I am persuaded that you will never be able to guess it."

"Not guess it, Madame?" he replied, "I will go and shut myself up in my study, I will return to you in half an hour."

"Well, sir, let it be so, I shall then be up."

Accordingly he returned as soon as the half-hour had elapsed. I was sitting by the side of the Countess in her boudoir and was taking a large cup of chocolate, which I had asked for without much ceremony. "Ladies," said M. de Lignolle as he entered

the apartment, 2you both know my new and elegant riddle; it was criticised yesterday. Would you believe it, Mademoiselle de Brumont, it was criticised with great asperity, but envy lurks at the bottom of these censures."

"You are perfectly right, M. de Lignolle."

"I was yesterday engaged," he said, "in a circle of amateurs of the *belles lettres*, (here I must relate this unpleasant anecdote) when a riddle was proposed, which I immediately found out. Another person in the company hit upon the meaning exactly at the same moment as myself, yet the whole circle immediately congratulated him on his discovery, without taking the least notice of mine. This act of injustice has aroused my resentment, and has brought to my recollection a plan which I had meditated upon frequently before. It is the custom to notify every circumstance relating to riddles in the *Mercuré de France*,<41> as you know, mademoiselle, and at the end of every riddle, it is the custom to insert the name, surname, title, residence, and even province and city of the author. This is all perfectly right, because encouragement should be given to talent; but is it not a frightful circumstance that a man who regularly devotes three or four days of the week to the investigation of the words that compose a conundrum, or rebus, in each number of the *Mercuré*, should not be repaid for his labours by a small portion of glory, or literary adulation? This neglect is a proof of downright ingratitude, or I am much mistaken. But now for my plan: I am going to propose to the editor of the *Mercuré*, to open a public subscription, the produce of which shall be devoted to the publication of a large placard once a week, on which shall appear the names of the fortunate candidates who shall guess the conundrum, the riddle, and the riddle of the foregoing week."

"Your plan is excellent, Countess, but since you make mention of the riddle, pray have you guessed mine?"

"Not as yet," Madame, he replied, "with an air of confusion."

"Sir," she said, "if you succeed in finding both the words, I make you promise, while your plan is in agitation, to move heaven and earth to have my riddle inserted in the *Mercuré*, with its explanation, my name and yours, if you can solve it, and all the circumstances to which it gave rise."

"Madame," he replied, "what you say has excited my attention to the subject."

The entrance of a chariot into the court-yard interrupted the Count in the middle of his speech, when a footman announced the Marchioness d'Armincour. She made her entry rather precipitately, and going up directly to her niece, said; "My dear niece, how fares it with you to-day? Is there any change in your health?"

"Ah, you young rogue, I see you have every appearance of lassitude, and your eyes are dim; but it is all quite natural; I am no novice, I understand it all; I wish you joy on the occasion. Monsieur Le Comte, I equally congratulate you on your felicity; let us now be at peace; let us embrace, and be friends. Perhaps we shall have a little nephew in nine months?"

"That's very possible, cried the Countess; my dear aunt, you are perfectly right, but why don't you compliment Mademoiselle de Brumont?"

While the Marchioness turned round and engaged in conversation with me, I observed that M. de Lignolle approached the Countess, and whispered something into her ear. With every apparent attention to the aunt, my concern was to hear what the husband said to his wife:

"Forgive me, my dear," he said, "indulge the Marchioness in her mistake."

"What, sir?" she replied, "are you not perfectly satisfied with me?"

"Oh! By all means, I commend you for your discretion."

"Your compliment is quite unmerited," she replied, "my discretion is necessary and natural, and you owe me no thanks on that score."

M. de Lignolle seemed delighted with these expressions, and coming up to me said, "Mademoiselle, I owe you eternal obligations for the pains you have taken with my dear Countess, in instructing her in a part so full of difficulties."

"No difficulties, Monsieur le Comte," I replied, "quite the reverse."

"Oh, my dear mademoiselle," he answered, "I am quite at home in the business, and fully sensible of your extraordinary complaisance."

This frank and decisive compliment on the part of this paragon of husbands, quite disarmed me, I contented myself with repeating to him literally the equivocal compliment of his wife: "My complaisance is necessary and natural, and you owe me no thanks on that score.

After this round of compliments, the conversation became general, and nothing on one side or the other appeared worthy of being recorded, and transmitted to posterity. However, about two o'clock, a gentleman was announced, who wanted to speak with me. The Countess was for having him come up, but I, knowing him to be M. de Valbrun, opposed that step. "Well," she said, "let him speak to you here."

"That cannot be, Madame," I replied. She then gave me leave to retire, expressing a wish for my speedy return. I ran to the door, and seeing my friend, exclaimed: "Good morning, my dear Vicomte!"

"Good morning, my dear Chevalier?"

"Have you delivered the letter to my sister?"

"Yes, I have sent it to the convent. And the letter to my father?"

"Yes, I put it into the general-post myself."

"And how is my Sophia?"

"The Baroness has not seen her," he said; "but an apartment is bespoke for you in the convent, as you desired."

"Then let us depart, my dear Vicomte—-Let us set off instantaneously."

"But, he said, have we not agreed to wait some time?"

"No; I replied, I will not wait a moment"

"But consider the danger."

"I consider nothing; I will listen to notbing. O my dear Sophia, can I deliberate a moment, when I have a prospect of seeing you?"

"Yet hesitation and delay become necessary," observed he, "and it would be right to pause."

"My dear Vicomte," I replied, "if you will not accompany me, I must go by myself. I would rather perish a hundred times than not see my Sophia today!"

"Chevalier de Faublas! and the Countess?" he cried.

"What do you say, sir?" I replied, "the Countess is nothing when Sophia is in the case. As for my enemies, I defy them all."

"But can no consideration determine you to defer your departure?" he said.

"No, my dear Vicomte; and I repeat my determination to you. If you do not attend me, I must set out alone, but still my gratitude to you is unalterable."

"Well, then," said the Vicomte, "since nothing can make you comply with my wishes, I must surrender to your resolution; but grant me one request."

"Speak, and rely on my indulgence."

"Only wait till night," he said. "In a quarter of an hour I must dine with the Baroness, and at five o'clock I will conduct her to you. When you see her enter the house of the Countess, be assured that my carriage shall be ready for you at the door. Do you then come down by the private staircase and join me, when I promise you most solemnly that I will attend you to the convent."

"At six o'clock, precisely, my dear Vicomte."

"At six o'clock precisely, I pledge my word of honour to you.

At the very moment M. de Valbrun bade me farewell, the Countess came down to invite me back. The dear creature, no doubt, thought that she herself was the only object of my profound reverie during dinner, which, to my imagination, appeared tedious and uninteresting. But, oh, my dear Sophia, it was you, and you alone, that occupied the recesses of my heart.

When the dessert was over, and while we were drinking our coffee in the drawing-room, I several times looked at the Countess de Lignolle, and my eyes always met hers. I finally gazed voluntarily upon her sweet person. What vivacity! How blooming! What a beautiful skin! That pretty mouth! Ah, charming little woman, you deserve not to be forsaken on the second day of your marriage.

These reflections were the genuine effect of a compassionate feeling, too natural to be disapproved of by any one; but unfortunately I happened to be in a situation of mind when one reflection suggests an idea, speedily followed by another, which other ideas immediately displace, and thus it will occur that in consequence of this combination of ideas, that which was good in the origin turns out to be blameable in the end. Who, among yourselves, relying too much upon himself, would presume, in similar cases, after having settled the exact point where he should stop, would presume, I say, to declare that he will never go beyond it? Show then your wonted indulgence to a youth, who, with his usual candour, makes at once a painful and delicate avowal.

I drew near the Countess, leaned towards her, and whispered in ber ear: "Could not I, my young friend, have a private conversation with you in the boudoir?" Madame de Lignolle rose from her seat, and addressing her aunt, said: "Will you, Madame la Marchioness, permit me to leave here for a moment?"

"Go, go," replied. Madame d'Armincour; "I well know that young women have always—"

"Indeed," interrupted the Count, with a kind of sneer; do you know what these ladies are going to be about? Composing a riddle in prose."

"Ah, sir," replied the Countess; "What an ironical joy! How much bitterness! I don't wish to defend our production; it has cost us so little trouble. But it appears to me that whoever is incapable of guessing our riddles, or of composing any, has no right to be in an ill-humour, or to make game of us."

This said, the cunning little Countess took me into her boudoir, and, although we did not stop long, our riddle was finished before we left the place.

I impatiently called tardy evening to my relief; it came at last, and I felt overjoyed. When the Baroness was announced I was near fainting; I could hardly stand on my legs; I was scarcely able to make a slight inclination to my protectress; but as soon as this extreme agitation had subsided, I made towards my room. I had hoped that the Countess, while welcoming the Baroness, would not have noticed my making my escape; but the watchful eye of a lover never loses sight of the least motion of the cherished object. Madame de Lignolle saw me go, and cried out to me: Are you going, Mademoiselle de Brumont?"

"Yes, Madame."

"But you will soon come again, I hope?"

"Oh, yes!—Madame— I shall—re—return—yes—I will try—yes, Madame, as soon as possible."

I will confess that I could only speak in broken accents, and that I trembled as I bade her that fatal adieu. Poor little dear!

I crossed her apartment and my room, ran down the private staircase, leaped through the street door, and jumped into the Vicomte's carriage.

In the course of five minutes I reached the convent, the wished-for asylum. A nun let me in, and enquired who I was.

"The widow Grandval."

"I am going to conduct you into your apartment, sister."

"No, sister, pray tell me where all your boarders are collected now?"

"They are at prayers, sister."

"Where do they read those prayers?"

"In the chapel."

"And where is the chapel?"

"Facing you."

I ran to the chapel, the whole extent of which my inquisitive eye surveyed at once. A number of females were saying their prayers. One among them seemed particularly attentive to her devotions. My heart was moved, and beat violently. Methought I saw her long dark hair, her slender waist, her enchanting graces. I advanced a few paces—I beheld her! Gracious heavens! Faublas! Happy husband! Check the violence of this first transport; go quietly to kneel close to her.

Madame de Faublas was so preoccupied that she did not perceive a stranger had just placed herself by the side of her. I listened to the fervent prayer she was addressing to heaven.

"Great God!" she said, "it is true that I had been his guilty love; but thou hast allowed me to become his legitimate wife. I thought that a long absence had sufficiently punished a moment's weakness. If thy justice, nevertheless, has not relented; if, according to the august severity of thy verdicts thou hast decided that my offence could be obliterated only by an everlasting separation, almighty God! God of kindness! Who art pleased to display thy infinite mercy, even when thou punishest, remember that I am a mortal; hasten to strike the blow; take my life! A speedy death will prove a signal favour granted to thy victim; and, if thou shouldst deign to gratify her last wish, thou wilt allow, at her last hour, that she may see her husband once more!—once only!—Thou wilt permit Faublas to close her eyelids, and to receive her last breath."

I overheard her prayer. My first motion was to run before her, and to show her that husband she had called for. I nevertheless retained sufficient presence of mind to be made sensible we should be ruined if we were noticed, and had fortitude enough to moderate my impatience and check my excessive joy until such time as the church service was over, and that I might make myself known to Sophia when she was by herself, I relished only the happiness of admiring her.

The divine service had just finished. Sophia rose without even seeing me, because, absorbed in grief, she could see none of the surrounding objects. I regulated my steps after hers, and followed her gently, close behind. She had just left the chapel, and was going to cross the yard. Just as I was stepping into it, several men,<42> rushing on a sudden from the recess in which they were concealed, surrounded and seized me. Surprise and fright made me send forth a loud scream, a terrible cry, that reached the ears of Sophia.

My beloved, knowing my voice, turned round, too soon undoubtedly, since she could still see me. I myself heard her address to me a useless complaint. I saw her holding out her arms to me, and I saw her fall in the midst of the terrified women who surrounded her! Alas! Where are my arms! Where are my friends!

The barbarous satellites overpower me, they being so numerous; they drag me away at a great distance from my wife! From my wife, who had fainted away! Cruel God! Unmerciful God! Hadst thou heard the last prayer she addressed thee!

Useless are the ravings of impotent fury, nothing can save me. The gates of that convent, which I had entered so rashly, opened a second time! I was put into a coach, which started immediately. It did not roll long. I hear immense gates to creak over enormous hinges; I see a strong castle, the drawbridge is let down before me. I enter a vast tower; decorated officers receive me—Alas! I am in the Bastille.

TO THE PUBLIC.

You have it in your power to set me at liberty; but, to induce you to be so kind, it is proper you should be desirous of perusing a new sequel to my adventures. If you should not continue to this essay the indulgence with which you have honoured the first, I shall find myself condemned to end my days in prison; and unlike a great number of my fellow-sufferers, shall enjoy the sad adbantage only, of knowing wherefore I have been sent and continue there.

END OF THE SIX WEEKS

CONCLUSION OF THE AMOURS OF THE CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS

First published 1790

XVIII.

Alas! I am in the Bastille! I stayed there during the whole of the winter season, four months, four entire months. It has often been published, yet I am compelled to write it over again:<43> sorrows of every description are collected together in that dreary habitation, and the most inconsolable of all those grievances, Ennui, dreadful Ennui, watches day and night by the side of Inquietude and Sadness.

I firmly believe that Death would soon be the only inhabitant of the place, if it were possible to prevent Hope penetrating within its walls. O, my king! The day on which your equity will suggest your destroying these scandalous prisons, will be a day of rejoicing for your subjects.

The sun, which for about two hours perhaps illumined the remainder of the world, scarcely began to enlighten us unhappy prisoners. Scarcely did one of its feeble rays, obliquely directed, illumine half of the narrow and long window that had been sparingly formed in an enormous thick wall; my eyes, which for a long time since had no more tears to shed; my eyes, worn down, were going to be closed for a few moments; for a short time I had ceased calling, Sophia, or death! On a sudden, I hear my treble door open, the governor came in, shouting out to me: "Liberty! Liberty!"

How can an unfortunate mortal, after having been detained only a few days in one of the less dreary dungeons of the Bastille, hear that word without his joy killing him? How have I been able to survive the excess of mine? I cannot tell; but what I well know, is, that I was going to run half-naked out of my tomb, when it was represented to me that I must at least take time to dress myself. Never did my toilette appear to me so long, never was it completed so expeditiously.

It was but a short time before I reached the first gate. As soon as it was opened M. de Belcourt<45> ran to meet me; with what transport I embraced my father! With what pleasure did he receive me within his arms!

Subsequent to addressing to me the mildest reproaches, after having returned me the other tender caresses, the Baron heard the delicate question which a husband, tormented with impatience and inquietude, was already repeating. "I could wish," he said, "to restore you to your Sophia; but for a charming woman, who feels the most lively interest for whatever concerns you—"

I thought the Baron meant the Marchioness de B***; a sigh escaped me. Whoever will remember what the Marchioness had done and suffered for me, will excuse that sigh, I am not aware whether my father had been surprised at my leaving it, but he kept silent for some minutes, looked at me most steadfastly, and then resumed:

"That lady who feels so lively an interest to whatever concerns you, has told me,—"

"Has told you! Have you then seen her, father?"

"Did you speak to her?"

"I have."

"Well! I is not she indeed—But you were just now making the observation: she is truly charming."

"I own it."

"And you believe, father, that she continues highly concerned?"

"In your case? I do so."

"She has been saying to you?—"

"That Madame de Faublas has been obliged to leave her convent the day after that on which you had been arrested there; no one has been able to discover where Lovinski has concealed her."

"Oh, my dear wife! Oh! What a situation she was in, when the military, having surrounded me, overpowered me by their numbers; I saw her fall, faint away, ready to breathe her last. Ah! If my Sophia is no more, it is all over with me."

"Reject those fatal ideas! your wife probably is not dead, she lives to love you: the day on which she left her convent, she looked very sad, very uneasy, but nothing was apprehended respecting her life."

"I feel comforted at this assurance, we shall find her out again."

"I ardently wish it may be so; but I could not dare to vouch for it. I have made great enquiries, we shall make more; but I confess that I begin to doubt of our being successful."

"What father, she lives, I am at liberty, and should I not find her out! Ah! I will find her out, you may rest assured of that."

Meanwhile, our carriage was ready. We were out of the Bastille, and near La Porte Saint Antoine, where a man, on horseback, having beckoned our coachman to stop, delivered a letter to me, saying:"From my master, here present;" at the same time he pointed to a young cavalier, who was capering facing us, at the entrance of the boulevard. Notwithstanding the round hat which almost covered the eyes of the handsome youth, I recognised the Vicomte de Florville; I knew again the elegant *frac Anglais*<46> which he sported in happier times, to come into the room of the Chevalier Faublas, to disabuse a too unjust lover; and, at other times, to conduct Mademoiselle du Portail to the *petite maison* of Saint Cloud. I hastened to look out, crying aloud: "It is her!" The Vicomte immediately honoured me with the most caressing smiles, kissed his hand to me, and galloped away.

Delighted at seeing her again, and unable to check my joy, I continued crying out: It is her!"

The Baron kept crying out: "You will fall out—take care—you will fall out, sir!"

"Father, it is her!"

"What her?"

"Her, father—that charming woman we were speaking of just now—only look!"

I thought that I had now taken hold of M. de Belcourt's hand, whereas, I was pulling and tearing his ruffle.

"If you wish me to look, make a little room, he said to me, where is she to be seen?"

"Yonder, yonder! She is already at some distance, but you can still distinguish her pretty horse, and charming dress."

"What! Does she dress in men's clothes sometimes?"

"Often."

"And she rides on horseback!"

"Well; very well! With infinite grace! And in a masterly style!"

"You seem to know more about her than I do," said the Baron, "who seemed to be a little out of humour, I did not know all that."

"Father, will you permit me to read what she has written to me?"

"To be sure, and even aloud, if it is to be done; you will oblige me."

I read aloud:

> Until such time as your unfortunate duel is entirely forgotten, sir, no more than your father, (who is very right to keep the name which he had assumed at Luxembourg), can you reappear in the metropolis under that of Faublas; let you be called Chevalier de Florville, if you should not dislike it, and if you do not find it too painful sometimes to call to mind the recollection of a friend, to the solicitations of whom you are obliged for your liberation.

"I was well aware of her soliciting," interrupted the Baron, "but she did not expect to succeed so soon. I only received this morning the happy tidings of your approaching liberation, and the letter was written by an unknown hand."

"Proceed, read on."

> We may have a moment's conversation together this evening: you will receive this evening a visit from Madame de Montdesir, and will act as she directs. Burn this note."

The Baron asked me instantly who that Madame de Montdesir was? I answered him that I did not know. "There is always," he replied with impatience, "something mysterious and extraordinary in whatever happens to you. However, I shall have the whole business explained to me this evening."

"This evening, father?"

"Yes, this very evening: we shall go to her house, to return our thanks to that lady."

"Shall we go to her house? But I cannot make my appcarance there."

"Why not?"

"Because her husband—"

"Could her husband find fault?"

"But her husband is dead."

"Dead?"

"To be sure he is—you, who seems so well acquainted with whatever concerns her, cannot be ignorant of that."

"How could I know of it, father. If he is dead, I am very sorry for it. Poor Marquis de B***, most likely it is in consequence of his wounds; I shall have to reproach myself with that as long as I live."

M. de Belcourt no longer heard what I was saying, because his carriage had just stopped at a convent in the Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, near the place Vendome.

"You are going to see your sister," said the Baron.

"Ah! my dear Adelaide!"

"I have placed her there," continued my father, "that we might have her nearer to us: you may notice, presently, and with pleasure no doubt, that from the window of the hôtel where I now lodge, you may see your sister when she will be walking in the garden, during the hours of recreation. You conceive it was impossible for me to continue in the Rue de l'Université, but on the contrary, that I was right to choose another part of the town than the Faubourg Saint Germain. Follow me, we shall take home Adelaide, who will not be sorry to dine with us."

She at first came down into the parlour. I found her very much embellished during the five months of my absence. She looked better-made, more womanlike, taller, and handsomer. Oh! Sweet, lovely girl! If I had not been your brother, what would not I have given to be your lover?

I held her hand, which I bathed with my tears, hers dropped on my hand, and my father lavished upon us both a thousand sweet caresses. It was me, however, whom he kissed most frequently. "Be not jealous," he said to my sister, who had made the observation with her wonted candour: "Allow me on this day to love him a little more than I cherish you, for upwards of six months, perhaps, I have suffered and been uneasy, but not on your account, my dear girl, it is not you who occasioned my sorrow." The Baron, in order to soften this kind of reproach, pressed me twenty times to his bosom.

From the convent we reached our hôtel in less than a minute. My father then put me in possession of the apartment he had intended for me. I was glad to find my faithful Jasmin in my antechamber; but I could not, without much grief, behold in my bed-room, which was very small, one single narrow bed. "Oh, father! You have lodged the Chevalier de Faublas as if he were destined to continue long a widower. This is the apartment of celibacy!"

The Baron, instead of answering me, opened an adjacent door. After crossing several extensive rooms, I entered a very rich one, in which I discovered two alcoves, and a couple of beds. I jumped through joy. This, thought I, is the temple of Hymen! Love will bring me back my wife here!

"Father, I shall occupy this room only in the company of Love—of my Sophia! Until such time as my wife is restored to me, I shall inhabit the dismal apartment. Nobody shall enter this; none, no beauty, unworthy of this place, shall profane it by her presence. And this boudoir, how pretty it is! How nicely furnished! Pretty, and nice, no doubt! But when my beloved will have entered it, only once, to receive my adoration, the boudoir will no longer exist; it will not only be a temple, but a sanctuary. I shall never approach the altar, but with holy respect."

The altar—it was an ottoman—I addressed, and kissed it.

"No one, except myself, is to approach it. Ah, my dear sister, don't you go into it—never enter it, my dear Adelaide, I beseech you! The entrance of this abode is closed to everyone except my wife! Yes, my Sophia, I take my solemn oath, never shall a mortal female penetrate into that sanctuary where my homage awaits thee. I swear it over again, she alone shall be worshipped there. She, the deity whom my most ardent wishes will seek after daily."

Whilst taking that double oath, useless at best, the Chevalier de Florville was far from suspecting, that before the day was at an end, a mighty scandalous scene was to occur in that place, so rashly consecrated.

My father made me observe, that the boudoir opened into a dressing closet, which led to a passage, at the further extremity of which there was a private staircase. I was not easily prevailed upon to leave my wife's apartment; before Monsieur de Belcourt could persuade me to enter his, he was obliged to listen to the tender exclamations, and to admire the caresses which I bestowed upon every piece of furniture in the delightful boudoir.

Do not ask me how it so happened that several hours glided away, without my being able to think once of Madame de B***; without having found time to ask my father about the situation of that widow who must have been so dear to me. Think that Adelaide was speaking to me of her friends; think, that my sister was lamenting, in company with me, the absence of my beloved.

We were still weeping, when the gate of the hôtel was opened with a great bustle. My father hearing the rattling of a carriage, ran to the window; and then returned to me. "My friend, it is her, although she knew very well that you were here, for I had sent her word, she is come most likely to dine with me." I was preparing to go downstairs, M. de Belcourt prevented me; "You shall not go to meet her in the hall, that is my office."

"Father!"

"Stop here, my friend; stop with Adelaide, I insist upon it."

He went down, and returned a moment after. In real truth I expected to see the Marchioness de B***; but it was the Baroness de Fonrose who made her appearance. My surprise, already great, became extreme when I saw her accompanied by a handsome little brunette, who, as quick as lightning, flew into my arms. When she had pressed me twenty times between hers, embraced me twenty times, and called me as repeatedly her beloved, she perceived there were two persons in the room whom she did not know, and who, very much surprised at her excessive joy, and at her vivacity more excessive still, silently looked at her, and seemed to wait impatiently till she had done. "I beg your pardon," she said, to my father, making a curtsey; "I had not noticed you—but it is no fault of mine—it is because—It is proper I should tell you, I am naturally rather quick;" and without waiting for M. de Belcourt's answer: "Who is this young person?" she said to me, showing Adelaide. As soon as I had she answered was my sister, she ran to embrace her, saying: "I am glad, mademoiselle, you are so nearly related, for I think you are very pretty."

My dear Adelaide, much confused and agitated, could not reply a single word, but I heard my father, scarcely recovered from his surprise, begging Madame de Fonrose to tell him the name of that lady whom, in fact, he found rather lively. The Baroness replied, aloud: "She is one of my most intimate friends; I believe I have occasionally mentioned to you the Countess de Lignolle."

My father next addressed the Countess: "It appears to me that my son has the honour of being known to you, Madame?"

"Very much so, sir," returned she.

"Yes, very much so," repeated the Baroness, who laughed at the same time, "they have composed riddles together."

The company were all seated, the Countess beckoned to me to come and sit close to her; as I was going, the Baron stopped me: "What a light-headed boy you are!" he said, and then presenting me to the Baroness: "Madame," he said, "receive my son's best thanks."

"It is to be confessed that he owes me some; I have been expeditious in bringing back to him a pretty lady to whom no doubt he bears some friendship."

"But," he resumed, "that is not the only reason."

"You are right, he is moreover obliged to me for having introduced him to her. I accordingly was eager to go and fetch the Countess this morning, as soon as I was apprised of the Chevalier having been liberated."

"As soon as I apprised you of it (but I hope you knew of it before I sent you word)?"

"Not I."

"How so! Did not you intercede for his release?"

"It is true that I have solicited, but—"

"Is it not to you that he is indebted for his liberation?"

"'Upon my honour, I don't believe he is."

"I wonder, Madame," he exclaimed, rather in an ill humour, "why you should reject the manifestation of the father's gratitude, and solicit at the same time the son to express the whole of his—"

"I, solicit the son! What do you mean, sir?"

"To be sure, Madame; you conceal from me the success you have met with, and hurry away to impart it to the Chevalier."

"Pray tell me, sir, she retorted, in a tone of impatience, how can I have informed the Chevalier, since I have not—"

"How? By means of the letter which you wrote to him this morning."

"The letter!"

Now I could see plainly that during the whole morning the Chevalier de Faublas and his father had been playing at cross purposes; it was evident that the latter had always meant Madame de Fonrose, whereas the former thought only of Madame de B***.

Struck at the warmth of M. de Belcourt's explanation with Madame de Fonrose, I could no longer doubt his being very much in love with her, and rather jealous of me. Had I spoken a single word, I might have vindicated the Baroness; but I wished to avoid exposing the Marchioness and picking up a quarrel with the Countess. What was I to determine? Whilst I was contriving to find out the means of

conciliating such jarring interests, Adelaide appeared absorbed in deep meditation, Madame de Lignolle to be uneasy in her mind, Madame de Fonrose out of patience; and the Baron went on, saying:

"Yes, Madame, a letter from you, which was delivered to him as we were going by la Porte Saint-Antoine, a letter in which you were pleased to call him de Florville."

"De Florville!"

"And in which you inform him that he may expect to receive, in the evening, a visit from a certain Madame de Montdesir."

"I rejoice at your having made me acquainted with that name. I must confess, however, sir, that I long for your putting an end to this untimely, procrastinated joke."

"It depends entirely upon yourself, Madame; you need but make a plain confession."

"Of what, sir? Am I accountable for all the whimsical reveries that torture your brains?"

"Merely confess," he continued, in an angry tone, "confess that, stationed at the extremity of the boulevard, you were waiting patiently till the Chevalier should cast a look at you."

"Are you cracking your jokes, sir; or have you lost the use of your senses?"

"Confess, Madame; I shall not be angry, though I should think it rather surprising that you should have deemed it advisable to ride off at full speed, when I offered to look out at the window."

"Ride off! A very proper expression!"

"Gallop away, if you like it better."

"This is no less correct!"

"Why not?" vociferated he, quite in a passion; "why not full gallop, since you were on horseback, and in man's clothes?"

"Will you tell me that I was on the boulevard this morning on horseback, and in man's clothes? Are you in good earnest?"

"Can you deny it! That is going too far! You have been seen, Madame, as I now see you."

"Who saw me, sir?"

"My son."

"He?"

"He did; he, in person, did see you."

"If it is so, I shall abide by what he is going to say. Speak, Chevalier, is it me whom you have seen?"

"No, Madame, answered I."

"How, sir," exclaimed M. de Belcourt. "Did you not tell me—"

"We did not understand one another, sir; you imagined I meant one lady, and I was speaking of another."

"Of whom, then?"

"I beg to be excused."

The Countess, rising with great vivacity, said to me: "I insist upon knowing!"

I pretended to laugh, whilst saying: "You wish to know?"

"Yes," returned she, "I wish to know who that female was, who, so anxious to see you, was watching your going by this morning, and has written to you."

"You wish to know?"

"I do, sir."

"What! In good earnest?" continued I, affecting a great surprise; "you wish me to tell?"

"How provoking! I insist!"

"Do you, positively, Madame?"

"To be sure."

"You exact it of me?"

"Out with it, I say."

"But, if I obey you, won't you be angry with me?"

"No."

"Weigh it in your mind."

"I have no patience with you."

"Well, then, suppose I only tell you, and in a whisper?"

"You keep me on the rack! No, sir, speak aloud, that everyone may hear you."

"I have your leave?"

"Certainly, since I order you so to do."

"You command me?"

"I do; yes, a hundred times over I do."

"Most likely you have your particular reasons?"

"To be sure I have."

"That alters the case, I therefore shall speak it out." (Addressing the Baron and Baroness, and pointing out the Countess) "It was this lady."

"That is not true," she cried.

"So, then, you won't believe that I knew you again?"

"I swear it was not me."

I maintained it was her, and put on such an air of assurance and of truth that my father believed me. The Baroness herself entertained no further doubts. "It is true,

she said to the Countess, that you sometimes wear men's clothes, and that you were not at home this morning when I called. I waited for you nearly an hour."

In vain did Madame de Lignolle, more chagrined than I can express, cry out: "I was gone to my aunt's, Madame d'Armincour's. Never in my life-time have I mounted a horse; neither did I know that the Chevalier was to be set at liberty so soon."

Her vociferation was of no avail; no one appeared to believe her. As for me, persevering in an impenetrable *sang-froid*, truly proper to redouble her impatience, I ceased not repeating coolly: "Ah! I knew you again!" I verily believe that the Countess would have jumped out of window, if I had been cruel enough to deprive her of the only amusement which afforded her some consolation—namely, that of pinching my arm; and of breaking her fan by knocking it upon my fingers!

"You are angry with me, Madame. I told you that would be the case I had foreseen as much when I resisted! Wherefore would you compel me to speak out?"

"Why, sir, could I guess—"

"That I would name you?"

"Ah! That is it! you urged me so pressingly, merely that I should name another person? I wonder I was not sensible of that. I have been very wrong, very wrong indeed! What a dunce I was!"

As I spoke at this rate, I pretended to lower my voice; but, at the same time, I took particular care to pronounce distinctly, so that all present might hear me. She noticed it, and was so vexed in consequence, that she would have beaten me in good earnest, if I had not run away.

Oh, my Sophia! I flew to your apartment, and went to your very boudoir, there to find a safe asylum.

I was mistaken, however. Madame de Lignolle entered it almost as soon as myself. Either too reprehensible, or too thoughtless, I only viewed the pleasure of meeting with her in so delicious a place, where I had it in my power to have the cruel frenzy replaced by the soft effervescence of love. I clasped her within my arms! And, in the most affectionate tone, addressed her in these words: "Since you assure me it was not you, I must believe you; yet I would have bet every louis d'or I am worth, that Madame de Lignolle had met me this morning near the boulevard. Lovely Countess! What does this mistake which grieves you evince? Nothing more, assuredly, except that at all times the recollection of you being so predominant, your adorer sees you everywhere."

"Well, now," answered the Countess, "this is sound reasoning. Why did you not urge it sooner? I would not have been so angry."

She gave me a kiss. I had taken a twofold oath: the one was already entirely forgotten, since Madame de Lignolle continued in the boudoir, which I had not opposed her entering: the other—with due humility I confess, though my feelings may be hurt—the other, which may not be deemed less essential, I was on the point, as irreligiously, and perhaps as promptly, to violate, if Madame de Fonrose had not come on a sudden to prevent my perjuring myself twice basely at the same moment—alas!

"Come along, my dears," she said, as she opened the door, what are you doing there? You act too inconsiderately; you do indeed. The Baron is angry; he will not

allow his daughter to dine with us. In true conscience, is he wrong! Come along with me: let us go in again."

"This is a handsome boudoir," said the Countess. "Thither we shall return, Monsieur de Faublas, du Portail, de Flourvac, de Florville, for you sport half a hundred different names."

"What! Are you apprised of all that, Countess?"

"And of many other things besides. I must tell you beforehand, you and I shall quarrel together ere long."

I locked the door of my wife's apartment. The Countess watched an opportunity of seizing the key, which she put in her pocket. "You probably have another," she said, "and I want this." When these two ladies re-entered the saloon, my father was gone. I ran out to meet him as he was going out with Adelaide. My dear sister's eyes were bathed in tears: [she said] "That lady, dear brother, occasions us a deal of trouble. Most likely it is on her account that we are not to dine together; she makes too free, and is too petulant; believe me, do not trust to her. Let me tell you, brother, I dislike those ladies that ride on horseback. Don't you, once more, on account of that one, assume an Amazon's garb to go and fight her husband. Could you derive any pleasure from injuring a man of honour, and like to return to the Bastille? Do not fall in love with that lady, I beg of you. Think of my *bonne amie*, she will soon come back; she loves you dearly, and I tell you, that Countess would occasion her as much sorrow as the Marchioness, who caused her to shed so many tears."

Thus would my dear Adelaide, unknowingly, administer good advice. But how was I to relish her morality, at a time when the Countess was upstairs waiting for me? Could I listen to reason, when pleasure was so near at hand? A day will come, my lovely sister, yes, a day will come, when you, influenced by your passions, will find it difficult, without hard struggling, to join example to precept. Till such time, innocent preacher, your salutary speech is of no avail, your grief alone perplexes me, and whilst your father is taking you back, I shall go to see the beloved of my heart.

"I love my second," said Madame de Fonrose, who saw me embrace the dear creature. "I love my first", repeated she as Madame de Lignolle returned the compliment. But after running between us, she added: "Gently, my dears, it grieves me thus to part two such pretty creatures, you must, however, postpone concluding the riddle."

The Baroness happening to mention the riddle so *apropos*, I became sensible that the Countess kept no secrets from her friend.

Placed between two handsome females, one of whom applauded the tender language which the other was lavishing upon me, I could not but find that, "the moments did slide on promptly," and to speak the truth, I thought my father was scarcely gone, when I saw him return. The Baron addressed the Countess with cold civility. Thanks, however, to Madame de Fonrose, cheerfulness prevailed during dinner.

The Baroness would smile at Monsieur de Belcourt at every sprightly sentence he uttered, and the gentleman seemed to be highly pleased at those smiles. Nevertheless, the Baron, more delighted still, at seeing me returned to his table, would frequently and for a long time keep his eyes fixed upon me; he would often speak of Adelaide, and each time that he mentioned her name, the recollection of her being

absent caused him to heave a deep sigh. During that too short dinner, believe me father, and I shall remember it all the days of my life, I needed only pay a slight attention to perceive that your mistress might occupy your attention momentarily, but that you unceasingly felt for your daughter, and that it was on account of your son only, that you were made happy. Yes, father, I observed you for a single moment only, and I was quite sensible that notwithstanding the allurements of that love, so powerful and so tyrannical, parental affection alone procured you that satisfaction you wished to conceal, and the joy you felt so delighted in exhibiting.

A friend to us both came to share in it; the Vicomte de Valbrun, who had just been apprised of my release, was come to congratulate me upon the occasion. It appeared to me as if Madame de Fonrose had wished he had not been in such a hurry. The gentleman assumed, when addressing her, the proudly modest tone which seems to be the privilege of a former lover, and I could see Monsieur de Belcourt, on the reverse, affect to display the proud airs of a preferred rival. "The business is settled," whispered the Vicomte, who perceived that I observed every performer in this scene, quite new to me, "it is a settled affair, the Baroness has entirely done with me. Alas!" He continued laughing, "I am the author of mine own miseries. The Baron having heard from me that you were confined, returned to Paris, I introduced him to the Baroness, and on a sudden the ingrate seduced her from me. I shall feel quite happy, however, if his son condescends to suffer me to continue the tranquil possessor of that little Justine, to whom in the present circumstances I devote my leisure hours."

"His son, you may rest assured, Vicomte, will not interfere with your amours!"

"I dare not trust you; swear by Sophia."

"With all my heart! I swear."

That was a luckless day for me taking my oath: it will soon be found that I perjured myself once more.

"When will you have done, gentlemen," said Madame de Lignolle, "tired of our whispering. Whom are you speaking of in that mysterious converse. Is it of Madame de Montdesir?"

"Madame de Montdesir!" repeated the Vicomte.

"The Countess in a spiteful and ironical tone, replied: "She is an unknown fair lady, who intends paying a visit to the Chevalier this evening; her intention she has imparted this morning in a billet-doux."

Monsieur de Valbrun, with an air of astonishment, again re-echoed the Countess's last words: "a billet-doux."

"Yes, desire the Chevalier to show it to you, you will find it a very interesting epistle."

"Ah! Chevalier, do me that pleasure."

I readily granted the request, and presented the Marchioness's letter to Monsieur de Valbrun. He read it over several times, seemingly with no less inquietude than attention, and returned it to me, without offering the least observation.

But a moment after we had done dinner, he drew me towards one of the balconies, and said: "I can guess who wrote that letter."

"I am very glad you did not mention it."

"Oh I make yourself easy. With regard to Madame de Montdesir, it is Madame de B*** who—"

Monsieur de Valbrun interrupted, "I am of your opinion; it most assuredly must be the Marchioness."

The Vicomte then added: "During the time of your incarceration, which might have lasted very long, Justine has told me a hundred times that Madame de B*** was continually labouring to procure your liberation. She, perhaps, has something very interesting to impart."

"Maybe so, and undoubtedly that is the object of her visit this evening."

"I am not sorry in the least at her coming to you, since such a step may prove serviceable; but be cautious, think of Madame de Lignolle, think of Sophia, do not—"

The Countess, who did not lose sight of me for one single moment, now came to join us, and put an end to a conversation, during which the Vicomte and myself had given a different meaning to several words susceptible of being interpreted in various ways; once more I must beg my reader's pardon, but we too had been playing at cross purposes.

Meanwhile, the Baroness was speaking of going to the opera. As soon as Monsieur de Belcourt understood that the Countess would not accompany Madame de Fonrose, he declared that he would not leave his home. The latter lady tried by her complaisant insinuations to induce him to go out, and vexed at finding he would not be persuaded, finally vowed that she would stay likewise; the Countess, on the other hand, who was uneasy in her mind, was protesting that she would keep me company the whole evening; and would say in a faltering tone of voice: "I shall be glad to know this Madame de Montdesir, so anxious to appoint a meeting." She next added, in a mild tone: "Have you not besides something particular to say to me?"

I confess that Madame de Lignolle's jealousy and her tender vivacity perplexed me strangely. To speak the truth I rapturously indulged the sweet hope which her polite question had given rise to. "Have you not something particular to say to me?" But flattering myself with a sweeter hope still, persuaded that, under a fictitious name, Madame de B***, perhaps within quarter of an hour, would be in the Chevalier de Florville's apartment, I enquired of myself what pressing concern could bring her back to me in such a hurry; nay, sometimes I presumed to think that love, justly offended at the violent resolutions she had formed at the fatal village of Hollrisse, would glory in restoring her to me here, more weak than ever. Everyone, of course, may judge of the embarrassment of the Chevalier de Faublas, anxious to return his best thanks with the utmost expedition to his dear benefactress, towards whom he was bound to be grateful in more than one way; but followed at every step by an eager pupil, who seemed to wait impatiently for the lesson which her tutor would have been sorry to refuse her. Let everyone, therefore, pity a young man, compelled in the first instance to dismiss the handsome Countess to make room for the beautiful Marchioness, and subsequently reduced to the hard necessity of sending away his primary teacher to receive his first pupil; let this be apprehended, lest in such a predicament he may commit some blunder. Alas! In so perplexing a situation who could, better than myself, have continued in his proper senses?

I determined upon what I imagined to be the best plan: I seized the opportunity of the Countess and Baroness being in close conversation to make my escape; I ran to my apartment, called my servant, and said to him: Go, Jasmin, and stand watching at

the street door; a lady will soon come, who will enquire for the Chevalier de Florville; you will desire her to follow you. You will even beg of her, very politely, so to do, for she is a lady of high rank; on account of its being dark, the porter will not see you go by; cross the yard, and go up the private staircase; the lady will be kind enough to wait in my apartment; you will leave.her then without a light, because it must not be seen from the Baron's windows that there is any one in my room; do you understand me?

"I do, sir."

"Wait a little, that is not all; instead of calling for me at the Baron's, you will go down into the yard, and thrum on your violin that tune which you scrape so nicely: *Tandis que tout sommeille.*<47> When you think that I have heard you, come up here again and wait for my further commands."

"Have you well comprehended all that I have been saying?"

"I have, sir."

"I need not repeat it, then?"

"No, sir, and you are going to be obeyed. Oh! How glad I am to see you again. I was right to say that when my young master should return, love and pleasures would revisit my antechamber."

"You were forgetful of your perquisites, Jasmin. Take this, for I like men of bright intellects."

I had scarcely left the Countess for a minute and she already wanted to send a servant after me. For upwards of an hour I had been waiting in her company for the appointed signal. Jasmin began—the good fellow scraped like a street fiddler; nevertheless, admire the power of my imagination over my senses; at the first thrums of the squeaking instrument, methought I heard King David playing on his harp, or, if you like it better, Amphion fingering his lyre. Never did Violli, our modern Amphion, in his best days, draw from his instrument more delightful sounds.

Most fortunately my enthusiasm did not enrapture me to such a degree as to render me forgetful of the happy moments that awaited me. I approached the Countess, and whispered to her, with apparent eagerness: "When will you allow me a private interview?"

"As soon as possible," she candidly replied: "We only need to contrive the means of making our escape."

"I shall weigh it in my mind; try yourself to find out some expedient."

"But hear me, I know how to manage it. Sir," she said to my father, "I have been told by the Baroness that you liked backgammon."

"So I do."

"I am a tolerable good hand at it"

"Would you wish to try a game, Madame?"

"With all my heart"

I was highly surprised at her proposing to play a game with my father, in order to procure me a private interview as had been proposed! That appeared to me arranging matters very awkwardly; I however, felt some consolation from the

reflection, that if the Countess's paramour was to be a loser, in consequence, the Marchioness's lover must be made a gainer. I imagined that I should be able to effect my escape without Madame de Lignolle noticing it. But I was mistaken. The sweet little creature kept watching me, she called me to come near her, insisted upon my sitting down, and would not allow me under any pretence whatever, to leave my seat.

This had already lasted half an hour, I began to grow tired, and the Marchioness likewise, when Jasmin began his solo over again. My worthy confidant feared, perhaps, my not having heard him at first, for he now made a devilish noise. One may easily conceive to what a degree my impatience was heightened by this loud scraping; I could feel as if a hundred thousand pins were stuck into me, and (mind what ingratitude) Amphion's lyre now appeared to me but a sorry bagpipe. The Baron, who happened to make a bad move at the time, did not find the music very melodious; he ran to the window, opened it, and asked who was the cursed scraper who made his head ache. "'Tis me, sir," returned Jasmin, thankful for the compliment that had just been paid him; "it is me."

"Be so kind as not to interrupt me at this rate."

I, like a dutiful son, through regard for my father, who was catching cold at the Window, lustily cried out: "Have done, Jasmin, you make such a noise; one can hear you in the drawing-room as well as if you were in it; be quiet presently, presently, you know what I mean?"

"I do, sir, you have said enough, I perfectly comprehend your meaning."

Pleased with my zealous interference, the Baron resumed his seat with an air of satisfaction: the giddy Countess soon lost the game. Under a pretence of having been seized on a sudden with a violent headache, she refused taking her revenge, and begged of the Baroness to play for her. As soon as Madame de Fonrose had taken her place, she joined me in a distant corner; and asked me in a low voice whether there was a light on the staircase?

"There is, my little pupil."

"Go away then, I shall follow you."

"Immediately?"

"Yes, my dearest."

"How imprudent that would be! Beware of attempting it."

"Why not?"

"Because there is no possibility of our leaving the company at the same time."

"Don't you say so!"

"Impossible! It would be noticed, and you would be ruined. I am going up stairs, it will be thought that I have some business in my apartment, and in about half an hour's time—"

"Half an hour? Ah! that is too long."

"It is requisite."

"Would you have me dance attendance here a whole half hour?"

"I shall find it no less tedious than yourself, my lovely Countess; but indeed we should act childishly if we were to manage it otherwise. See, the Baron has already turned round several times, he watches us, he looks as if he was uneasy."

"The Baron! The Baron! what business has he to trouble his head about what concerns us?"

"On account of my being his son, he thinks himself entitled to look into my little affairs. How can it be helped? Every father and mother will assume that ridiculous pretension."

Jasmin no longer durst play on his fiddle; but I could hear him, true French singer-like, bawl out, *Tandis que tout sommeille*.

"I am going, my beloved. I shall wait for you in my bed-room."

"No, wait in the boudoir."

"Why so?"

"Because it is prettier, more conveneient"

"Why, but—"

"In the boudoir, sir, I tell you, I wish it to be in the boudoir."

"But—"

"I insist upon it"

"I, therefore, must obey. Now take care to make it half an hour."

"Be it so."

"Will you be as good as your word?"

"Yes, yes, I will.

I flew like an arrow. "Get out," Jasmin, "shut the doors after you, run to the bottom of the private staircase to wait for the lady who will soon come down. You have introduced her unperceived?"

"I have, sir."

"Well, use the same precautions when you take her back; where is she?"

"Ah! Sir, what a happy mortal you are! What a sweet woman she is!"

"Tell me, then, where she is?"

"We first entered the dressing-closet"

"Go on!"

"You won't allow me time, sir! She saw the boudoir, and would not proceed any farther. I left her in the dark, as you bade me."

"That was right: put this light out too, I have no farther occasion for it; get you gone, and close the doors after you."

Close the doors after you! What a wise precaution! What a crack-brained fellow was! I had forgot the Countess had the second key in her possession!

Replete with a fatal security, I crossed over my wife's apartment as quick as the surrounding darkness would permit me to trace my steps, and entered the blessed

boudoir: "dear mamma! My sweet friend! Here you are then! The Chevalier de Florville at last enjoys the happiness of possessing you in his own house!"

"Yes," she answered in a stifled voice: "How tenderly thankful must I feel! How I love you! How highly obliged do I feel."

Whilst addressing her so, I was feeling after her; a pair.of officious arms encircled me, I was pressed against a gently agitated bosom, greedy lips sought mine, and repaid my burning kisses, I immediately presumed to venture more; far from opposing the least resistance, my fair friend seemed anxious only to hasten the success of my bold attempts. Her defeat and my triumph were soon complete.

Woe to them who are ignorant of it! Such men as are favoured with an ardent imagination, will experience that there are certain moments when the feelings of happiness become so acute as to absorb every other; when the soul, greedy after one single object, and become frantic in consequence of the poignant desire of possessing that same object, will create one, and appropriate it to himself, though it were an entirely foreign object. The illusion then is so overeruling, that no human faculty remains capacitated, by exercising its particular powers, to annul the I saidllusion; the memory then can no longer recollect, the mind is unable to reflect, neither can our judgment compare. Woe to him who is ignorant of it yet, as it will be seen presently, I had occasion to regret having had one of these fits of delirium.

"Oh, my stars! I hear a noise! Dearest mamma, make your escape!"

How could she have run away? She was without a light, in a strange apartment, the windings whereof I myself was scarcely familiarised with. I wished to favour her flight; and, laying hold of her hand, tried to reach the door of the dressing closet, but I had not time. The other door of the boudoir opened too soon. Madame de Lignolle, favoured rather too much by chance and love, which guided her rapid steps through the dark, was reaching the loving pair whom her approach frightened: "I have found you at last, my dear," she said, kissing a hand which she had just caught hold of; but it was not my hand that she kissed.

The Marchioness, thus detained on a sudden, dared not move; whilst I, conscious of her apprehensions and killing embarrassment, hastened to throw myself between her and Madame de Lignolle and, consequently, to cover with my body that which the Countess had seized, and a very useful limb of which she kept caressing most tenderly, without interruption.

"I have found you at last, my dear," repeated she. Compelled to return an answer, I was so unjust, in my violent perturbation of mind, as to reproach her for having come before the appointed time.

"Do you find that I am come too soon," she retorted: "I observed the Baron to be entirely attentive to his game, could not conquer my impatience, and seized the opportunity to give him the slip."

"You have acted wrong, madam; you ought not to have been in such a hurry ; you should have waited as I had begged of you, and as you had promised. My father will perceive your being gone. We shall see him coming here —"

Alas ! I little thought I was speaking so true; he was hurrying on at that same moment. A loud scream escaped me: "Dear mamma, you are ruined!"

The Baron, with a lighted taper in his hand, stopped at the door. What a scene did he illumine! He, in the first place, who thought of finding only one female with his son, was not a little surprised at seeing two, who amicably held each other by the hand. Madame de Lignolle next: that good lady, equally angry, surprised, and ashamed, sufficiently displayed in her countenance, wherein were depicted several opposite jarring passions, that she could forgive neither the infidelity, of which, no doubt, I had been guilty, nor the insignificant caresses with which a moment before she had overwhelmed her rival, who, standing motionless, stuck to the wall, appeared to be a mere statue. However, you may well imagine, that, of the four performers in this strange drama, I was not the least thunderstruck, when casting a stolen look upon the unfortunate statue, I recognised—I looked at her three times more before I could be persuaded that my senses had misled me so far—that woman, in whose arms I had fancied I possessed the most beauteous of her sex, was only a brunette, tolerably pretty! She whom I so recently idolised as Madame de B***, was no other than Justine!

Beauty! Heavenly gift! Offspring of Nature and queen of this universe! Permit one of your humble, respectful, but sincere subjects, to submit to your best judgment a reflection, which your enthusiastic worshippers will perhaps call a blasphemy. Since it is true that, sometimes heated by love, and occasionally cooled by disgust, imagination, ever active and inconstant, may at every moment, and a hundred times in a moment, either create, or, according to its fancy, can annul thee; tell me, what art thou in fact?—in what consists thy most attractive charm?—where does thy real power reside?

Wait a little, however. Perhaps it was something superior to Justine. That pretty shoe and stocking; that elegant and rich gown; that superb hat, surmounted with a waving plume; a thousand other appendages, that rouge especially, that noble rouge, which never coloured plebeian cheeks, pray what does all that portend? Pray tell me. Most assuredly no part of that brilliant equipage belongs either to Madame de B***'s waiting woman, or to the priestess of the Vicomte's *petite maison*. Oh, Madame de Montdesir! Behold my embarrassed state, and pity me. Was it under a recently true-made name that you have entered my premeises? Have you, at the cost of some dupe, acquired the noble *de* which precedes it, and which I am proud of for your sake. Gently though—the lion's skin is not so dexterously put on, but a little bit of the informing ear may be discovered. In your court lady's attire, there is——I know not what—an affectation of delicacy, that speaks you to be no gentlewoman.

Well, everything duly examined, it was only Justine!

The cunning Countess had discovered as much; and, with a contemptuous look, surveyed, from head to foot, her unworthy rival.

"You most likely are Madame de Montdesir," she said.

Justine, who had just recovered her presence of mind, replied in a sarcastic tone: "Ready to serve you, Madame."

"Madame perhaps is a married woman?"

"Quite so, Madame, to all intents and purposes."

"Is Madame's husband busily employed?"

"Alas! He does his utmost. And yours, Madame?"

"He does nothing at all," replied the Countess, in an ill humour. "But you are very bold to interrogate me! Be satisfied to answer those questions with which you are honoured. I was asking you what your husband did, what was his profession, what he is, in short?"

"What he is?—what he is?—why, he is—what yours is apparently, likewise, Madame."

I must confess, that once more my behaviour towards Madame de Lignolle was reprehensible. This repartee of Justine was truly jocular, but I ought not to have burst out laughing at it in the presence of the Countess, as I did. To speak the truth, as I am now disposed to recount all that passed then, the little lady punished me most severely; for she gave me—yes, I believe it to be the fact—it was a slap on the face that she gave me!

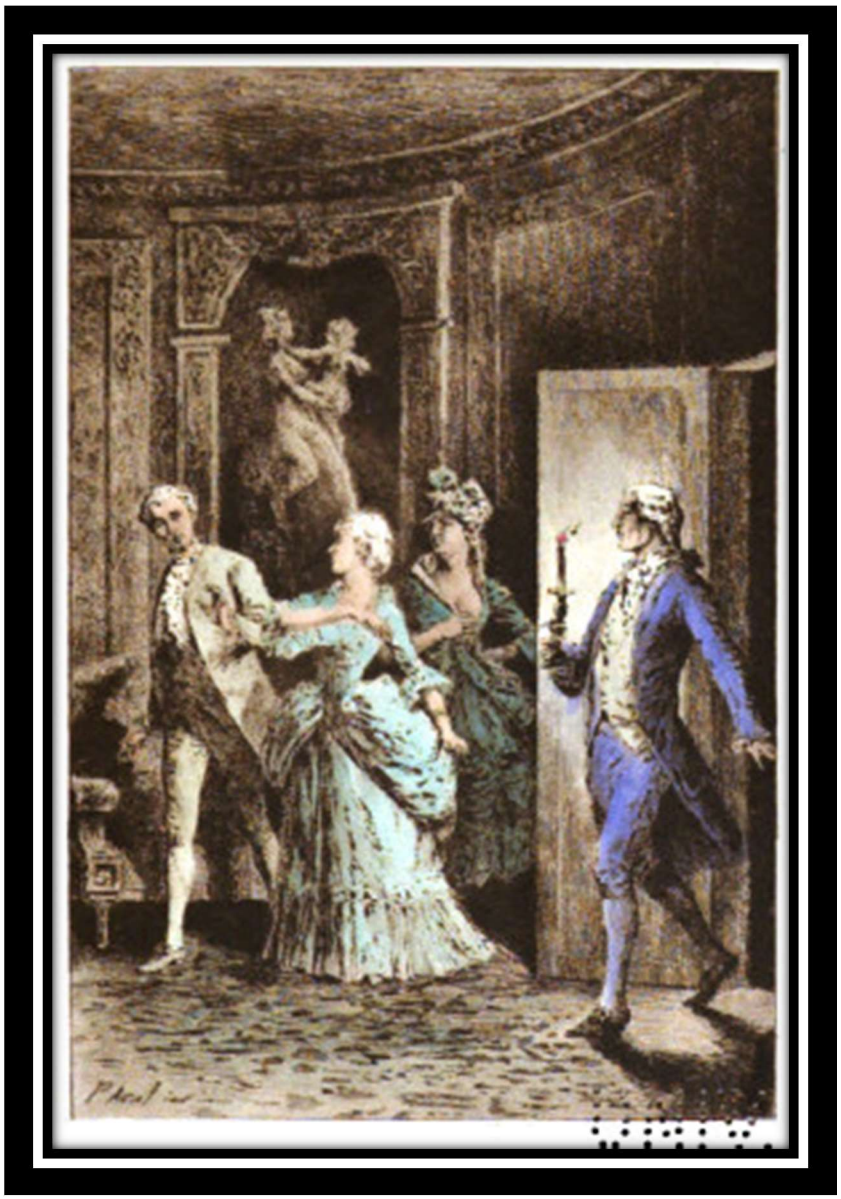

Illustration: My father did not remain a tranquil observer of so scandalous a scene

One may easily guess that my father did not remain a tranquil spectator of so scandalous a scene; but I do not deem it superfluous to relate in what manner he put an end to it, and avenged the offence that had been offered me. Monsieur de Belcourt

pulled the bell, which was answered by a footman, whom he ordered to light Madame de Montdesir to the street-door. He next addressed the Countess, saying: "Madame, I may be three times as old as yourself, I am a father, and you are in my house, I therefore deem it incumbent upon me to tell you candidly, what I think of your conduct: it is so inconsiderate, (and you ought to thank me, if through a particular regard, I do not use a harsher expression,) it is so inconsiderate, that your extreme youth is the only excuse that can be alleged in your favour. Though my son may have mistresses, Madame, it is not here that they meet; and never will a woman who retains the least idea of common decorum, select for her appointments with the Chevalier, his father's house, and his young wife's apartment. In short, Madame, a female well brought up, a lady of quality especially, will be cautious never to use her lover, although he were culpable, and they should be by themselves, in the manner you have treated yours, even in my presence."

Madame de Lignolle for awhile stood abashed. The Baron then continued, in a less severe tone: "Whenever Madame la Comtesse, as a friend to Monsieur de Belcourt, and to the Chevalier de Florville, will be pleased to pay a visit to them both at a time, she will do them high honour: but to detain you any longer today, Madame, would be, in my opinion, to abuse your embarrassing situation. Go you, my son, into the saloon, tell the Baroness that Madame la Comtesse, who wishes to leave us immediately, requests she will see her home, and that she is waiting for her in her carriage. Permit me, Madame, to see you downstairs."

The Countess, whom ill humour deprived of her proper senses, rejected my father's hand, saying: "No, sir, I shall go down by myself. You turn me out of your house," she added, 2in that dictatorial tone which I never heard from my husband; but remember! You may come to my house some day! Come, and you will see!"

I could not hear what Monsieur de Belcourt answered to this menace, which must have occasioned great surprise. Anxious to make amends for the errors I had been guilty of, and to soothe my irritated father, I was hurrying to the Baroness, who, astonished at the abrupt departure of the Countess, asked me what was the occasion of it. I protested that Madame de Lignolle would relate, better than I could, all the particulars of the calamitous event which deprived me so soon of the pleasure of seeing her. Madame de Fonrose leaned on the Vicomte's arm to go down, and I attended them as far as the hall. From thence I could hear the impatient Countess returning unceasingly this only answer: "The perfidious man! The ingrate mortal!"

When I was left alone with my father, he returned to Sophia's apartment and I followed him. He stopped facing the door of the boudoir: "No living female this morning, "he said, was to be allowed to enter these premises, "and this very evening two women have been locked up in it!"

"The one that I know not, is no great thing, I believe; but the other!—that Madame de Lignolle—I am frightened on her account! A woman at her time of life! A mere child, so enterprising, so bold? Wherefore must she happen to be a person of rank, possessed of great wit, and handsome? I am frightened on her account, and on yours no less; I never saw a more lightheaded, imprudent, violent woman! Dread her; you yourself are too incautious, too petulant; she will expose you too much. Only consider how, during several hours, she has already known how to make you forget her, whose absence you had been lamenting during the whole forenoon! What! Cannot the misfortunes, and the uncertain destiny of Sophia sufficiently engross your attention? Is it indispensable that several objects at a time should employ the activity

of your soul, and the fickleness of your senses? Will you never be steady? Have the lessons you have received from adversity been insufficient? And if your wife, so charming, so unfortunately seduced, so respectable, even in her foibles, I am not afraid of saying so, your interesting wife, so deserving of being loved sincerely, tell me, is she destined to be united to the most inconstant of all husbands? Ah, Faublas! Faublas!"

The Baron saw my tears run, and left me without offering a word of consolation. How tediously long did the evening appear to me and when bed-time was come, how painful did I feel, to be reduced, close to the apartment with two large beds, to occupy the room which contained only a very narrow one. It is to be confessed, however, that I was not so uncomfortable there as in the Bastille. In my prison, I would call Death to my assistance; at home, I invoked Sleep.

Come, Morpheus, come thou god of married men, what thou art continually doing for them all, deign to perform in my behalf, for a few hours only: drive from my couch tender inquietudes, impatient desires, consuming love; harbour me within thy peaceable bosom, summon near us, carelessness, sloth, languor, and indifference, dejection and disgust; above all things, convey into the very bottom of my soul, the entire forgetfulness of my beloved half. But when the light of day shall come to disperse the darkness of night, suffer not the Chevalier de Faublas to continue in a state so unnatural. Ah! I beseech thee, bid the morning dreams to come and caress his refreshed imagination; bid them to bring back to him a cherished image; allow him at day break to awake in the arms of Sophia. God of illusion, thou hast never favoured me but with one dream, but shall I be the only single man who shall have derived consolation from a dream! To the youth whom thou favourest, to the novice whom thou enlightenest, do not your grossest impostures appear as sweet reality: yes, beneficent god, thou will have restored my fortitude; filled with new hopes, I shall rise to accompany you; I next will shut myself up, demand my wife of the whole universe; and if love will second me, thou shalt soon see me bring back to the temple of Hymen, the beauty the most capable of driving thee from within its walls.

Alas! Wherefore was the conclusion of my invocation as ill suited as the famous harangue of that loquacious Nestor, to that most rancorous Achilles? A god is susceptible of feeling piqued the same as a hero: my unworthy petition was rejected, I enjoyed neither refreshing sleep nor agreeable dreams, but spent the whole night in lamenting a beloved object not being now at hand.

A letter that was brought to me the next morning, however, recruited my spirits; I here offer the contents to your perusal.

> You never allow, Monsieur le Chevalier, a poor woman time to recollect herself. I ought to be accustomed to your ways; yet I always suffer myself to be caught, owing to my memory not being very retentive, and to my being occasionally absent. You, meanwhile, should not have forgotten our former agreement, namely, that I should always discharge my errand first.
> Yesterday evening, you occasioned me to forget one of high importance; a certain great lady, whose very humble maid I was only, when you were thought to be her fathful attendant, sorry at my not being able to speak to you then, as I was commissioned so to do, desires me to write that she wishes to have a few moments' conversation with you this very day. She will be at my house in two hours' time. Come sooner, if you are desirous of our breakfasting tête-à-tête before she arrives. For my part, I should feel very happy if you would; for your manners are so engaging,

that they are irresistible.
Wholly yours, De MONTDESIR"

De Montdesir! it is now beyond a doubt, Justine now ranks with the nobility. Prosperity brings a great change in one's manners; Justine now scorns being called by the same name as her ancestors. Her *wholly yours*, nevertheless, I deem rather unbecoming: methinks the dear creature assumes a tone of superiority. Why should she? I was born a nobleman, but she is handsome. Has the ever-renovated question been hitherto decided: whether we were allowed to be more proud on account of having fortuitously been favoured with a high birth and great wealth, than if chance had dispensed upon us beauty and personal graces? Justine, upon some occasions, will act a better part than many a duchess; neither durst I boast of being her equal. Give it up, Faublas, humble thyself, man, renounce a puerile vanity, overlook and forgive the temporary lofty one of thy conqueror.

Let me read over a certain passage in her letter: *a great lady whose very humble maid, etc*." Madame de B***, most certainly! The lady wants to see me in a stranger's house! Madame de B*** wishes to speak to me in private! Heavenly powers! If love could restore her to me as tender—"

"Jasmin?"

"Sir."

"Is anybody waiting for an answer?"

"There is, sir."

"Tell him that I am going directly."

"Why, but she will only be there in two hours."

"What does that signify? Justine will be at home, we shall have some chat together; I am low spirited, that will cheer me a little. Tell the messenger that I shall follow him close."

XIX.

In fact I reached the Palais-Royal nearly as soon as the messenger. What struck me at Madame de Montdesir's, was, not so much the beauty of her apartment; the tasteful elegant furniture, the impudent look of her young manservant, and of her ugly waiting woman, as the true air of protection with which Justine honoured me. Reclined on a sofa, she was playing with an Angora cat, when my name was called in. "Ha! Ha!" she said, in a listless accent; "Well! Let him walk in;" and without either rising, or letting go her darling puss, added: "Is it you, Chevalier? It is very early; however, you will not incommode me; I have had but very little sleep, and shall not be sorry in the least at having company." She next addressed her *fille de chambre*: "Are not you going to set this dressing-table to rights? I really can't tell how you manage it, but you leave everything undone." She spoke to me when my turn was come: "There is an armchair, be seated, and let us have a little gossip." The waiting woman once more attracted her notice. "That will do, I have no patience with you, take yourself off. If anybody should come, let them be told that I am not at home."

"You appointed your mantua-maker, Madame?"

"Dear me! How stupid you are, miss! When I say somebody, can I mean that creature? Is that dress-maker anyone to mention? Bid her to wait"

"But Madame, if she should want to be gone?"

"Bid her wait, that's her province, and yours is to hold your tongue. Away with you, begone."

At first I was struck dumb with surprise; but at last I could not suppress a loud burst of laughter. Tell me, my beauty, how long since have you assumed those princely airs?"

She replied: "It is very proper with such people, and in their presence, not to lose sight of one's consequence. Be thou not angry therefore at my—"

"What how so? Will Justine presume to thou me?"

"Why not? Since Madame de Montdesir likes you, and since you love her."

"You are right, indeed, I have been saying as much to myself less than half an hour ago, while perusing your familiar epistle. But, permit me to urge an observation: did you not love me formerly?"

"Formerly! For shame! I did love you indeed, as much as a wretched *fille de chambre* could love."

"And now?"

"Now my affection is no less, but that affection is more delicious, more dignified; for you must know that I am settled, I now have a settlement of my own."

"I wish you joy, Madame, and in fact everything here annouuces opulence. Do inform me by what means you have acquired so brilliant a fortune."

"Most willingly; but I have much more interesting news to impart first."

I allowed Justine to proceed with her narrative, and found her language to be very correct. It appeared to me, that she had improved prodigiously during the last four months, and in consequence, I wondered less at the mistake which, on the preceding evening, had abused my senses. I durst not affirm, however, that I was

entirely free from prepossession in the present instance; a pretty dishabille will sometimes act more powerfully than is thought of; neither can they who have never experienced it, imagine how many new attractions a more elegant dress will add to the charms, already familiar, of a young female who had neglected her mode of decking herself out. I shall even say here what many men perhaps do not know, but that, which for certain no female is ignorant of, namely, that oftentimes a coquette, either forsaken or betrayed, has only needed, in order to bring back the disgusted or inconstant lover, to add a flower to her head-dress, a fringe to her waistband, or a flounce to her petticoat. It can't be helped! I am sorry for it, myself; but love is amused with those trifles; he is a child, who must he supplied with toys. At any rate, I hope you will understand my meaning, that you will comprehend what sort of love I am speaking of, when I mention the name of Justine collectively.

Don't you imagine, nevertheless, that I have entirely forgotten Monsieur de Valbrun. Yet, to speak the truth, I only thought of him and my promise so late that Madame de Montdesir had no cause left either to wonder at it or to complain; but it was solely in consequence of my bad memory, and not at all a voluntary mishap, for were it so, I would confess it as candidly. Now that we were disengaged and at liberty to enter into a confidential discourse I desired Madame de Montdesir to let me know the nature of the Vicomte's concern in her favour; she, without the least hesitation, told me all the particulars. Monsieur de Valbrun, soon tired of his *petite maison*, but more attached daily to his mistress, had furnished an apartment for Justine, to whom he allowed twenty-five louis d'ors per month, besides paying her rent, frequently likewise making her presents, and sharing in the expenses of her housekeeping; that was what the lady termed having a settlement. As soon as I knew her to be to all intents and purposes no better than a woman in keeping, I begged of her most seriously to consider me only as a chance visitor, and pulled out of my pocket a few Louis, which I insisted upon her accepting. I cannot forbear submitting upon the present circumstance, to my readers, an observation illustrative of our manners. When, in former times, Justine, waiting-woman to the Marchioness, and confined in the obscurity of her servile situation, was willing, in her leisure hours, generously to surrender her person to whomsoever she appeared handsome, I did not scruple loving her gratuitously; nay, I considered as a mere effect of my liberality, the trifling presents with which I occasionally rewarded her complaisant affection. Now that Madame de Montdesir, a stipendiary of the Vicomte, brought her charms to market, I should have thought it indelicate to fatigue those charms without allowing the owner a remuneration. All among our young nobility who are possessed of principles, will reason and behave in this same manner; hence it proceeds, that for a female who relies upon her beauty to procure a fortune, the most difficult part does not consist in finding out half-a-hundred coxcombs, whom she may persuade of her being a meritorious object, but an honourable man who will take it into his head to set a price upon her accomplishments.

Be it as it may, I paid Madame de Montdesir, and made so bold as to call for breakfast, which was brought up by the saucy-looking footman. The fellow was of a handsome figure, and I could immediately perceive that his mistress did not address him so peevishly and with those haughty airs which she exhihited when she spoke to her waiting-woman. I am observing you all this while, Madame de Montdesir, and see that you do not pay sufficient attention to what you are about, that you are forgetful of that consequence which you had been mentioning, now that you are speaking to your footman. If I am not widely mistaken, you retain in your actual state of grandeur, the

original disinterested propensities of your former situation in life! Justine, this young gentleman puts me in mind of La Jeunesse. Ah my dear Vicomte, take care of yourself; look sharp! Henceforth you alone will be entitled to keep the watch, for I protest that in future I shall have nothing to do with your kept mistress. But let us give up speaking of Madame de Montdesir; methinks I can hear Madame de B***.

This lady did not make her entrance the same way I had made mine. I saw her make her appearance on a sudden in the room which Madame de Montdesir had just left. I ran and threw myself at her feet, which I embraced. The Marchioness stooped to give me a kiss, but seeing that I was rising with the intent of repaying the compliment, she drew back a couple of paces, only presenting me her hand through mere civility, but with that air, which far from soliciting a caress, seemed to command respect. For my part, delighted at holding within mine that hand which I had cherished for such a length of time, I was fully sensible, while covering it with burning kisses, that ever deserving of being loved, she was too pretty to inspire only respect or friendship. Madame de Montdesir came forward to pay her obeisance to Madame de B***, who received her as she formerly was in the habit of welcoming Justine. "I am satisfied," my girl, she said, "with your zeal, and the skilful and expeditious manner with which you have attended to my commands; you know me, and shall not have to complain of my want of gratitude. You may go now; shut the door after you, that no one may come to interrupt us."

No sooner had she obeyed than I endeavoured to express how thankful I was for Madame de B***'s kind visit, and the excess of my joy. "Chevalier," retorted the Marchioness, withdrawing her hand, which most likely I squeezed rather too hard, "you are not going to hear me, through false delicacy, pretend to deny what thousands of people will soon know, and will come to inform you of: it is owing to me that the gates of the Bastille have been thrown open to you. Perhaps Montdesir has told you to what degree, in consequence of my being a constant attendant at court during four long months, my credit there has been increased; and I can assure you, my good friend, that the consideration of your unhappy situation, which I was anxious to relieve, was not the least inducement that prompted me to persevere in my ambitious projects. I have now attained the highest degree of favour which a courtier can aim at, and if your liberation, at first sued for in vain almost daily, but finally obtained, notwithstanding a thousand obstacles and as many enemies, has not signalised as soon as I could have wished the whole extent of my interest, I may boast of its being the most unequivocal proof of my credit; neither am I afraid to confess that your release is the most gratifying success I ever wished for. Do not believe, however, that the good offices of your best friend are to stop there. I am well aware that you do not value liberty as the chief blessing: I know that Faublas, although unceasingly caressed by several sweethearts, cannot be happy so long as he languishes separated from the woman he has always cherished. I intend to restore her to him; I am determined to find out du Portail's place of residence, though it were at the furthest end of the universe."

"Oh, my benefactress!" I exclaimed; "Oh, my generous friend!"

The Marchioness drew back her hand as I was preparing to lay hold of it again, and proceeded as follows: "And when I shall have succeeded in bringing together a charming couple, I shall presume, for the sake of their mutual happiness, to attempt a bolder stroke still, I shall endeavour, if Faublas is willing to repay my care by reposing confidence in me, and if he allows me to enlighten his inexperience by

my advice, I shall endeavour to guard him against the allurements of my sex and the wanderings of his own. I shall exert my utmost powers to make him sensible that a young man, favoured as he has been by Hymen, must derive happiness from his being a faithful husband. Imagine not that I am ignorant of the difficulties attendant upon such an undertaking. No, I can foretell that from you I am to expect the greatest obstacles. I am no stranger to your impatient vivacity, which seldom allows you time to resist perilous opportunities; I know, likewise, that your fiery imagination will frequently induce you to go in quest of them. These, Faublas, are the enemies I dread above the angry fits of your giddy Countess, more than the skilful instigations of her intriguing friend, the Baroness."

"I here interrupted Madame de B***: "What! Are you acquainted with those ladies? How came you to know?"

"Monsieur de Valbrun," she replied, "leaves very few secrets untold to Madame de Montdesir, who, for three months past keeps none from me."

The looks which Madame de B*** cast upon me, while laying a decided stress on the words *keeps none from me*, would not allow me to question the meaning she intended to convey. I could not help blushing; the Marchioness noticed my confused state, and said to me: "Let us have done with Justine for the present, we shall speak about her presently; but it is proper before that, I should acquaint you with Madame de Fonrose's true character: neither shall I be sorry to let you know how Madame de Lignolle is known to me."

"The little Countess, proud of her attractions, which she thinks are matchless; of her wit, which she is told is genuine; of her birth, the legitimacy whereof she is not apprised of being brought into question; of the immense fortune and title she is in hopes of inheriting; presuming on account of those advantages, for which she is obliged to her weak aunt and the most imbecile of husbands, the fair little Countess thinks herself entitled to claim adoration and respect. Giddy, imperious, obstinate, whimsical, and jealous, she has every imperfection of a spoilt child. She will always evince being less actuated by the gratification of proving agreeable, than by the happiness of commanding; she will be found the most troublesome mistress, as she is known to be the most impertinent of all women: ere long, she will take one of her footmen for her paramour, in like manner as she has made a slave of her husband. I warrant you, she is no more capable of disguising her extravagant opinions, than of curbing her unruly passions. You accordingly will hear her continually striving to justify and defend by her nonsensical talk, the blunders she may have previously committed; I shall even go so far as to assert, that with the inexhaustible stock of conceit which she is known to be possessed of, in vain would she struggle to mend the combined vices of nature and education.

"With regard to the Baroness, she is well known; for which reason no one can have the least regard for her. Her scandalous behaviour early in life brought her husband to an untimely grave. He was a very worthy character; the only fault he deserved to be reproached with was to have tried, in his elevated rank, to inspire his wife with plebeian virtues. The noble lady, in consequence, when in a humour to crack her jokes, always called him *le philosophe de la Rue Saint Denis*. As soon as her husband was dead, Madame de Fonrose being at full liberty, hastened to confirm the opinion which she had already established. She has been seen to rise above decorum so ornamental to her sex, and in every circumstance, with stoical effrontery, to maintain her notorious character. In less than ten years' time her conquests had

become so numerous, that for fear of forgetting some of them, she has wisely determined, of late, to publish a list of them. The name of your father ranks the thousandth in this endless vocabulary, and will probably be followed by a thousand more, besides your own. What renders it more surprising still is the invincible boldness of that woman, capable of putting up with the uninterrupted favours of so many people that she welcomes them all, and never rejects any one. Never will the first new-comer make room for the last in that Messalina's good graces. She will keep thirty at a time, if thirty are willing to stop. In case someone should dislike this order of things, he withdraws himself without complaining. If the vacuum which he has left should happen to be found out it is immediately filled up; but, invariably, should the deserter return after six months' absence, he is always sure of being well received. Do not imagine, however, that such minute details alone are sufficient to occupy the whole capacity of the Baroness's head. Her intriguing genius requires occupation abroad. Vexed at the leisure hours which her own amours leave heavy on her hands, her only consolation consists in favouring the amours of her acquaintances. Go to her house on a day when she receives company, and you will see her surrounded by groups of young men whom she has in training, and of youthful lasses whom she introduces.

"Such are the female enemies which, assisted by you, I intend to oppose; yet I should think it advisable, for a while, to let them enjoy the pleasure of triumphing over you, and swell the immense catalogue of those men whom Madame de Fonrose has made happy. That woman, too busily engaged already, will not be able to detain more than one single day a youth, whom I know to be endowed with feelings, and I hope, with delicacy. As for Madame de Lignolle, I shall allow her to keep you for a few weeks. Since you stand in absolute want of an object of amusement, I prefer, to any other, a giddy child, who will inspire you with a transient whim at most. Be you, then, in your leisure hours, the doll which she will be fond of; but rememher, that as soon as I shall have succeeded in bringing Sophia back, you must give up the Countess forever."

I promised the Marchioness to hehave as she directed; thanked her for the interest she showed me, and engaged to love my wife alone, as soon as she was restored to me. I felt much chagrin, however, at Madame de B*** insisting upon my remaining faithful to Sophia, and in order that no one should find fault with the lively displeasure I felt involuntarily, I hasten to inform everyone that the Marchioness, at that period, more than ever, shone in all the lustre of youth and beauty. Her skin appeared to me more dazzling fair; her rosy complexion more blooming, my memory pointed out to me other charms which my imagination depicted as being brought to a much higher degree of perfection; true, indeed, I was forced to acknowledge at the same time, there was a something more steady, more decent in her still enchanting countenance, and in her whole person, still completely graceful, a dignified air inimical to amorous approaches. I could feel exasperated: twenty times I was on the point of recalling to her those recollections which agitated my mind, the painful remembrances of my former happiness; but as many times she silenced me by a look that seemed to say: pity my distress, and respect your friend.

I was forced to abide by the injunction, and to listen a little longer without interrupting. She entered into a particular detail of the means she could now command, and proposed going to find out Madame de Faublas; and when she had convinced me, she thought, that no one could discover where Sophia was, if Madame de B*** did not, she spoke to me about Justine.

"That young woman," she said, "has engaged to throw no obstacle in my way, and to allow me to make a good boy of you; but I doubt her being able constantly to adhere to so involuntary a determination. I therefore beg you will condescend not to put her to too severe a trial. You cannot," she said in a more serious tone, "in common decency continue as intimate with her as you have been for a long time past. An intrigue of that sort is totally unbecoming of you, my good friend. You are neither so foolish as to intend making Madame de Montdesir's fortune, nor base enough to pay her gratuitous visits. It seems to be the general opinion now-a-days, that the rich libertine who goes unceasingly cheapening those girls, is less contemptible than the obscure coxcomb who courts their favour; but it has not yet been determined whether it is more absurd to pay very dear for their good graces which the purchaser cares very little for, than it appears disgraceful to obtain them by cringing, when in want of gold to become the best bidder. What has been truly ascertained is, that whoever is so unfortunate as to be fond of the company of women of that class, must soon, unless he takes care, forfeit besides his property, the esteem of all honourable people, and ruin his constitution, and finally blush at his own conduct."

I candidly apprised the Marchioness of Madame de Montdesir having violated her rash vows that very morning: I even recounted to her by means of what sweet illusion, in order to procure one of the most happy moments in my life, I had, on the preceding day, emhellished Justine with all the attractions of Madame de B***. I observed the Marchioness to blush repeatedly, and heard her sigh several times, in consequence of my unpardonable error. Emboldened by her confused state, I presumed to risk a gentle caress, and an insidious question. "Do you ever think of me, dear mamma? Does never a soft recollection?—"

Madame de B*** having already recovered her composure, interrupted me: "Ought you to ask whether I think of you! Does not all that I say to you evince that, continually bearing in mind your dearest interest, your friend–"

"Is it true, then, that you are my friend? Alas! You no longer are but a friend then?"

"Faublas, you ought to congratulate me."

"Dear mamma! I can only complain."

"Faublas, you should have said Madame."

"Madame! To you? I shall never get accustomed to it."

"It is requisite you should though, Faublas."

"Ma—Madame, my name is Florville."

"So much the better, I thank you for your condescension."

"Dearest mamma! How happy!"

"My good friend, you should say Madame"

"What happiness does that name put me in mind of!"

"Let us speak of something else, and have done with that."

"With what exquisite pleasure I rememher the amiable Vicomte who was called by that name!"

"Pray, once more, let us speak of something else."

"Oh I that I was Mademoiselle du Portail still!"

"Chevalier, introduce some other topic."

"Oh! That we were still going to Saint Cloud together"

"My stars! It is twelve already," she exclaimed, looking at her watch. "Before I leave you, however, Florville, I want to send you on an errand. She drew from her pocket-book a paper, which she delivered into my hands. I have petitioned myself the Secretary of State for this letter, which recalls back to France my most mortal enemy; have the goodness to direct it to Count Rosambert, at Bussels, where he now is. Inform him that he is at liberty, under his own name, to return to the metropolis, and even to make his appearance at court. I give you leave to let him know that she whom he had affronted, and who needed only to speak a single word to have his estates and property confiscated, to have him dismissed from his majesty's service and made an exile for life, has just obtained his restoration to his former rank and honours. He must not expect, however, my renouncing to be revenged, but it will be a becoming revenge that I propose taking. His base offence will not provoke a base chastisement. To inflict a noble punishment upon a man, who, forgetful of his high rank, has presumed to insult me grossly, will be to inflict a twofold punishment. Adieu, my friend."

"Adieu, Madame. Shall I he deprived long of the happiness of seeing you again?"

"No, Florville, I intend coming here sometimes."

"Say, often."

"Well, often, if I have it in my power."

"And soon?"

"As soon as possible."

"Within a few days?"

"Justine will let you know when. Adieu, my friend."

When Madame de B*** was gone, I called Madame de Montdesir.

"Tell me, I said, where does that passage lead to through which I saw the Marchioness come in and make her exit!"

"To the jeweller's next door, whom the lady has paid most liberally to allow its being made. This is to answer the same purpose as the boudoir at the milliner's."

"Oh! No, Justine, this is not for the same purpose, far from it."

"How so! Has our mistress been shy?"

"She has."

"Perhaps it is on account of your being a married man?"

"Do you think so?"

"Who can tell? I know that for my part it would occasion me a deal of vexation, and that I should he very angry at first. But we poor women cannot bear malice long. I should soon make it up."

"So then you are of opinion that the Marchioness—"

"Will soon be appeased. Make yourself easy. Besides," she added, in a careless tone, "I know that you are not without some consolation left you."

Madame de Montdesir, in fact, seemed much disposed to offer me some, but I summoned fortitude enough to do without.

Jasmin was waiting for me with great impatience. He informed me that Madame de Fonrose had just sent to beg of me to call upon her. I first wrote a short letter to Count Rosambert, which I had carried to the post-office, and immediately went to meet the Baroness.

When the Chevalier de Florville's name was called in, Madame de Fonrose let an exclamation of joy escape her. She took me to her dressing closet, placed me facing a looking-glass, and rang for one of her maids, who, less handsome, though equally clever as Justine, by means of using some ribbon and a few flowers, soon dressed my head in as elegant a manner as any young lady could have wished. I next was decked in a lilac-coloured India silk gown, and petticoat of the same, and to complete the metamorphosis my feet were confined in a pair of small shoes from the Cadran Bleu. Madame de Fonrose dismissed the waiting-woman, and kissed me repeatedly, protesting at the same time that I looked as lovely as most persons of the sex. I was just going, imprudently, to return her flattering discourse and tender caresses, when a servant in waiting bawled out from the door, Monsieur de Belcourt.

The Baroness, apprehensive lest my father should enter the dressing closet, shut the door, and received him in the next room. "I am come," said the Baron, "to beg your pardon, load you with reproaches, and express my regret. We were obliged yesterday to part rather suddenly: I suffered much in consequence, but it was your own fault entirely; you had introduced to me the most frolicsome little creature—"

"Say a charming woman, sir, handsome, lively, witty—"

"That may he, Madame, but—"

"Have done with your *but*!"

"I must confess," he continued, "that I feel some inquietude in my son embarking in a new intrigue. It would be too grievous for me to think that his wife will be gone forever."

"For God's sake, Baron, make yourself easy! When she returns she will have her husband back again."

"It will be too late; perhaps he will not love her so much; yet, indeed, his Sophia deserves to be happy."

"There you are again! I wonder at you! According to your maxim, it would appear as if the perpetual adorations alone of her husband can constitute the happiness of a wife; and you have brought from the country the obsolete notion that every good husband, plebeian-like, must overwhelm his wife with incessant love. What uninhabited part of the world are you come from, my dear sir? Don't you know that gentlemen in the present time marry only that they may keep a house and procure an heir to their estate?"

"And that is the reason why, Madame, those gentlemen you are speaking of, after some years' marriage, have neither estate, house, nor children of their own."

"Indeed, you are the most entertaining man in the world when you wish to take the trouble."

Then, turning towards a footman: "Let the carriage be got ready."

"Don't you dine at home, "resumed my father.

"No, I am prevented."

"I intended to spend the evening with you."

"I am very sorry, but it is not in my power."

"May I take the liberty, without being impertinent, to ask where you intend going?"

"I shall dine with the little Countess."

"Are you going alone?"

"No."

"With my son, perhaps?"

"With the Chevalier? By no means."

"Yon are cracking your jokes."

"I give you my word of honour it is not your son who is to accompany me."

"Who then?"

"A young person, whom I do not believe you ever heard of."

"What is her name?"

"Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"De Brumont no, I do not know her. Is she to come and fetch you, or will you go for her?"

"Why, but—I cannot tell, I am waiting."

"Will you stop late at Madame de Lignolle's?"

"I had thought of coming home early, that I might sup with you."

"That was a bright thought, an excellent idea. I would be denied to everyone if you did not dread finding a tête-à-tête tedious."

"I would only apprehend finding it too short."

He then kissed her hand. A servant now came in to let the Baroness know that her carriage was ready. Mademoiselle de Brumont, eager to join her mistress, found that the Baron's chat with his, lasted too long.

Yes, my Sophia, I must beg your pardon upon the occasion; Faublas was ruminating on the means of speedily dismissing his father.

Agatha, the expeditious chamber-maid, who had dressed my hair so well, consented to receive a louis d'or, and to show me some mercy. She led me through a back staircase into the yard, where I found the carriage, and then went to tell her mistress that Mademoiselle de Brumont was just arrived, but that upon being informed that Madame de Fonrose was engaged, and unwilling to receive company, she was waiting below for the Baroness.

My message was delivered very punctually: I soon saw Madame de Fonrose coming down, and leaning upon my father's arm. He cast an inquisitive look at me in the coach, but I was so uncivil as to hide my face with my fan.

We drove off. The Baroness laughed heartily; she congratulated me on the result of my stratagem. She took hold of my hand, gently squeezed it, honoured me with several tender glances, and more than once repeated that my father might be considered as a most amiable man, but that I was the most charming woman she had ever seen. Madame de Fonrose was kind enough to warn me that the Countess, very angry still, no doubt, might at first treat me with no kind reception, but, she added, you soothe her, as all women are to be soothed, by oaths, encomiums, and caresses.

The Count and Countess were together, when we sent in our names. Indeed it is her! said the Count. Madame de Lignolle, yielded to her first impulse, rose, and opened her arms to me; but on a sudden, actuated by a contrary sentiment, she threw herself back on the chair, and cried out: "I will not see her." I was going away, the Baroness prevented me, and said: I have brought her back to you very repentant, and sorry for what has happened: I can assure you, she longs to be deserving of forgiveness."

"Forgiveness for such deep ingratitude!"

"To be sure," said M. de Lignolle, "this young lady has presumed to behave here in a very strange manner. To stop only two or three days, and then to give us the slip without saying a word! She ought at least to have given notice to the Countess."

"To me, sir? Notice! that would have been acting most wisely, indeed. You are speaking nonsense, sir: I am not to be given notice to because I am not to be left."

"It is to be owned, however, that Mademoiselle was at liberty; she has as much right of sueing for her discharge, as you had to dismiss her."

"But in such a case, I shall repeat it over again, notice should be given on both sides, some days beforehand."

"I beg, sir, you will keep your observations to yourself. Perhaps they might divert me at another time, but now I confess I find them tedious."

The Count held his tongue, and I began to speak: "I confess, Madame, that I have behaved towards you in an improper manner; but appearances made me look more blameable than I am in reality."

"How so! Do you pretend to say, that you have not been unfaithful?"

"And for four months' continuance," interrupted the Count. "Four months without even letting us hear from you! The Countess is very right, that was not behaving well."

"Something may, nevertheless, he said in her favour," observed Madame de Fonrose: "I have heard from good authority, that those four months' ahsence appeared to her very tedious, and that if she had been allowed to come and see you, she most heartily would have availed herself of the permission."

"In vain would you attempt, Madame, to apologise for her; you know that she has betrayed me!"

"To be sure," said M. de Lignolle, "it is a kind of treason."

"She has sacrificed me!"

"Yes, indeed, she has truly sacrificed us, if she went to take another situation."

"That is exactly what she has done," resumed the Countess.

"I confess, Madame, I have acted wrong, but—"

"You hear what she says", she interrupted again, lifting up to the ceiling her pretty little hands, with which she next covered her eyes. "You hear her plain enough! She went to take another situation, she don't deny it."

"I beg, Madame, you will only listen to what I have to say more—"

"She went to take another situation!" repeated the Countess, in doleful accents: and her eyes were filled with tears."

"Was it with a lady," asked the Count?

"Undoubtedly," exclaimed Madame de Lignolle, with great vivacity; "what queer questions you will ask, sir!"

He then addressed me: "Who is the lady with whom you engaged?"

"What is that to you?" interrupted the Countess again. "It little signifies in what capacity even."

"Is she a lady of quality?" asked the husband.

"As much so as my groom."

"And what is she?"

"What is she? What is she," retorted the Countess, whose anger was heightened at every interrogation of her inquisitive husband; "She is a dealer in bad practices and nonsensical jokes."

"And what is her name?"

Madame de Lignolle exclaimed: "Oh! I know what her name is; but I wish you would tell me, Mademoiselle."

"Madame, I beg you will excuse me."

"No shuffling excuse, Mademoiselle, I insist upon it."

"Well, Madame, her name is Montdesir."

"Montdesir! I was sure of it."

"Montdesir!"

"She has left me for another! She went to live with a Madame Montdesir!"

The Countess again wept bitterly.

The Baroness said to me in a whisper: "She now sheds tears, she presently will be soothed, she soon will forgive. Kneel before her, and beg her pardon."

I did so. I emhraced her knees; and, while Madame de Fonrose was administering to her, in a low tone of voice, some consoling discourse, the Count addressed me, frequently intermingling some of the most gentle upbraidings with parental remonstrances: "You are very young, Mademoiselle de Brumont, and are endowed with both personal attractions, and an agreeable wit; you, nevertheless, must not expect to mend your circumstances if you are fickle-minded, if you will not attach yourself to anyone, if you accept of a situation anywhere, without being disposed to

settle with any family. Whom did you prefer to us? Tell me, I pray. A plebeian, a mean character, a philosopher, I would lay a bet. Were not you a thousand times more comfortable here? I do not believe I was ever deficient in showing respect to a young lady for whom I had conceived the highest esteem; as for my wife, she was quite fond of you. In the first place, without speaking of manifold other advantages, you enjoyed one in our house, which is seldom to be met with elsewhere, namely, of guessing riddles every day, and of composing as many yourself as you pleased."

The grief of the Countess continued not proof against the last observations of her husband. Monsieur de Lignolle had scarcely done speaking, but Madame fell into convulsive fits of inextinguishable laughter. On a sudden, deep sorrow was replaced by sportful joy on that charming visage, where smiles and tears were intermixed. I could easily perceive that Madame de Fonrose, the same as myself, would have paid very dear to be at liberty to laugh as loud as the Countess; but I was equally afraid as herself of creating strange suspicions in the mind of her husband, who was looking at us, and who must already feel much surprised at his lady's deep grief and unhounded joy. The Count, in fact, noticed my state of perturbation, and addressed me as follows, to quiet me: "You look quite abashed, mademoiselle; but nothing of all this must surprise you. No affection whatever of the soul escapes me. During the time of your absence, the good humour of my wife had undergone a striking alteration, but I discovered there was a possibility of making her cheerful, and spoke to her about riddles. She no sooner heard the word, than she burst out laughing ready to split her sides. I repeated the experiment several times, and always with a similar success. You have witnessed it yourself; she has been laughing this quarter of an hour without interruption. Look at her now! The fit redoubles!"

The Countess, in fact, burst out laughing again, and Madame de Fonrose gave up all constraint. I was incapable of resisting the temptation; neither could M. de Lignolle see three people so merry without joining with us. Our boisterous laughing must have been heard all over the neighbourhood.

Notwithstanding Mademoiselle de Brumont was made half crazy, the Chevalier de Faublas retained the use of his senses. His greedy lips pressed her lily arm, as smooth as ivory, and with a caressing hand, he gently squeezed a pair of pretty knees.

"Grant her forgiveness," said Madame de Fonrose, who was continually looking at me, and could see every detail of the ludicrous pantomime. "Grant her forgiveness," the husband re-echoed, who, not satisfied with applauding my actions by his looks and gestures, stooped twice to whisper into my ear these very encouraging words: "Go on! Go on! Do not get tired; persevere, you will gain your point."

"Forgive me," I exclaimed, in my turn, with tender accent, and in a supplicating voice: "forgive me, for I repent, and I love you."

"I love you, likewise," she answered, embracing me: "And I forgive you, she added, embracing me again, "but you must promise never to visit that Madame de Montdesir again."

"I never will."

"That you will never settle but with me."

"Never."

"That being the case, I forgive you! I love you! And kiss you! And, if you are as good as your word, I will love and kiss you as long as I live!"

"Well, then," exclaimed the Count, delighted at his lady's being in such good spirits, "since Madame loves, kisses, and forgives you, I wish also to forgive, love, and kiss you."

He then honoured me with several kisses.

"And I, too," said Madame de Fonrose, "must love, forgive, and kiss you, for I have been highly entertained by you for the last half hour."

"Who will now pretend to say," resumed the Count, with a triumphant air, "that riddles are of no utility whatever? See how they have put us all in good humour, in what manner a reconciliation has taken place so soon as—"

The Countess interrupted him: "The Count is speaking of riddles; would you believe it, Mademoiselle de Brumont? He has not yet been able to guess our last."

"The reason why, is, because it is not exact"

"That I call a substantial reason," exclaimed Madame de Fonrose: "How comes it that your riddle was incorrect?"

I pointed to the Countess, and replied: "This lady was the real author."

"True," answered the latter, "but it was at your instigation."

"It does not signify," resumed the Baroness, "since it is not exact, you must begin over again."

"We intend as much, Madame," said the Countess.

"Undoubtedly, "observed M. de Lignolle, "you must begin over again."

"Will that give you any satisfaction, sir?"

"Most assuredly, Madame, I should he highly pleased. I even wish I were allowed to help you."

"I return you a thousand thanks; I will have no other tutor, in future, than Mademoiselle de Brumont. Besides, sir, perhaps it might be to no purpose that you would attempt to become mine."

"You may be in the right! I have already composed above five hundred poems, in enigmas and riddles. It would be an arduous task for me to have to go over the first rudiments again."

I then said to him: "Give me leave to observe, sir, that my lady Countess is young, inquisitive, and anxious to learn."

"Well, then, mademoiselle, you want no help-mate to teach her all that it is requisite she should know. I am thoroughly persuaded that you are fully capacitated to teach your pupil excellent principles, and when you have taught her the first elements, I willingly engage to finish—"

"By no means; the pleasure and glory of her education I shall not allow anyone but myself to enjoy."

"Please yourself. That, however, will not prevent my feeling a lively interest for the progress of your pupil."

"What you are so kind as to say, sir, will certainly prove a great encouragement to me, and I promise to give my lady Countess the best lessons in my power."

"Do, mademoiselle, do."

"I shall compose many a riddle with her, I assure you."

"Do, mademoiselle, do."

"So, then, sir, I may attend to those lectures, without running the risk of displeasing you."

"Indeed, Madame, you may, and all day long, if you like it."

"Now then, I am satisfied! I rather scrupled at so doing, at first, because I was afraid of assuming a privilege that I had no right to; but, since I have obtained your permission, I am quite easy in my mind."

"So much the better; but I invite you to begin over again that which you had only sketched; for I certainly should have found it out if it had been completed. Come, mademoiselle, go to work, no *mauvaise honte*;<48> begin over again, and do things better."

"I shall try whether I cannot, sir."

"Do your best, and be as quick as possihle."

"Directly, if my lady Countess likes."

"No, not quite so soon," quoth the Baroness, "let us dine first, you will have plenty of time. I intend leaving you here a fortnight."

I thought I had not heard her right: "What a fortnight, do you say?"

"Why, truly, you find that it is very short?"

"Do not wonder at it, but I never could obtain a longer period."

"Obtain! have done my utmost, mademoiselle, for I knew how desirous you were of prolonging your stay with the Countess."

"Certainly. But—"

"But your parents were inflexihle."

"You say, Madame, that my parents—"

"Would never grant above a fortnight."

"You say that my parents have granted me—"

"Yes, only a fortnight; nothing could induce them to deprive themselves for a longer period of the pleasure of your company at home"

"A fortnight! Madame la Baronne, are you sure?"

"I am sure, mademoiselle, they will not allow you to stop any longer; make your arrangements in consequence; I shall take you back in a fortnight; we have settled it so."

"Settled it!"

"Yes mademoiselle, I am bound in honour"

"Settled! Madame?"

"Irrevocably so, mademoiselle. In the meantime I shall come and see you every day, as you may well expect. I shall visit your friends almost daily, likewise, so that you will hear of them as frequently as they will of you. I am to sup with one of them this evening."

"I knew of that; with one of my grandparents, if I mistake not."

"You are very right, mademoiselle; I shall mention you to him, and let him know about your absence from home."

"I shall be very much obliged to you."

"I doubt not but, at first, this long separation will alarm him, as it has the rest, but I shall reconcile him to the idea."

"That will be doing me service."

"I warrant you he will not be angry."

"I will take your word.

I could but be very much surprised at the artful and bold manner in which the Baroness had introduced me, and was going to leave me with the Countess, whether I would or not, as might be said. I shall not presume to say that I was sorry for it, few people would give me credit; but, at least, oh, my Sophia, I can protest that I mentally determined at that same moment to continue upon good terms with Madame de B***, that I might, according to future circumstances, be speedily made acquainted with the result of her inquisitive researches, and behave in a proper manner.

The Count, who had heard every word of my dialogue with Madame de Fonrose, asked whether my friends were now residing in Paris. The Baroness replied that they had come incog., for particular reasons she was acquainted with, but which she must not reveal.

I was seated at table between the Count and his lady; every now and then the Countess would catch hold of my hand from under the tablecloth, while our knees stuck close to each other's. M. de Lignolle must have noticed our being frequently abstracted if Madame de Fonrose, continually on the watch and ever complaisant, had not kept up the conversation, and many a time have put us on our guard, and awakened us from our reveries. When the dessert was brought up, however, I was no longer allowed with the least propriety to continue silent.

The Baroness, whether she wished to divert me from the object which engrossed too much of my attention, or that she took pleasure in plaguing me a little, took it into her head all on a sudden to strike a blow at me more difficult still to parry than all the former ones had been. "*Apropos*," she said, "you undoubtedly have heard of the grand piece of news: the Chevalier de Faublas has been released from the Bastille."

"Who! The Chevalier de Faublas?" said the Count"

"Don't you recollect the history of that gay youngster, who dressed in woman's clothes, got into the Marquis de B***'s hôtel."

"Yes, I do."

"And that young rake has been set at liberty! Why don't they confine him for life?"

"You are too severe, Count; he is said to be a most amiable youth."

"A notorious libertine who ought to have been flogged in the public market-place."

"The Baroness then asked me: "You don't speak, Mademoiselle de Brumont; are you of the same opinion as the Count?"

"No, Madame, not quite so, no—that Chevalier de Faublas whom you are speaking of I should deem excusable, if he be still very young, unless he has been guilty of some of these heinous offences"

"He has committed enormities," vociferated M. de Lignolle. "You are not informed of his history, I find, mademoiselle; I shall recount it to you: First of all, he left off the clothes of his own sex, and pretending to be a female, went into the bed of the Marchioness de B***, almost under the nose of her husband. Was not that abominable?"

"Permit me to stop you here, sir; this does not appear to me to be probable in the least. Is it possible that a man should look so much like a female as to be mistaken for one?"

"The case is not ordinary; yet there have been instances of it."

"If you were not so positive," said the Countess, "I would not believe it."

"You must though, for it is a matter of fact. At any rate, that Marquis de B*** is no better than a silly fool, with his physiognomical science. It is the knowledge of the human heart which is requisite."

I interrupted him again: "It appears to me, sir, that if you had been in the place of the ill-fated Marquis, that Chevalier de Faublas could not have made a dupe of you."

"Oh, you may rest assured of that. I am an observer, I am acquainted with the human heart, and no affection of the soul escapes me."

"We know that well," said the Baroness; "but returning to our young rake, you will be much astonished when I inform you that he is obliged to the Marchioness for his liheration."

"To Madame de B***!" cried the Count"

"To Madame de B***!" I exclaimed myself, shamming extraordinary surprise.

"To her very self," resumed the Baroness, coolly. "Everybody will have it so."

The Countess got up abruptly. "What! she said to me, was it the Marchioness?—"

She spoke so loud and so quick, she looked so surprised, uneasy and chagrined, that fearful lest she should address to me some imprudent reproach or some dangerous question, I hastened to interrupt her: "Apply to the Baroness," I said; "what are you asking me about? A story that I know nothing of, a mere fable; for how can it be imagined that the Marchioness ever dared—"

"I speak no more than the truth. I cannot but find it very natural that a young inexperienced female, a pure virgin, void of passions and hlameless, should deem an event of the kind quite scandalous, and that her innocent heart should induce her not to believe it. I cannot even help blaming the Countess, who has some knowledge of the world, to have been just now inclined to question her *demoiselle de compagnie*,<49> so inexperienced a person as that young lady must be, relative to a certain matter. But that M. de Lignolle, a man of parts, a man of sense, who has a thorough knowledge of court, of women especially, that M. de Lignolle, a profound ohserver, an excellent judge, should call a fable a fact, very uncommon no doubt, but not unprecedented, and which will appear most probable to him who is no stranger to the corrupt morals of the present age: is more than I can conceive."

"But allow that I should have made a particular study of the disposition of Madame de B***, whom I have no more than heard of."

"I, most unfortunately, have often met her in my way. I might dispute her native and acquired accomplishments; but most of the young court nobility will have it that she is a far more insinuating, artful and skilful dissembler than any of them: they are to be believed. Some will allow that she is witty, others that she is possessed of great talents; all agree generally that she was intended by nature to intrigue; some again wonder at ambition exercising such a tyrannical empire over a heart which they think was made to indulge milder passions, while others, seeing her continually attending business of high importance, are at a loss to conceive owing to what miracle she has any time left to carry on her amorous connections. What everyone cannot be tired with admiring in her, is a continual medley of that audacity which distinguishes the strong, and of that cunning which seems to be the portion of the weak only. She sometimes astonishes either her enemies or her rivals by the boldness of her doings; she also will frequently harrass them with tranquil patience and endless perseverance. She at times will act like an angry tigress, that rushes upon and overpowers the huntsman; or as the hypocritical cat lurking for whole hours to seize upon its prey. As a proof of her extraordinary capability, I shall only quote the manner in which she rose again triumphant, subsequent to her last dreadful fall.

"When her intrigue with the Chevalier de Fauhlas made so much noise, everyone thought she was ruined; she alone retained spirits enough not to despair. I should attempt in vain to tell you by what means she succeeded to persuade her cornuted and discontented husband, that he was not made a fool of; but certain it is that they now live upon good terms. This reconciliation, however, is the most trifling success she had in view; as soon as she had pacified her credulous husband, she then thought of liberating her charming lover. How did she go to work for this purpose, do you know? Let me tell you. M. de ——, who had many friends on account of his being possessed of some little merit, and a very considerable fortune, had been in love with her for a long time in vain, and with no better success, had strove to become a member of the administration. The Marchioness joined the party that procured M. de ——'s appointment; after a hard struggle, which lasted four months, she had the minister dismissed, frightened one of the candidates, imposed upon another, and the fortunate competitor whom she served was at last appointed to fill up the high office. His benefactress then scrupled not to become his mistress.

"You appear to be astonished at that, Mademoiselle de Brumont? Alas! It was so, the fair victim resigned herself—she most generously has surrendered. Thus has Madame de B*** recovered her former credit, which increases every day. By this

means the Chevalier de Faublas is let loose again upon the wide world to play some of his infamous tricks, if we do not keep a watchful eye over him."

Madame de Fonrose at last held her tongue; and as she only wished to puzzle me, she had occasion to congratulate herself respecting the fatal piece of news; fatal it was, for it cut me to the quick. However, when I reflected within myself, I thought it rather improbable that the adorer of Sophia, and the lover of the Countess, should be in love with Madame de B***. I nevertheless could hear from the botetom of my heart, a sweet voice crying out to me, that the Marchioness should have kept me in prison. In my excessive displeasure, I presumed to blame my friend for having done too much to serve me. Are those consoling moralists right then, who maintain in their daily publications that men are naturally ungrateful?

Madame de Lignolle, displeased at my sorrow, which might easily be noticed, said aloud: "You look very grave, Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"So she does," observed the Count. I returned no answer to the Countess, hecause the Baroness, so apt to guess at, and so quick in preventing the imprudent discourse of her friend, had already whispered to her, no doubt, all that she thought could pacify and make her keep silent. I seized the opportunity to address M. de Lignolle, and to impart a great secret to him.

"Sir," I said, "if my memory serves me right, you have, some time since, expressed a wish that nothing relative to amorous topics should ever be spoken in the presence of your lady."

"That is very true," he replied: "but whenever the name of that libertine is introduced, I am thrown off my guard, grow irritated, and am forgetful of my resolutions. I must return you thanks, however, for your good advice, which I shall abide by; I shall now speak of something else." He was most cruelly as good as his word, for he ohliged me the whole evening to guess riddles and to listen to long dissertations on the affections of the soul.

The Baroness withdrew at ten o'clock, to go and sup with my grand-parent, as she called him. At twelve, M. de Lignolle wished a good night to the Countess, and a sound sleep to Mademoiselle de Brumont. Out of those two contradictory wishes, one only could be fulfilled; the Countess spent a good night, precisely because Mademoiselle de Brumont slept but little.

Do not wonder at it, ye who remember that yesterday evening and this morning I had been rather busily engaged with Justine. Think of my too long confinement, think that the economical diet of celibacy, rigorously observed during one hundred and twenty killing days, must have prepared me to stand in a proper manner, the multifarious excesses of several happy nights.

You too, unhappy lovers, who, on account of your having found satiety in the arms of your beloved, can no longer conceive a happiness too much above your strength, receive, besides my evidence, a salutary advice, and take courage; get confined in the Bastille, stay there four months only, and when you get out again, you will see what you will be able to perform; with what eagerness you will fly to the knees of your mistress! Ah! how many times will you say to them: "I love you," if they speak the words only once! Ah! How handsome you will find them on your return, if you do but find them faithful!

Mine was, and swore she would continue so forever. I, for my part made her so easy in that respect, that on the next morning, all her jealous suspicions had vanished. We breakfasted most cheerfully together, as no third person was present to interrupt us. M. de Lignolle, prior to his departure for Versailles, whither he was going to spend a few days, recommended my keeping constant company with his wife, and to take great care of her.

It turned out, however, that she took care of me; her little hands dressed my hair, and adjusted my garments. True indeed I was not accoutred the most dextrously; yet I, in return, through gratitude, very unskilfully to be sure, but quite in style, returned similar services to those she had rendered me. The whole forenoon, was spent in that pleasing occupation. Number, if you possibly can, the moments of absence that prolonged our toils and the frolics that interrupted them. Madame de Lignolle's natural liveliness seemed to be redoubled; could Faublas, whom you know, behave more rationally than he did? Figure to yourselves our childish joy, whimsical caresses, and hoisterous transports. Imagine to what degree those freaks may have been entertaining, and our tricks frolicsome; our garrulous quarrels, our silent fights. Represent to yourselves our interesting sulky fits, and the voluptuousness of our reconciliation. Respectful companion, I have been playing my mistress an impertinent trick; and more infallibly to draw upon myself the punishment which I deserved, I pretended to make my escape. The Countess, who saw me running away hastened to follow me, and rushed close to my heels into the dark alcove, where I seemed desirous of hiding myself: an exclamation of hers announces that I am found out, but the conqueror was immediately conquered, realised too late the trap into which she had fallen, she fell and begged for mercy; I was inexorable, and gave her a kiss. Oh! you, whoever you may be, whom those sports alarm, if in spite of your severity, you condescend at least to be found equitable, judge us not according to the rigorous law by which men are governed; I am not yet eighteen, and the Countess is hardly sixteen; we are still children.

Madame de Lignolle had not wished to be denied to every comer. We received in the course of the afternoon a visit from Madame de Fonrose, who brought me news of my father; and that of the Marchioness d'Armincour, whom her niece had apprised of Mademoiselle de Brumont's return. The good aunt, delighted at seeing me again, overwhelmed me with compliments. I had inspired her with great esteem; she had not forgotten that I combined with the pretty common advantage of knowing, the rare talent of explaining everything, and that in an embarrassing circumstance, I had most powerfully assisted her, in giving her Eleanor<50> requisite instructions. The old Marchioness loved me so dearly, and loaded me with so many caresses, that I could not, without ingratitude, find her visit too long. I observed, that the Baroness who most likely did not do me justice, was endeavouring to prevail upon the good aunt, to go and sup with her; but when she perceived that her entreaties were superfluous, she determined to stop with us herself. Both our guests left us at twelve; the same pretty chambermaid who had dressed me, hastened to undo her work, and the female friend of the Countess, resumed his office as her lover.

When I say the Countess's friend, I am perfectly right. They knew in the family, I was no longer her companion only. At any rate, I firmly believe, that upon a similar occasion, every nobleman might, without degrading himeself, have filled a situation like mine. Why! In the morning, to preside at the lady's toilette, in the afternoon to chat with her in her boudoir, and to enter her bed at night, I see nothing in that, which a youth highly born would find hard to do, or might not honourably

perform. For my part, I know that I fulfilled the duty of my office with pleasure, and void from the apprehension of derogating from my nobility. In every respect, I found myself quite as comfortable at Madame de Lignolle's, as at my own home.

As at my own home!—every now and then, but not continually. No, father, no. Notwithstanding, two days only had elapsed since we parted, I wanted to see you again. Oh, my Sophia! I was anxious to call at Justine's, to enquire whether Madame de B*** had heard of you, and the very idea of the troubles that you endured, embittered my reprehensible felicity.

It was on account of my wife, that at daybreak, I had a serious quarrel with my mistress. "I believe you are weeping," cried out the wondering Countess; "what is the matter with you?" To confess that I was lamenting the absence of Sophia, would have been acting most cruelly; I preferred uttering an officious falsehood: "I grieve, my Eleanor, on account of my being obliged to leave you for a few hours."

"Leave me! What for?"

"To pay a visit."

"To whom?"

"Not to my father, for he would not let me go, and I wish to return: but to my sister."

"To your sister! my beloved; you need not be in a hurry."

"It cannot be postponed; I must see her to-day."

"Must you?"

"Indeed I must."

"Are you sure?"

"Very sure."

"Well then, I shall go with you."

"What a queer idea! Would you have us be seen together in the streets of Paris? If someone was to know me?"

"We shall let down the blinds."

"Be it so, but must not we get out and in again? Besides, could I, with any propriety take you to the convent what would it look like!"

"I shall wait in the street"

"Don't give it a thought."

"So you will not allow me?

"I would with all my heart, but—"

"You impose upon me."

"My sweet pretty dear, can you believe it?"

"I do: you intend playing me some foul trick."

"Eleanor!"

"It is not to your sister's you are going, but to the infamous Marchioness, or, perhaps, to that little hussy, de Montdesir."

"My dearest Eleanor!"

"In case you should have any appointments, you shall not fulfil them; I forbid your going out."

"You forbid me!"

"Yes, I do forbid you."

"Madame, assume those airs with M. de Lignolle, so long as he will allow you; as for me, I declare I will not put up with them, but will go directly."

"And I declare, sir, that you shall not go out at all"

"I shall not?"

"No."

"We shall see then.

I was about jumping out of bed; with her right hand she caught hold of my hair, and with her left pulled the bell so violently that the wire broke. Her maids being frightened came running up, when she cried out to them: Tell the Swiss<51> to keep the gates of the hôtel exactly closed, and not to let out any of my female attendants.

This mode of keeping within doors a lover appeared to me so novel that I was forced to laugh at it. My good humour pleased the Countess, who burst into laughter also. This delirium of joy lasted some minutes; after which we got up, and when I was dressed we began to quarrel again.

"Eleanor, I am going; I give you my word of honour that I shall return within two hours."

"Mademoiselle de Brumont, take my word, my Swiss will not let you go out."

"Are you really in earnest, Madame?"

"Quite in earnest, sir."

"Countess, I shall not attempt to force the passage, because, adding an act of imprudence to that you have already committed, would be notoriously exposing you; but remember the constraint you put upon me; think that you will not always have it in your power to keep your lover at home in spite of himself; and that, when once he is free, he will delay in returning to resume a yoke that you have rendered too heavy."

"Ah the monster! He threatens to forsake me! Faublas, if you do not return, I shall fetch you back; I will go to all your mistresses, successively—to Madame de Montdesir, to slap her face; to the Marchioness, to claim you from her husband; even to your wife, if requisite, to declare that I am your wife, likewise—yes, your wife! That M. de Lignolle has only married my fortune—it is you who have truly married me, you alone, my dear, you know it well! Wherefore do you wish to go out, and become unfaithful? While you were in the Bastille I had no appointment with any one—my sole occupation was to call on you, feel impatient, and groan! Is it Madame de B*** who expects you? Confess it, and I shall forgive you, provided you do not go. What advantage has that Madame de B*** over me that you give her the preference? She is beauteous, but I am handsome? Is she endowed with talents?—you are not aware of all mine—I sing well, I dance better still! and, if you wish it, will

immediately perform on my piano all the sonatas of Hedelmann and Clementi! Is she possessed of wit? I have my share; if she loves you, I love you more?—I am younger! More blooming! More amiable! I tell you so—believe me—you laugh, Faublas! Well, do not go out, and we shall laugh, chat, and play together! We shall run after one another, exchange kisses, fight, and amuse ourselves as we did yesterday! Stop with me, my beloved; I promise you this day will appear as short as the preceding one!"

"All you say, Madame, is of no avail. You keep me by compulsion: but take care your prisoner does not make his escape; for, upon being liberated from his fetters, he will break them asunder."

"Dare you repeat? Put my courage to so dreadful a trial, and you will see, perfidious youth! I shall go in pursuit of you everywhere; shall surprise you with one of my rivals—will kill her!—kill you—kill myself! And to the last moment of my existence, at least, shall prove that I adore you, ungrateful as you are! Great God! Where am I? I no longer know myself! Faublas, my dear, do not be angry; do not go out. You will not speak, you push me away from you. Ah, forgive me, I beg of you. See, look, I weep, I am on my knees before you!"

I felt moved; I helped her up and comforted her. We entered into a kind of negotiation, and a capitulation took place. I obtained that the gates should be left open, but she obtained that I should not go out.

On the following day, I felt my inquietude to increase; and determined to see Justine, whatever might be the consequence; I spoke to the Countess about my sister. The endless dispute was getting hot, when a loud rap at the street door, announced the return of the master of the hôtel. M. de Lignolle came running to the apartment of his wife, and cried out from a distance: congratulate me, ladies, I have brought from Versailles the certificate of a pension of six thousand livres."

"For whom?" asked the Countess."

"For myself," he answered, with an air of great satisfaction.

"I am very glad of it, sir, since you look so highly pleased, but what is a pension of six thousand francs to you?"

"I could not obtain more."

"You don't comprehend me," she resumed, with great composure. "Far from complaining of the smallness of the pension, sir, at your having petitioned for it, you who were possessed of about twelve hundred thousand livres in landed property, and to whom I have brought twice as much for my marriage portion."

"One is never too rich, Madame."

"Ah! Sir, so many good folks are not sufficiently so! Why not leave the court's bounty to reach those who are in want of it?"

"True," replied the Count, rubbing his hands, "there were a number of amateurs: I am not the only one who has been favoured. The first was d'Apremont, you know him."

"One of his estates brings him sixty thousand livres per annum."

"De Versenil."

"He is a governor of a province."

"D'Herival"

"His uncle, formerly a secretary of state, has overloaded him with riches, which he squanders away, and with honours of which he is undeserving."

"There is Flainville."

"The immense wealth bequeathed to him, he has made fourfold, by means of stock-jobbing."

"Next comes a M. de Saint-Prée—but no, I am wrong, that one has obtained nothing."

"What a pity," I said, "he is a worthy man."

"Do you know him?"

"I do, Madame. He has been in the army, is a man of courage and of merit. You could not hear of the many wounds with which he is covered, or of his misfortunes, without feeling highly interested. I don't suppose he is rich."

"Quite the reverse, he is very poor."

"His eldest son, however, has been admitted at l'Ecole Militaire, and his youngest daughter at St. Cyr."

"Has he a large family?"

"Three more of his children are nearly starving with the father in a sorry village in Languedoc. Now tell me, is not it dreadful that courtiers who are in opulence, should deprive that unfortunate family of their honourable and last resource?"

"This said, she turned towards her husband. Are you not ashamed?"

"Ashamed! At what? If that gentleman is in distress, let him complain; if he is forgotten, let him show himself. What is he doing in the country; why does he not come to Versailles, and he seen at the Oeil-de-boeuf; am I to go and fetch him? He has served a few campaigns; what then? Have not thousands of officers been wounded also? At court, it is useless to make an exhibition of scars: you must produce friends, have patience, and become troublesome. If M. de St. Prée is not deficient in those respects, he will come in at his turn."

The Countess replied with great warmth: "But had it not been for you, his turn was come."

M. de Lignolle, with a tone of superiority, returned: "How childish! You have not the least knowledge of the world. Admitting, that to make room for that gentleman, I had withdrawn, others less delicate than myself would have kept him at a distance. Besides, if people were checked by a multiplicity of petty particular considerations, no one would ever think of himself."

Madame de Lignolle crimsoned, turned pale, and stamped on the floor: "Brumont, you hear him! I have no patience with such reasonings; I could jump out of my skin! Sir, as you rightly observe, I have no knowledge of the world, nor of the human heart: nor, thank God, of the art of fine reasoning; but I listen to my conscience, which cries out to me, that you have taken the ministers by surprise, imposed upon the king, and robbed the distressed."

"That expression, Madame"

"Yes, sir, robbed!"

Her husband wanted to leave the room, she kept him back, and with apparent composure, proceeded as follows: "If within a few days, you do not contrive to resign your pension in favour of M. de Saint-Prée, I protest that I will take care to have six thousand livres forwarded to him yearly, through an indirect channel, by way of a restitution."

"Just as you please, Madame, you are enabled to do so without pinching much: it would be at most one third part of the annual sum you have reserved to yourself for pin-money."

"Do not flatter yourself, sir, I shall not touch that part of my income. Although I am not to be called to an account, 'I shall repeat what I have already told you a hundred times; I would never forgive myself, if I were foolishly to spend twenty thousand francs in gewgaws of dress, when there are poor wretches on your estate that want bread, my savings I shall dispose of in a way better suited to my feelings. With regard to the debt to M. de Saint-Prée, which you have just contracted, you may discharge it with those monies we have in common. If you should leave me to settle that business, I shall pledge my diamonds; and when I shall have sent them to the Mont-de-Piété for you, we shall see whether you will not redeem them."

"No, Madame."

"No! Dare you say no to me! I shall repeat it over again, I will have it so, and so it shall be. Monsieur le Comte, let us live at peace, believe me, don't put me at defiance; I have relatives, I have friends, the right is on my side, a separation might easily he obtained; I know you can do without me, but the loss of my fortune, might occasion you bitter regret. Hear me, Brumont, you see before your eyes the most unfeeling and avaricious mortal. I am forced to quarrel with him every day, to prevent his committing acts of greediness or of injustice. We have been man and wife these six months, and I have not yet had the satisfaction once of seeing him assist a man in distress! He is never happy but when he can hoard up; gold is his God! He has but lately been adding to his fortune, which he is contriving means to increase; and for whose sake, pray? Of distant relations; for he knows not whether there are any poor in existence: and as for children, he will never get any, unless a riddle—"

The Countess, who had been very angry for some time, on a sudden burst into laughter, ready to split her sides. Suhsequent to a moment's reflection, however, she resumed: "Unless a riddle should be a substitute for a beloved child!"

"He is right, by the by, to like them, the making of them costs him nothing. But now that we are speaking of children, sir, let me tell you that I long to see my family again. Last autumn I wished to go and take a tour to Gatinois, you have kept me here to pay visits, and I have been informed that you have taken a trip there unknown to me. Now that I am made acquainted with your disposition, that mysterious journey alarms me. I insist upou the condition of my tenants undergoing no alteration. I do not wish the vassals of the Marchioness d'Armincour to have to complain of their having become those of the Countess de Lignolle. My good people! my aunt has brought me up among you; your honourable toils procured me joy, and my most agreeable occupation was to share in your innocent sports. She taught you to cherish me; she taught me to respect you; she taught me to derive happiness from yours, to be proud of your love, and rich in your prosperity. She would often say to me, (I delight at the recollection,) 'Eleanor, don't you find it very gratifying, at your

time of life, to have as many children as there are inhabitants in this village?' Yes, they are my children; yes, my good people, I wish to bring back your mother to you; she will not appear too old yet, but I hope that now, as when she was not so full grown, you will feel gratified at her encouraging your labour, preparing your festivals, dancing at your balls, presiding at your hanquets, rewarding your laborious sons, and crowning your sweet Rosières.

Not long before, the Countess was laughing; I could now see her eyes filling up with tears.

"Sir," she continued, with great impetuosity, "I shall start tomorrow."

"Tomorrow! Madame? that is too soon; the season—"

"I beg your pardon, sir, the approaching spring will bring us fine weather: it is beautiful already. I shall set off tomorrow for my estate in Gatinois, stop there a few days, come back to fetch my aunt, whose business here will be completely settled, and then she and I shall proceed to Franche-Comté. I have a family also in that country"

"But, Madame—"

"I shall go tomorrow, I am determined. I shall take Mademoiselle de Brumont with me. If you are ready, you will accompany us. Are you otherwise engaged? Please yourself. I shall not want, either for my occupations or amusements, a man equally incapable of contributing to the happiness, or compassionating the miseries of anyone."

She immediately ordered her trunks and travelling carriage to be got ready. M. de Lignolle withdrew, discontented, but without offering any further opposition.

XX.

Meanwhile, the Countess was shedding tears. I could see the most tender concern depicted on her countenance, and the fire of wrath to be extinct. My heart was penetrated with delicious feelings, such as those with which her own seemed to be moved. Sensibility, the offspring of Providence, and sometimes of Adverse Fortune, sister to Compassion, and parent to Beneficence, is, I imagine, one of those virtues, which, for the everlasting propagation of our species, has been granted to us men, that we might be loved, and to you, our sweet companions, that you should, at every period of life, and at all times, be possessed of infallible means of pleasing us. I have always seen, that there was not a figure ever so old, but which might he made to reassume a moving expression; and its admirable power extends so far, that whilst embellishing the least handsome, it adds a thousand charms to the most beauteous. Judge then, how much, at that moment, Madame de Lignolle appeared to me more dazzling with attractions and youth, and wonder less at being told, that a cause, identically deserving of encomiums, produced reprehensible effects.

A few minutes after he had left us, M. de Lignolle returned to his lady's apartment. Most luckily, I had holted the door.

"You have locked yourselves in, he cried."

"We have, sir."

"Why so?"

"Because we have our riddle to begin over again."

"Is that a reason why I should not be let in?"

"I verily believe it is. I have already told you, sir, that I did not like to be disturbed when I was composing. Call again in a quarter of an hour, my lesson, perhaps, will be at an end."

That lesson, however, did not last so long; but after having received and given one, the tutor and the disciple had a little explanation, which it was not proper everyone should overhear.

"Eleanor, my charming friend, I have but just now heard you with transport delivering to your husband a lecture on virtues which I idolise, but that are unknown to him. You are become dearer to me on that account, you appear to me prettier still."

"Why, my aunt has always told me the same; she has constantly reepeated to me, that a look of kindness would deck a female much better, than all the hats in Mademoiselle Bertin's shop. She was right, since my lover can find it so. Oh! How pleased I am!" she cried, jumping through joy, "how happy I am to be good, since it makes me look more amiable in your estimation! I promise, Faublas, to be more and more so every day; I am imperious and irritable; people might think I am ill-tempered, though at bottom there is not a better-natured woman in the world. I am worth my weight in gold. Believe me, every day you will find me possessed of some new accomplishment. You will see. I tell you so. Tomorrow I shall take you with me into the country, are you glad of it?"

"I am delighted, my little dear."

"Wherefore little? Not so very little, I think. Don't you find that I have grown in the last four months?"

"An inch at least."

"Oh! I hope I shall grow again. Yes, I shall grow, be sure of it. That will give you pleasure, will it not."

"Great pleasure, most assuredly. To resume the question you were just now asking me, I am delighted at going into the country with you; but if you wish to have me go tomorrow, you must allow me to go to Adelaide's this day, and to go there unaccompanied."

This brought on the renewal of our dispute, which this once ended to my advantage; I even had the good fortune to make the Countess sensible of the impropriety of her lending me her carriage. A hackney coach was sent for. I directed the coachman, to take me to Adelaide's convent, but at a few paces from the hôtel, I begged of my Phaeton<52> to take me incog. to Justine's.

The lazy girl was still in bed, gossipping with M. de Valbrun. As soon, however, as Mademoiselle de Brumont was announced, they hoth cried aloud to her: "Walk in." I was welcomed in a friendly manner. I cannot tell whether the Vicomte quite free from jealousy, was as delighted at seeing me in his mistress's bed-room, as he was pleased to declare he was, but I know well, that Madame de Montdesir made unsuccessful endeavours to prevent M. de Valbrun seeing, that she preferred M. de Faublas to him. The poor girl, still a novice in her line of business, could not do justice to her part. I confess that it was not with a view of assisting her that I spoke to her of my own affairs. She appeared sorry to inform me that she had no intelligence to impart relative to the Marchioness, but she promised to have her apprised of my going to —— with Madame de Lignolle. The Vicomte engaged not to let the Baroness know in what place he met with me.

From the Palais Royal I went to the Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, to my sister's convent. To make my appearance before her in my new disguise would have caused great affliction to my dear Adelaide, and would have been comitting a useless act of imprudence. I scribbled a note, which I had conveyed by the portress, to inform Mademoiselle de Faublas that her brother was going to spend a few days in the country.

Madame de Lignolle and I did really set out on the next day at an early hour. The Count, having some business to attend to, would make us hope that it was impossible for him to join us for a whole week. I shall not attempt to describe my young mistress's raving joy on being on the road with me; neither shall I tell how amused I was during my journey; but you are well aware that one never finds it tedious to *courir la poste*<53> with a beloved mistress. It was near five o'clock when we arrived. We had not dined; I longed to sit down to table, but the Countess was anxious to look into some arrangements which she deemed essential. We began by examining the apartment that had been prepared for her. She ordered a second bed to be put up close to hers. It was so deecided that, for the future, Mademoiselle de Brumont should have a bed wherever Madame de Lignolle should have hers placed.

In the meantime the report of our arrival had been spread over all the villages on the estate of the Countess; and on the same evening there was a great concourse of visitors at the castle. Madame de Lignolle did not receive the tedious and ceremonious visits of petty country nobles, proud of their antique nothingness, nor of enriched plebeians, more vain still of their newly-acquired privileges; her numerous court was composed entirely of those men who are almost everywhere kept at a distance, and

everywhere respectable, whom most of the "gentry" have persuaded that the first of all arts was an ignoble occupation. Less credulous, and more happy, each of the honest husband-men that I saw appeared to be inwardly conscious of his merits in particular, and, in geneeral, to be proud of his profession. All of them in the presence of Madame de Lignolle displayed a modest assurance; all of them had become men again since a woman had protected them. All, indiscriminately, while congratulating themselves upon the Countess's return, lamented not seeing the Marchioness, and prayed to heaven to repay the niece for all the benefits which the aunt had overwhelmed them with. Crowding round my charming mistress, the wives loaded her with thanks and praises, the young maids covered her with flowers, and the children would kiss her wearing apparel. Madame de Lignolle, deserving of the affection which she inspired, had remembered all their names. To aged Thibant she addressed her kind thanks; to good Nichols an obliging enquiry; a flattering compliment to the young Adèle; and a sweet caress to little Lucas. She wished to know all about their private concerns, if prosperous. You would have taken her for an affectionate mother, just returned into the bosom of her happy family.

"Eleanor," I said, "my dear Eleanor, you deserve to be the object of general cheerfulness, for you appear to enjoy it."

"So I do, I assure you; my emotion is truly heartfelt. Never, during the whole winter, had any tragedy produced upon me so poignant an effect. Tell me, then, wherefore so many opulent people, who, on their estates, do no good to any one, will go when in Paris to the theatres to be moved by fictitious calamities?"

"They do not understand them, my dearest; at our theatres plebeians alone shed tears. The fashionable gentry do not even know when the performers are on the stage; they go to the house to point their glasses at each other from the boxes. You may well imagine they are not entertained; but for a few hours they become forgetful of the ennui which devours them."

"You are perfectly right, I think I have noticed as much several times; I accordingly have fixed upon a determination. I shall spend most of the year in the country, and lay out in good deeds the money that a box would cost me at each of the three houses."

"Ah! My beloved, how short the days will appear then! Ah! if you go continually in search of the unhappy, you will not have a moment to lose. You will be a gainer also, I believe, on the score of pleasure; interesting scenes will meet you. How could you not be continually amused and affected, when you will have unceasingly, either tears to wipe off, or transports of joy to moderate?"

"Well, once more I am determined I shall continue among my tenants in the country—provided my Faublas does not leave me, provided he be always faithful to me."

"How could I be otherwise, my dearest? Where could I find, with more virtues, so many—"

I could not say more. Oh! My Sophia! A recollection prevented me from ending the sentence.

"So then you will always love me," resumed Madame de Lignolle, in a low tone of voice."

"Always."

"You will never think of any other?"

"Of you alone. But only see, my lady Countess, how pretty those country lasses are! How handsome those young fellows look! I should feel inclined to think there are many children got here, and fine children too, the fathers look so happy in their situation."

"There is no doubt of it. Commerce, so fatal to the human species, on account of the dangerous toils it occasions, the long sea voyages it requires, the frequent wars it necessitates; commerce daily deprives agriculture of labouring hands. A destructive calamity which it brings in its train, namely, luxury, will also carry off from our land one-tenth part of the choicest men to plunge them forever into the abyss of capital towns, wherein whole generations are extinct. What have we left for the cultivation of our deserted cornfields? A few miserable slaves, condemned to be oppressed by the higher classes, who, by means of an iniquitous distribution, having reserved for themselves idleness and respect, leave for their vassals poverty and contempt, labour and taxes. If distress is injurious to the mind, grief is not less so to the body. Gnawing sorrows stamp upon the countenance everlasting marks, more hideous than the wrinkles of old age, or the deformities of ugliness, marks of reprobation, which an ill-fated parent transmits to his posterity, equally condemned, like himself, to all manner of opprobrium. Thus it will inevitably occur that the individual is bastardised at the same time that the species is reduced. Wherever you see the peasantry to be in small numbers and ugly, you may boldly affirm that they are made miserable."

While I was holding out with the Countess a conversation which was duly calculated to enhance the esteem and regard I bore her; upwards of a hundred covers had been laid upon an immense round table on the green, which was speedily illumined. The musicians were just arrived, and the impatient youth of both sexes were waiting for the signal. Madame de Lignolle took a genteel young man by the hand; I followed her example, and the ball commenced.

The supper hour came too soon, to the great sorrow of the dancing master and for the lovers; but to the great satisfaction of fathers and mothers, who upon similar occasions, are more eager to sit down to table than their children are. Madame de Lignolle wished me to assist her in doing the honours of the feast. We withdrew, however, after all the guests having drank the health of their hostess, and of her beloved aunt; the old men began their songs to Bacchus, and the young, hymns to the God of Love.

I must tell you, as a secret not to be repeated, that rather fatigued in consequence of the exertion I had gone through the two preceding nights, I relished during the whole course of this one, no other pleasure but that of quietly sleeping by the side of my wondering Eleanor. M. de Lignolle, had he been in my place, would have done neither more nor less; therefore far from being proud of it, I plead guilty. But make yourselves easy: love, always righteous, had decided that on the next morning my youthful mistress was to be amply indemnified.

It was not twelve o'clock; for several hours already the lively Countess had dragged me through every part of her park; a jardin Anglais invited us to enjoy some repose in one of its shady bowers; a cool breeze gently agitated the foliage of the cedar and willow tree.

A thousand birds perched on their intertwined branches sang the pleasures of spring; a rivulet, alternately rapid or tardy in its course, caressed with its silver stream

the flowers that grew on its shores. At the bottom of a dark harbour formed by the interwoven wreaths of lilac, roses, and honeysuckle, was a mysterious grotto.

I was drawing close to it when, judge of my surprise, I read at the entrance this inscription: *Grotto of Riddles*.

"Grotto des Riddles!" I exclaimed."

"Grotto of Riddles!" repeated the Countess: "we need not ask," she added, with a loud burst of laughter, "whether the Count has been here last autumn." She then resumed in a majestic tone: "Grotto of Riddles! Will you dare to enter it, Faublas?" And her eyes, full of fire, invited me to make amends for the last night. I had the audacity to penetrate with her into that place of delight; a bed of moss seemed to have been prepared there by the hands of Venus, and it received the two lovers. During some minutes we heard neither the birds, nor the zephyrs, nor the stream. The sweet grotto had just been rendered deserving of its apellation, which perhaps we were going to confirm, when the approach of a profane intruder compelled us to suspend our transports.

It was M. de Lignolle who surprised us by his sudden arrival. "Ha! Ha!" he said, "you were busily engaged at work here!"

"Yes, sir, have not you given us leave?"

"Undoubtedly."

"It is immaterial to you then in what place."

"Exactly so. But, Madame, you look quite confused; did I come mal-à-propos?"

"Mal-à-propos! No, not quite. We are thinking of you"

"How so! What! While composing a riddle?"

"We never make one but you are in it for something."

"How so?"

"How so, I cannot tell. At any rate, make yourself easy: it is a mere trifle, which ought to concern you a little, but about which you are not concerned in the least."

"Why, faith, Madame, this is too difficult. I don't comprehend you."

"Very proper it should be so, perhaps at a future period you will know more about it. Now let us have done with riddles. You have settled your business very expeditiously; you are come very quick."

"I have settled nothing. I intend going away the day after tomorrow. I am come because I longed to see you first, and next to revisit this estate, which for a number of years has been very ill managed."

"Very ill! You will never manage it better. I do not wish any change to take place."

"I would wish to reform it."

"No reformation. I tell you so beforehand, I will not suffer it. Sir," she added, as she left the grotto, "you perhaps have a riddle to compose, we don't wish to disturb you."

"Don't let me interrupt you Madame, yours—"

"Is finished, we perhaps were going to begin a second, but here you come like a jealous man!"

"I beg of you, Madame, it is proper I should withdraw, if the place pleases you."

"By no means, stop here, she replied with a laugh, it will please another time: don't be uneasy about it, we shall be no losers."

Madame de Lignolle proposed my accompanying her in the afternoon to go and visit her tenants. In the nearest village we entered the house of one of her farmers. "Bastien," she said, "you did not come to sup with me, but I am come to ask you whether you will give me *à gouter*<54>. Wherefore did not you come yesterday with your comrades? Don't you love me any longer?"

The good man cast down his eyes, with an embarrassed air. His wife, less intimidated, answered: "My master told me he could not have the honour of seeing our lady; that pleasure was denied him, because he did not wish to break her heart with a recital of his troubles; and he assures me, that she knows nothing of them."

"It is because I know nothing of them, that he must make haste to inform me. Come, Bastien, you and I are old friends, come, child, come and sit by me, and speak out."

The poor fellow, after some hesitation, at last said: "I have renewed my lease, and your steward has increased my rent."

"Increased your rent! By how much?"

"One hundred pistoles."

"Bastien, speak the truth, how much did you clear annually?"

"Two thousand francs."

"So, then, now you have only one hundred pistoles profit?"

"No more."

"If I am not mistaken, you have a family of five children?"

"Since we saw you, Madame, it has pleased God to favour us with one more."

"A high favour, indeed, for a poor wretch who can only earn one thousand francs. She then turned towards me: The father, mother, and six children! To feed and clothe all of them, no more than one hundred paltry pistoles? I know, that by means of pinching a little, that trifle, in this part of the country, may be made to suffice; but never to treat a friend, never to have a bit of a relish, not to be allowed to spend a single sou but for indispensable articles; and after many years' labour and parsimony to have nothing left to portion the daughters, and to enable the sons to commence business; no, my good folks, no, it shall not be. Dumont, I beg you will tell La Fleur to go immediately and inform the steward that I am waiting for him here."

When I returned, I heard the Countess saying: "Keep up your spirits, Bastien, and bring me some cream, for Mademoiselle de Brumont is a great lover of it, and so am I."

He brought us two large salad-dishes full. I believe that the Countess would have had an indigestion, if her fun had not interrupted her swallowing. She could not resist the temptation, at every second or third spoonful, of daubling the face of her companion with the nice liquid, who returned the compliment. This childish play amused us, we laughed like two madcaps, and were still at it when the steward arrived.

The Countess immediately resumed her gravity. "Sir," she said, I would wish to know wherefore, without consulting me, you have increased the rent of this good man?"

"Madame, I know the intentions of Monsieur le Comte."

"I understand you, but you have forgot, that by using such means to flatter him, you might be sure of displeasing me in the highest degree. Hark, I do not intend to argue with M. de Lignolle upon the subject; you have committed the fault, it rests with you to repair it. If, before twelve o'clock tomorrow, you do not bring me a new lease, whereby the rent is continued on the former footing, you shall not sleep in the castle."

"Madame!"

"No reply: begone."

The husband, wife, and eldest daughter, threw themselves at the knees of the Countess, and bathed her hands with their tears. Judge of my emotion, when I saw Madame de Lignolle shedding also delicious tears over the hands that squeezed hers. In the first transport of my enthusiasm, I flew into her arms, pressed her to my bosom, gave her several kisses, and exclaimed: "Adorable child! How dearly I shall love you!"

"My good friends," she said, "this is carrying matters too far: rise, rise up, I entreat you. If gratitude is a debt, Brumont has just been discharging yours. The riches of the whole globe could not pay for the pleasure I enjoy."

They arose; we left them; and the remainder of the cream was forgotten.

Although the too rapid transition from a very interesting scene to a very ludicrous one, should occasion you great surprise, and even make you angry for a moment, I cannot refrain from relating the comical incident which occurred on the night following.

The Countess knew that M. de Lignolle had taken for himself the apartment adjacent to ours; but the light-headed fair lady had not observed that only a thin partition separated her bed from that in which her husband still laid awake. By the questions he addressed to his wife, I leave you to guess at the cause of the noise he had heard: "Are you incommoded, Madame?"

"Who speaks to me?"

"I"

"What? Do you ask of me?"

"Whether you are incommoded?"

"Incommoded, do you say? Not in the least"

"I heard you complaining, just now."

"I did not complain, sir, I assure you; but, perhaps you yourself were dreaming."

"At any rate, I am wrong to be alarmed; if you wanted anything, your women are not far off."

"And Mademoiselle de Brumont is here, close to me, sir."

"Oh! What! Does Mademoiselle de Brumont understand attending a woman who—"

"Better than all the women in the world put together."

"Have you had occasion to try her, Madame?"

"Several times, sir."

"Already!"

"Yes; and I can vouch, that my women and yourself, sir, would have let me die, for want of being capacitated to give me that attendance which she has so skilfully lavished upon me."

"That being the case, I may sleep in full quiet."

"Sleep! Sleep!"

"I wish you a good night, Madame."

"I return you thanks; it has had a tolerable good beginning."

"Good night! Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"Trust to me for that, sir."

This, however, was a warning for the lively Countess not to sigh so loud, if she happened to sigh again; and, especially, not to call me by any other than my maiden name, whether she was pleased to receive some further assistance, or that she imagined she had only thanks to return me.

It was broad day-light when we awoke. Madame de Lignolle proposed taking a ride in the carriage, and going to join her husband, who, from an early hour, was gone out to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. We started. At about half a league from the castle, we got out of the coach, as the Countess wished to walk up a steep hillock. We were near reaching its summit, and Madame de Lignolle's servants at a pretty good distance behind, when we were surprised at seeing a man on horseback, who had come full gallop, stop as soon as he had reached us, and view us with a scrutinising eye. "What does the fellow want?" asked the Countess.

"I am bearer of a letter to Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"Give it to me."

"I have been ordered to deliver it into Mademoiselle de Brumont's own hands."

"I am the person."

"No, it is not you: it is he, he added, pointing to me."

"How, he!"

"Yes, he! He then threw the note at me, and set off as quick as he had come.

I opened, and read it. What is the matter? Faublas, she exclaimed: you turn pale!

"Nothing: nothing at all, my dearest."

"Let me see that billet."

"I cannot"

"No?"

Before I could be aware of her intention, she snatched the cursed letter out of my hands, and pocketed it.

We returned to the castle; but notwithstanding my most earnest entreaties, she would not give up the letter. The Countess bolted herself and me in her apartment; and having on a sudden entered a dressing closet,<55> she locked the door, and nothing preventing her any longer, she perused the fatal epistle. It was a challenge conveyed in the following words:

> You were for a long time Mademoiselle du Portail; you are now Mademoiselle de Brumont; I have always read in your countenance, that for your whole life-time you would make it your business to impose upon married men, and to seduce their wives. I have it in my power, by divulging your secret, to have a second person interested in my cause; but then you would think that I am afraid. If you are not in reality become a female, you will, three days hence, on the 10th of the present month of March, repair to the forest of Compiègne, in the centre of the second cross-road, on the left-hand side. I shall be there from five to seven in the evening, unaccompanied either by friends or servants: I shall take no other weapon than my sword.
> (Signed.) LE MARQUIS DE B***.

Madame de Lignolle had not disappeared for above two minutes before she returned and flew into my arms. "You must go, my dear," she said; "I am not a woman who would advise you to anything contrary to strict honour. We will have our dinner, and then set off; shall we not?"

"Yes, my dear."

"On the 10th! This is the 9th; you have nearly forty leagues to travel over; you have not a moment to lose? Tell me!"

"Yes, my dear."

"Well, we shall reach Paris in the evening. You will be at Compiègne at about five, and before dark you will have killed the Marquis. What say you?"

"Yes, my dear."

"But do not miss your aim; kill him; it is a matter of material importance; kill him, he is acquainted with our secret. You conceive how dangerously we are situated! You conceive?"

"Yes, my dear."

"It is a cruel thing, however, to take away a man's life—to have to reproach one's self with the deed! No, Faublas, no; do not kill him; only wound him; and then exact his word of honour that he will not tell about us. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, my dear."

"And you will return immediately to apprise me that the affair has been completely settled. I shall be waiting for you in Paris; you will return immediately, will you?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Had not I better go with you? I see no impossibility; what do you think of it?"

"Yes, my dear."

"But he always says yes! He answers without hearing me?"

I heard very well, but could not comprehend her. Alarmed at this misfortune that threatened me, I reflected with deep despair that a duel would be the occasion, a second time, of my leaving my country, to part from my friends, the Marchioness, my sister, my father—alas! From my Sophia!—and—shall I speak it?—to forsake the little Madame de Lignolle, whom I found daily more amiable and more interesting.

"Faublas," she continued, "tell me what makes you so uneasy? Is it because you must leave me for a few days that you are made miserable? I am as much grieved as you are, my dear, but your absence will not last long. I shall see you again after tomorrow morning, shall I not? Speak to me."

"Yes, my dear."

"You pronounce that 'yes' in the same tone as before, sir! And do not listen to me! Faublas! You do not listen to your Eleanor?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Great God! How dejected he looks! What can—alas!—But indeed if a misfortune should happen!—If, on the reverse, it was the Marquis de B*** who—but no, it could not be so; my lover is the most courageous and expert of all men! Faublas you will kill him! I tell you so! You will kill him! Answer me."

"Yes, my dear."

"Again that 'yes!' which puts me out of patience, that exasperates me, sir."

"Have done, my Eleanor, you hurt me."

"Answer; speak to me, then; tell me, my beloved, what causes your inquietude?

"My inquietude! Can you ask such a question? Eleanor, a duel!"

"He is right! Great God! To leave France! Do not leave it, my friend; come with me, you will be much better at my home than in a foreign country. If he was going to be arrested; to be confined; if we were to be separated forever! Ah, Faublas, I beg of you, do not suffer yourself to be arrested, to be taken to prison again. Do not wait till you are taken. Hasten back to Paris; come to your friend's; and, if they should presume to follow you to my house, if they should be so daring, leave it to me; they will have me to deal with, and you also, Faublas. I shall protect you; you will protect me; we shall be two against them!"

Madame de Lignolle, in her extreme agitation, would give me a thousand similar advices, which it was no easy matter for me to abide by. A visit, at last, was announced.

"I am not at home," she cried.

"Madame," replied the servant, "it is the rector of our parish."

"The rector! Do not send him away; let him come upstairs."

She ran to meet him at the door. "You are come just in time, worthy sir; I was going to send for you. I shall not ask you what you have done with the money my aunt left you the last time she was in the country: I am well aware of your prudence keeping pace with your integrity. I have only been here a couple of days, and have noticed the inhabitants looked equally comfortable and thankful; my heart felt content. I shall not, however, conceal from you two causes of deep affliction; the Marchioness, you know, has always objected to any of her tenants being reduced to a state of servitude. I understand, nevertheless, that to be the case of poor Antonio. I have heard that he was a man of good character, undeserving of the misfortunes which have compelled him to give up his little farm, and to go out to procure work from his neighbours."

"All that is very true, Madame."

"Well, suppose we make him a present of a few acres of land? I have also observed that old Duval's cottage was falling to decay. The poor veteran, perhaps, cannot afford to have it repaired; it has been the habitation of his forefathers; he has lived happy there; I wish he may there continue so for the remainder of his days; let us spend a few louis-d'ors to attain that purpose. Also, If I have not been misinformed, the road that leads to the next town wants the pavement, already begun, to be completed. Will twelve hundred francs be sufficient to have the work done?"

"I believe so, Madame."

"Well, let it be finished this year."

She took up a pen, wrote a few lines, and returned to the respectable ecclesiastic.

"Here, doctor, is a draft of four thousand francs upon my steward. You will have the goodness to take out of that sum what will be wanted for the fore-mentioned expenses; the remainder you will distribute according to circumstances among the most necessitous. I know not how to apologise for giving you so much trouble; I know that my children are yours; it would procure me infinite pleasure to share with you the task of assisting them, but indispensable business summons me to Paris."

"Nothing disastrous, I hope, Madame; you have been weeping. Oh! My God! Be just; load this generous woman with prosperity only; the overthrow of her fortune would replunge a hundred families into a state of indigence! Oh, my God! For whom would you reserve riches, if you were to impoverish such as make the best use of them! Who, then, in this world could expect to be happy, if so many virtues were not to be rewarded with felicity?"

M. de Lignolle returned from his shooting excursion a few hours after the Rector had left us. He had commenced a long history of his good shots, when his lady informed him that we were going to have our dinner, and then to set off. The Count was surprised, yet pleased at the intelligence; although he had intended reeturning to Paris only on the morrow, he had no objection, he said, to start one day sooner, that he might have the pleasure of our company. The Countess, who had preferred travelling with me alone, tried to persuade her husband not to be so positive; but unfortunately he had already reckoned that some expense might be saved by travelling together; and

the Countess, probably, did not think it proper upon this occasion to exercise her authority.

In truth, a more useful opportunity of saying: "I insist upon it," soon occurred. We had just done dinner, when the steward came to beg of the Count to sign Bastien's new lease. Monsieur, at first, refused. Madame grew angry. The dispute, though hot, was not of a long duration, and M. de Lignolle, though sighing aloud, finally did sign.

We at last took our departure. The deep reverie of Madame de Lignolle, clearly expressed that she was thinking of the reverse that threatened our amours, and yet, I believe, that my inquietude and sadness surpassed hers. That fight, condemned by righteous laws, but commanded by tyrannical honour, that fatal duel which I was going to fight, tormented me most shockingly. I know not what presentiment, at once sweet and cruel, foreboded that the most interesting moment of my life was near at hand, that a few minutes longer, were to bring me into the most embarrassing situation, which could ever be experienced by a man of lively feelings, and who had to struggle with events, and his passions.

We had already travelled a couple of leagues, I discovered from a distance, the city of Nemours, and close to us, the steeple of Fromonville church. Madame de Lignolle on a sudden, was taken ill. The indisposition which she complained of caused me to shudder at once with inquietude and pleasure: she was sick. How much joy, how much grief for me! My Eleanor was with child—she undoubtedly was! But I was going to leave her! I was going to fight! In the course of three days, perhaps I should be forced to forsake at once, all! My mistress, child, country! My father! and my Sophia! Sophia, whom I no longer adored alone, but whom I adored still.

A thousand divers thoughts, thus collectively harassed my miud; a thousand opposite feelings thus oppressed my soul: yet they were only a prelude to the dreadful agitations which my Eleanor was going to share with me.

Her husband was foremost in advising, and I myself pressed her to leave her berlin<56> for a moment, and to take a little exercise. She knew the country, and said that she felt strong enough, and wished to walk as far as the bridge of Montcour, where she ordered her coachman to proceed, and wait for us. She would not suffer her women, who followed in an open carriage behind, to get out and accompany her. We left the high road, went through Fromonville, as far as the sluice. The Countess had just refused taking M. de Lignolle's arm, but leaned upon mine. We walked slowly over the green turf, which in that part covers the borders of the canal.<57> My Eleanor, still indisposed, would every now and then bend down her head, which rested upon my shoulder, she pretty frequently would also send forth a tender sigh, and a gentle complaint. Her languishing, yet satisfied look, while informing me that she knew the cause of, and cherished her illness, seemed to solicit my love, rather than my compassion. And, I must confess it, less alarmed for the moment at the dangers of her situation, than delighted at the happiness of being a father, I viewed, with more gratification than terror, the alteration of that sweet face, which an interesting paleness rendered prettier still. Thus thinking of each other only, we could see nothing of the delightful landscape, which M. de Lignolle admired so much.

On a sudden a doleful cry, proceeding from a private house which I had not seen at first, struck my ears, and penetrated to the bottom of my heart. Great God! What a voice! I rushed on suddenly. Through some iron bars which stopped my course, I perceived, at the further extremity of a large garden, under a bower, a young

person in a swoon, whom two women carried into a distant building, the door of which was immediately closed. I could not distinguish the features of the unhappy creature, but I have seen her long dark hair reaching the ground; I have seen that elegant shape which can only be hers! That dolorous scream also, I thought I knew it again. I fancied I heard that scream a second time, that lamentable groan which she could not help uttering when in the convent of the Faubourg Saint Germain, cruel satellites prevented me from expiring in her arms. While laying fast hold of the gate, which I shook, as if I wished to pull it down, I ceased not crying out: She has fainted away, I could scarcely hear Madame de Lignolle, who begged of me to mind that she was fainting also.

A country girl happened to pass by, who seeing the uneasiness I was in, said to me: "'Tis because she is ill."

"Who?"

"That young miss."

"What is her name?"

"I would tell you, miss, but I don't know."

"Who are those women?"

"I leave you to guess; only think, they don't speak as we do."

"How so?"

"Why? I can't tell, how could I, since the rector of our parish, who knows as much Latin as his prayer-book will hold, don't understand it more than my pocket; they speak such a brogue, that old Nick himself could not make head or tail of it"

"Are there any men in the house?"

"Every now and then I can see one, who looks to be the father of all the rest."

"Is he old?—Not so very old, but of a mature age."

"Does he speak French?"

"He! Oh! he is much worse. He does not speak at all; he is a bear, begging your pardon, and when I go near his den, he looks as if he were going to swallow me up. There is a servant also, who is no youngster neither, but will chatter Iroqueze like the rest."

"How long have those strange people lived in these parts?"

"Why, somewhat about three or four—"

Madame de Lignolle, beyond herself, did not allow her time to end her sentence: "Hold your tongue, you gossip, and go about your business; now you, mademoiselle, do you intend to stop here all day, till such time as we are lost?"

The Count, who most fortunately did not comprehend the true meaning of those equivocal words, "till such time as we are lost," said, in vain, to make her easy, that it was impossible we should be lost, though in a dark night, in a common high road. He repeated it to no purpose; she was alarmed, she uttered lamentations, she exclaimed: "Don't you hear me, my dear? Could you forsake me in my present situation? Must I be reduced to implore the commiseration of strangers as they pass by me?"

I looked at Madame de Lignolle, and shuddered, I no longer beheld that interesting countenance, whereupon lively pleasure checked the signs of slight pain; her features were convulsed. Burning anger blazed in her eyes; pale terror discoloured her cheeks, she could 'hardly stand on her trembling legs, she shuddered through every limb.

What she had been saying to me, and the situation in which I saw her, brought me back to my proper senses. I was struck immediately with the numberless dangers that threatened us, on the formidable spot where I obstinately would stop. If my ears have not deceived me, if the emotion of my heart does not impose upon me, it was my Sophia whom I have heard to groan, it is her whom I have seen ready to breathe her last; she undoubtedly has uttered that scream of despair only when under a perfidious disguise, she knew her unfaithful husband again. Since my wife is in that house, du Portail is there with her; the lover of Madame de Lignolle will not be able to escape being recognised by the man who has so often seen the metamorphoses of Madame de B***'s lover; and my inflexible father-in-law, if he perceives me, will look out for another retreat tomorrow, and carry away from me my adored wife—adored although betrayed! M. de Lignolle, too, who is already asking me wherefore I am concerned about those women, who speaks of going to enquire who those foreigners are, may at the first word of an explanation, equally easy and fatal, discover the twofold secret of my sex and of my name.

The multiplicity of those dreadful considerations terrified me; and in my sudden fright, I was as prompt to retire from the gate, as I had been eager a moment before to break it open.

Within my left arm I pressed the right arm of the Countess, and with my right hand seized the left of her inquisitive husband; then, without weighing in my mind whether the one was willing or the other had strength to follow me, I dragged them both to upwards of two hundred yards from the dangerous house. There I stopped; doubtful how to act, I turned round, and my sad looks were cast towards the place which I had just run away from. Alas! A forest of poplar trees, friendly, perhaps, concealed from me the walls wherein I left, a prey to black despair, the dearest object I had in the world! My heart then grew contracted, I had no further occasion to conceal my tears, I could weep no longer.

Meanwhile the Countess, under a pretence that quick walking did her good, pressed me to help her to proceed. I was then obliged, at the same time, to support my unhappy friend, ready to fall at every step, to dissemble my extreme anxiety, and to answer, in a satisfactory manner, M. de Lignolle, who kept asking me questions as he hopped after us.

We reached Montcour. The overtired Countess stepped into her carriage, and only opened her mouth to bid her coachman to drive as quick as he possibly could to Fontainebleau, where she intended to take post horses. M. de Lignolle, quite out of breath, kept silent for awhile, so that I was left at liberty at last to probe the wounds in my heart, and to indulge my poignant reflections.

Faublas, whither is that rapid vehicle carrying you? Cruel man! Whither are you going so fast? Whom have you left behind? Separated four months since from him she idolised, she called on him every day with tears in her eyes. However, the tortures of absence might have been soothed by the consoling idea, that a faithful husband groaned likewise. How much more miserable, now she is obliged to think the

ungrateful man forsakes and runs away from her. This morning, no doubt, she cherished the author of her woes; this evening she must hate him. Oh! Sophia! Sophia! When you will read within my heart, you will only pity me, forgive me, and adore me again. Your rival, it is true, now sits by the side of me; but behold the grief which my pledged love to you, the love I feel for you, occasions her: what a sorrowful situation she is in! After shedding floods of tears, for fear of breaking out in bitter reproaches, she would not speak a single word to me, not even to complain of her sufferings. Her inflamed eyelids are weighed down; a cruel drowsiness overcomes her, the stillness of death is but too apparent? My dear Eleanor, how I pity you!—how I love you!

What have I been saying? Oh, Sophia, cease to be alarmed. When the moment is come, you will see whether I hesitate between my wife and my mistress. Eleanor, you will not consider it a crime if I leave you to go to her. My Sophia's accomplishments are not inferior to yours, and I am bound to her. Dread not, however, Eleanor, your friend entirely forsaking you. Could your lover be such a monster as to forget his having made you a mother? No, my dear, I will come secretly at times to bewail your miseries. We shall no longer spend whole days together under the same roof, but—What projects! Oh! Who will pity me? Who will settle my irresolution? Oh! Who will prevent my fatal sensibility making perpetually wretched two objects nearly adorable to the same degree. But where am I wandering again? I shall not be allowed to divide myself between them, I shall lose them both.

I shall only pass through Paris without stopping. Perhaps I shall never see Fromonville again. Honour summons me to Compiègne, to Compiègne, whither I am going to meet—no, not death—I could face undaunted the Count and Marquis, united against me, for a similar cause, no, not death, but exile, which in the present moment is to me far more dreadful. Execrable power of opinion! It is with a view of immolating an enemy, justly irritated, that I quit at the same time two beloved women; it is inflexible honour which commands the odious sacrifice! A barbarous prejudice compels me, although I would have resisted any other inducement, or the most excruciating pain.

"Mademoiselle," cried out M. de Lignolle, "let us see, whether you can guess this?"

I answered in a low tone of voice: "The deuce take the whole race of riddles!" And aloud: "Your proposal is very unseasonable, for I am as stupid as an owl."

"Quite womanlike, I know you by that; they are as cowardly as hares: at the least scratch they think that death is staring them in the face. See, now, the Countess suffers more from her apprehensions than from illness; but in truth it is not an illness, but a mere temporary indisposition, the common effect of a country jaunt, the spring; and who knows? Of a rather violent exercise. To be sure, mademoiselle, you go on with her at such a rate! Take my word for it, mind what I say to you, it will hurt her. Perhaps, however, it is only an excessive good health, an apoplexy of humours, of propitious, benign humours. It is a clear case, and by no means alarming. Yet she grieves, and why does she? Because her soul is affected, because the souls of females are liable to be so, whether they be married or single; and as you love the Countess, at least I think so, and without boasting I am a tolerably good connoisseur; as you love her, I say, you grieve at her grief, so as to grow stupid, according to your own saying; though I imagine you don't mean to be thought so. At any rate, however, you are unable to guess my riddle, because your soul is likewise affected, and thus it will take

place, that the greatest operations of the mind depend upon the minutest affections of the soul."

"That may be, sir, but I beg you will leave me to indulge my reveries."

I repeated my supplications to this effect several times, prior to our reaching Paris, where we arrived at three o'clock in the morning. The Countess, scarcely allowing her husband to enter her apartment, hastened to dismiss her women, and, when left alone with me, flew into my arms. "Faublas, speak the truth; is not it that you have found her again?

"It is, my dear."

"How unhappy I am! Answer me: Could it be possible for you to intend forsaking me?"

"Forsaking you, my Eleanor! How could I? Who could be loved by you and not adore you, not burn with a desire of seeing you again?"

"That is exactly what I will say to myself when I think of you, and I am continually thinking of you. So, then, my dear friend, you expect to return from Compiègne here, without stopping anywhere, without going anywhere else?"

"Without going anywhere else? But my wife?"

"Well! Your wife?"

"My wife, who so long since—"

"He wishes to go and join her!"

"My wife—"

"How happy she is to be his wife! To have a lawful right because she has said 'yes' or 'I will' in a church, for that is the only difference. You have seduced and deceived me, as you have her, yet I am satisfied, and idolise you the same as she does. And do you imagine my being sick is a matter of no consequence? You have given me a child. Monsieur, I do not complain; I don't say that I am sorry for it, quite the reverse. I am well aware that my character will be impaired, that perhaps it will be the ruin of me. But let them divest me of my rank and property; I agree to it with all my heart, provided they allow me to retain my liberty and my lover. Yes, all things duly weighed, I am delighted at being made a mother; in the first place, it is an advantage I shall have over your Sophia, and, next, you must love me better, for I love you the more for it. And yet, ungrateful man, you dare to think of leaving me in my present situation!"

"My dear friend, only think that I am ignorant myself of what is to become of me; this evening, in all probability, instead of returning to Paris, I shall be obliged to leave France."

"In vain do you endeavour to persuade me; it is at Fromonville that you are in expectation of finding an asylum! I declare, sir, that if you go there you must drag me after you. I declare that I will accompany you to Compiègne, that I will follow you everywhere, that I will stick to you as if I was your shadow. Perfidious man, you will have, I swear, no other means of getting rid of me, but to immolate me by the side of your antagonist."

"I beg of you, be pacified; listen to me."

"I will listen to nothing. You want to leave me; I shall keep to you in spite of yourself. I shall even use violence. We are going to Compiègne, that is a settled business; and as for Fromonville, if I cannot prevent you from returning there, I hope you will not attempt preventing my following you thither. However, you are not there yet; a good thrust may not allow you to go there in such a hurry. My stars! What have I been saying? No, Faublas, I rather wish you should not be killed. Defend yourself well: we shall see afterwards who, of Sophia or of me, shall carry the day; do not suffer yourself to be wounded, as in your first duel; rather kill him; pray do kill him. I shall be there, my dear, I shall help you with my advice, and encourage you by my cries; you will fight before me, under my eyes, before the mother of your child; you will be invincible. Why do not you answer? Speak to me."

"What would you have me answer, when you listen only in a blind rage, and plan the most irrational projects? Eleanor my dear Eleanor! Is it possible you should go to Compiègne, and not expose yourself?"

"Quite possible, for it shall be so."

"My dearest, act rationally. Admitting that you were able to bear the fatigue of that second journey, and that, by an inconceivable good fortune, nobody should recognise Madame de Lignolle travelling post with the Chevalier de Faublas; I ask it of yourself, can I suffer you to witness a bloody scene at a time especially when your critical situation demands particular attention?"

"Particular attention, no doubt! That is the reason why it is incumbent upon me to follow you to Compiègne, and why you must not go to Fromonville. What will become of me when I am informed that you are gone to meet your antagonist, and perhaps my female enemy? Tormented by the most dreadful inquietude at every moment in the day, I shall behold my lover either unfaithful or dying. Alas in whatever manner my lover is taken from me, if I lose him what is life to me? Faublas, I beseech you, pity me, pity your child, pity yourself; dread my rage, do not drive me to despair. Faublas, I conjure you, promise me that you will not see Sophia tomorrow; promise that I shall see the Marquis with you this evening."

She was on her knees before me; she kissed and bedewed mine with tears. The most unfeeling of mortals could not have resisted her. I promised all she asked for.

XXI.

Notwithstanding we were to set off before dawn, yet we could not determine to sit up all night. Madame de Lignolle wanted consolation no less than repose. We went to bed; to the painful agitations of a too long day, succeeded the sweet agitations of too short a night: and the Countess, exhausted with fatigue, finally went to sleep. That was what her unfortunate lover had been waiting for: compassion had induced him to utter a falsehood, and imperious necessity forced him to break his promises.

By the feeble light of the rising sun, I removed, cautiously, the sheet which enveloped me; by gradual motions, I reached the edge of the bed; my feet already touched, or rather skimmed the ground; the bedclothes were replaced gently; and, on that couch where love lately heaved happy sighs, and enjoyed still repose, a forsaken lover was left to groan bitterly.

I was very slow at dressing myself, for fear of making a noise. However, I had got quite ready, and was going. I was seized, on a sudden, with a deadly shivering! I entered Mademoiselle de Brumont's room, that room which led to the private staircase. I entered it, and could feel my heart to fail me. Irresolute, I stopped; I then, alternately, turned round, withdrew, and advanced again. I attempted to fly away, and drew near again. Great God; is it a mistake? Has she not spoken? Has she not mentioned my name? Let me listen. Yes, this time, I have heard her very plain: it is Faublas, it is her friend whom she calls in plaintive, dolorous accents. Amiable, and dear creature! A dream informs her of my flight; she is agitated by a dreadful dream—alas! Too true. I felt a violent agitation myself, stooped towards her, my mouth murmured an adieu, my lips nearly pressed hers, I dropped a tear upon her uncovered breast—alas! I had reached the private staircase.

I had the misfortune to meet M. de Lignolle in the yard, just going to step into his carriage."

"Ah! ah! So early?"

"Yes, sir, I am going out."

"What! Without the Countess?"

"She is tired, she is fast asleep, she knows that I have some business that will keep me out all day."

"Are you going by yourself? and on foot!"

"I shall call a coach."

"No, mademoiselle, I shall take you wherever you want to go."

"But, sir, it will take you out of your way; you are in a hurry

"Never mind."

"Permit me—-I shall suffer no such thing."

While I stand contending with M. de Lignolle, to evade his troublesome politeness, the Countess may awake, and make a terrible bustle; I yielded consent, in consequence of that reflection; I got into the cursed carriage; M. de Lignolle did the same, and desired me to tell the coachman where I wished to be carried. I thought, at

first, of saying my sister's convent; but, upon second thoughts, directed him to take me to the house of Madame de Fonrose.

When arrived at the Baroness's door, I got out of the carriage; and, as I was going to enter the hôtel, I saw M. de Belcourt, coming out, incog.

He knew me again, and cried out: "I have found you, at last! It must be chance, then."

Trembling, I interrupted him: "Father, that gentleman whom you see in his carriage, I beg leave to introduce to you; he is the Comte de Lignolle, the husband of that young lady, at whose house—"

The Count, who had heard us, hastened out of the carriage, threw his arms round my father's neck, and congratulated him, upon having a daughter who guessed every riddle that was presented to her. He next added, "We return her to you for four-and-twenty hours, but hope that tomorrow you will do us the pleasure of bringing her back yourself."

M. de Belcourt wished to be excused, but M. de Lignolle persevered: "Mademoiselle de Brumont must return, for my wife is ill."

"I am sorry for it," replied the Baron, out of patience; "but—"

"But," continued the other, "you need not be alarmed. It is only a temporary indisposition; she has been sick: that proceeded, I believe, from her having taken, these last few days, too much exercise with your daughter, who you know, is active, and of a strong constitution. The Countess is still in her teens, mind. However, as I told you before, it is nothing. Nevertheless, it might become serious, if Mademoiselle de Brumont did not return; because, my wife, who is very fond of her, would grieve; her soul would be affected, sir, and when a woman's soul is affected, good bye I there is nobody at home!"

"I must repeat, sir, that I cannot promise."

"I will not leave you till you have given me your word."

"I beg—"

"Ah! I beseech you, M. de Brumont—"

The Baron, yielding to his natural impetuosity, exclaimed: "Let me alone, sir." Then casting at me an angry look, said: "Is it not shocking that I should be continually exposed in this manner?"

I shuddered, and threw myself into his arms. "Oh! Father! Remember la Porte Maillot."

These few words rendered him more composed, and he immediately begged a thousand pardons, and returned as many thanks to M. de Lignolle.

This latter gentleman, meanwhile, stood amazed at the anger which the supposed M. de Brumont had so given vent to. In order to remove all his suspicions on the subject, I thought it advisable to whisper to him, in a mysterious tone, the following insidious confidence; "Madame de Fonrose has informed you, that certain family business compelled my father to live incog. in this country, and yet you wish him to go and see you! And call him aloud by his name!"

"Ah! How sorry I am that I have been so forgetful," said the Count to the Baron.

"And I, for having been so rude," replied the latter.

"I beg you will not mention it, I have been to blame; but wherefore refuse your daughter returning to my wife? Well, since you can't bring her yourself, promise at least to send her back."

"I promise," resumed M. de Belcourt, "to exert my endeavours so that you may have no occasion to repent for your extreme politeness."

"The business is now settled. I am satisfied. But you have no carriage; shall I see you home?"

"I then answered him: We thank you. But I want to speak to the Baroness; I hope my father will step up with me; it is something particular I have to say to her."

He drove off. When his carriage was at a distance, we got into a hackney coach, which, whilst carrying us from the further end of the Faubourg Saint Germain to la Place Vendôme, afforded me full time to indulge my reveries. Solely engaged in thinking of the despair of my wife, forsaken on the preceding day; of the approaching miseries of my mistress, whom I had been unfaithful to that very morning, I seemed to be attentively listening to the salutary representations of M. de Belcourt. Vain sounds struck my ears; I was awakened from my lethargy only by the following words of the long reprimand; "The miseries of Sophia, whom you forgot."

"No, I do not forget her, no. Her miseries are great, no doubt, but they will be of no long duration. Tomorrow, yes, tomorrow. And you, father, this very day. Ah! must beg your pardon, I am beyond myself. You are getting out here, father. You are going to see Adelaide?"

"I am."

"I am not going to show myself in the parlour in my present costume. I shall go home and change my dress, and then—farewell, father. Oh! You, whom I love as much as she does! Adieu."

"How so, my friend are you not coming to join me?"

"To join you! Ah! Yes, to join you! Father, embrace me then, forgive me, for all the chagrin I occasion you."

"With all my heart, but pray—"

"Indeed I would wish to behave better; but I cannot resist. You will have the goodness to kiss my sister for me, won't you?"

"You will discharge your errand presently yourself."

"Yes, father"

"I shall see you again tomorrow."

"What does he mean? Are you deranged?"

"True indeed, I speak at random. Farewell, I am sorry to leave you, adieu! You will hear from me in an hour."

I reached home. Jasmin was standing sentry at the door; the fellow laughed at seeing me in female attire; and apprised me that Madame de Montdesir had already

sent twice that morning to enquire whether I was returned from the country, and to recommend I should be desired, immediately upon my arrival, to go to her house. "Very well! This agrees with my plan. Quick, Jasmin, dress my hair."

"Like a man's, mademoiselle?"

"Yes."

The business was soon done.

"Jasmin! A pen, ink, and paper. Quick. Whilst I am writing, make haste to get everything ready for me to dress from head to foot."

"In man's clothes, mademoiselle?"

"To be sure. Next you will get my horse, and your own ready also."

"And am I to go with you sir?"

"Yes."

"So much the better, I shall have some fun. We certainly are about some frolic."

"Jasmin, you must reach me my sword."

"Ah? So much the worse, for if we are going to fight we shall kill somebody. The poor little Marquis, methinks I see him, down he comes. That was his own fault, though, for we did everything to spare him; you carried it too far! Since that one is not dead, his soul must have been screwed into his body."

"Jasmin, make haste; we haven't a moment to lose; above all things don't go and blabber."

"I had rather be hanged, sir, than divulge your secret."

I was writing to my father, and giving him all the information I possibly could respecting Sophia's place of retirement, and my letter was concluded in the following manner.

> Go, father, I beseech you, set off immediately for Fromonville! Let not du Portail escape you a second time; whatever his motives may be, see my father-in-law, speak to him, soothe him, that he may restore to us his admirable daughter; bring my dear Adelaide back with you, pray do bring her back. The two friends will be so glad to meet again! Let the presence of Adelaide be to Sophia the forerunner of Faublas's return, let the tender caresses of the sister prepare her for the transports of the brother, of that brother who adores her, by whom she is idolised. The extreme tender feelings of Sophia require to be nicely managed. Spare no pains, I beg of you, to inform her of our re-union, without endangering her health. She now is plunged into deep despair; her joy would kill her. I confide into your hands, father, my dearest interest; I recommend her to your care, the most respectable, the most beautiful, the most amiable creature in the world, I recommend to you my beloved.
> Oh! That I could myself now fly to Fromonville Alas! I am going elsewhere. Need I tell you that an indispensable affair imposes the obligation upon me. Yet be not alarmed. Tomorrow, before twelve I shall be near my father, near my wife; I swear by Sophia and by you."

I dressed myself, and sealed my letter, which a trusty man was commissioned to take to Adelaide's convent, and to deliver into M. de Belcourt's own hands. I

ordered Jasmin to go and wait for me at La Porte Saint Martin, and ran to Madame de Montdesir's.

I found there, not Madame de B***, but Vicomte de Florville. "Here he is at last," he said. I apologised for having kept him waiting, and thanked the Marchioness, who had sent for me just at the time when I was anxious to know how I could procure the happiness of a few minutes' conversation with her. I added, that I had brought from the country a grand piece of news.

"What is it?"

"I have seen Sophia."

She turned pale, and cried out: "That is impossible!"

I informed her, in a few words, of the retreat which du Portail had selected, and how, by mere chance, I had the good fortune to find it out. The Marchioness looked uneasy while listening to me; I entreated her to send immediately to Fromonville some people to watch du Portail, and follow him everywhere; for I apprehended, lest my father-in-law still intended, and might find the means of avoiding M. de Belcourt's pursuit.

"How comes it," she said, in a faltering voice, "that you do not go yourself?"

"I cannot, an affair of importance calls me to another part."

She resumed, with a more calm air, and in a tone of greater assurance: "What! Has Madame de Lignolle already acquired such an empire over you?"

"It is not Madame de Lignolle who tears me away from Sophia; an indispensable duty."

"Speak it out; can't I know?"

"Believe me, my dear mamma, it breaks my heart to keep a secret from you."

"This is giving me a broad hint, Chevalier, that I should be guilty of indiscretion if I were to ask any further questions. I condescend to believe, that I have no reason to complain of so much reserve. I am going to issue the most pressing orders that du Portail should be watched from this evening, and that he may not stir an inch without my being informed of it directly; either I, or little Montdesir, in my absence," she added, with a deep sigh."

"In your absence, mamma! Are you going to quit Paris?"

"Presently, my good friend."

"That is very unlucky for me! How sorry I am to lose you, especially at a time when your advice and assistance would have been so requisite! Where are you going?

"To Versailles, first."

"To Versailles in this dress! Mamma, it appears to me to be the *frac Anglais*<46> of the charming Vicomte, whose name I had borrowed, and which you embellished on the day we went to Saint Cloud together?"

"That may be," returned she, affecting not to be certain. "Yes, I believe it is the same."

"And from Versailles you intend proceeding to?"

"Chevalier, it is with regret I am forced to repeat your own words: Believe me, it breaks my heart to keep a secret from you."

"But, will it be a long journey?"

"Perhaps, my good friend, perhaps, she answered, in broken accents, and that is the reason why, prior to my undertaking it, I ardently wished to bid you adieu."

"Adieu! Mamma; my dear mamma, you make me quite uneasy, you look sad, pray entrust—"

She interrupted me on a sudden: "Respect my secret, I did not attempt to force yours. I do not even pretend to guess at it. Go, Faublas, go and return content, if possible. I cannot be explicit, I cannot speak of the approaching event, nor mention the apprehensions that discompose me, the wishes I presume to harbour! But my friend, my dear friend, how cruel if we were never to see one another again."

"Great gods! You sigh! Your eyes are bedewed with tears!"

"Adieu, Faublas, adieu, my dear child. I grieve at leaving you; remember it, if some great misfortune was to happen. Do not forget, the Marchioness de B*** lost you on account of an act of treachery, and that she became the victim of a base man, who called himself your friend. Do not forget, above all things, that she never ceased bearing you the most tender friendship; the most tender, repeated she, squeezing my hand.

She gave me a kiss, and ran away from me. I remained confounded at what I had just heard; and in the first moment of my surprise, I repeated some of the expressions that had escaped Madame de B***: *Go, and return content; I cannot tell the wishes I presume to harbour; how cruel if we were never to see one another again*. It is beyond a doubt. Madame de B*** knows that I am going to fight, and who my adversary is! *The wishes I presume to harbour!* Those wishes she could not express, without committing a crime. I, perhaps, am excusable, for endeavouring to find out her secret, her most secret thoughts."

How cruel if we were never to see one another again. You will see me again, Madame de B***, you will see me again, rest assured of it; you being the prize of the contest, the day will be mine.

Imprudent Marquis! How audacious to challenge Faublas to the field of honour! How rash your attack upon a life so powerfully defended! The destinies of three charming women are linked with mine.

Justine, who now came in, perhaps intended to give me some encouragement, in her way, but it was already so late, that I could not have listened to her, although I had been so inclined.

At the Porte Saint Martin I found my man,who accompanied me as far as Bourget; there I bade him take my horse back to Paris, and applied for post horses.

I reached the forest of Compiègne, and the appointed spot, before the clock struck five. For some minutes I had been walking up and down, when, on a sudden, two men came up, and clapped each of them a pistol to my breast. They next asked me whether I was a gentleman.

I hesitated not to answer in the affirmative. "Since it is so, sir, have the goodness to cover your face with this mask, and to stand witness to a fight, which is

going to take place between two persons of high rank. Give us your word of honour, don't speak a word, but remain motionless during the contest, and whatever may be the issue, never to reveal it."

"I will not boast, sir, my being a man of very high rank; though, in truth, besides being possessed of a large fortune, I bear an ancient name. I myself have an appointment here to fight. Perhaps you have been led into an error, perhaps I am intended to be one of the performers in the unhappy scene, which you wish I should be a tranquil spectator of?"

"We shall soon know, sir, whether it is to be so, but till such time as we have ascertained the fact, please to put on this mask, and to give your word of honour."

You may easily conceive that I did, and promised to do all they were willing to dictate.

For about an hour I had been in that situation, which began to cause me some inquietude, when I thought I heard a noise towards the extremity of a walk that joined the high road. The moment after, I saw a post-chaise, surrounded by several masked and armed men, enter from the same side the cross-road where I stood. It appeared to me, that this gang, which at first I imagined to be composed of assassins, had just secured the servant and postilion, and compelled the master to get out of the chaise. Dreading lest he should be massacred before my eyes, actuated by a rash zeal, I was going to fly to his assistance; the two men who watched over me only kept me back by saying: "The critical moment is come, think of what you have promised."

In the meantime the unknown person, still surrounded, was advancing towards us most steadily, and with an air of great composure. The nearer he approached, the more I thought I recollected the features of a young man whom I had not seen for a long time. When he had got to a short distance, one of my keepers went straight up to him, desired him to stop, and said: "A man of honour complains of your having done him a mortal injury, and intends to claim immediate reparation; if he falls, he promises that no particulars of the fight shall ever be made known to anyone; in case he should survive his wounds, he engages to return to the same spot as soon as he is cured, to maintain the contest, which can only be completely settled by the death of one of the parties. Make a similar engagement, Monsieur le Comte; and swear upon your honour to fulfil it."

"What!" replied the young man, "Is Lord Barrington offended at my leaving England without having taken leave of his august spouse? It must be confessed that husbands all over the world are queer people. This outlandish husband especially appears to me to be a great oddity; did he wish me to entertain an everlasting blaze for his languishing lady? Besides, if he bore me malice, why did he not tell me so in his own country? Wherefore did he not come to Brussels, where I stopped a long time, having heard that he was in search of me? Why, at the expiration of six weeks, comes he with this frightful apparatus, to attack me in my own country, when I am just returned to it? At any rate, I hope we are not going to fisty cuffs."

By his voice, his countenance, and his lively discourse, as well as by his sneers, I could no longer doubt of his being Rosambert. Then only I began to surmise the strange truth: Oh! Madame de B***, for you it was that my heart throbbed! However, I took great care not to exhibit by any motion, or to express by any words, my extreme surprise, and my profound terror: I was bound by oath.

Rosambert was now presented with a horse, which he was invited to mount; and with a pistol, which he was desired to load himself. The Count soon mounted the horse; and while loading his pistol, said to those who encircled him: "Yes, you are right; this is the favorite mode of fighting among those sons of Albion. With the exception of the pistol, I stand highly obliged to the noble lord; he makes me a thousand years younger than I was. Indeed, gentlemen of the Round Table, the heroical parade which we are now exhibiting, exactly resembles an adventure of King Arthur! In imitation of the champions of old, you stop travellers on the high road, to make them tilt with you." Rosambert then casting a look at me, continued: "This genteel cavalier, who stands solus, without opening his mouth, or meddling with your bravados, who is he? A gentle damsel whom I must relieve; or some great princess in male attire? I should like it better, for my part. But where is the giant, the famous giant that I am to cut in halves?" The stranger, who had hitherto been the spokesman, then said to Rosambert: "Swear, Monsieur le Comte, to stick to the terms agreed upon."

"*Foi, de gentilhomme*!<56> Gentlemen, I do."

One of my keepers gave the signal, by firing a shot. We immediately perceived an individual approaching at full gallop from the other extremity of the avenue. Rosambert waited for him undaunted; but whether he relied too much upon his taking a good aim, or that he did not entirely retain the *sang-froid* requisite upon those occasions, he fired at his antagonist from too great a distance, and missed him. The other, on the contrary, with more skill and intrepidity, fired almost immediately, but yet fired last. The ball whistled close to Rosambert's ear, carried off one of his curls, and struck his hat so as to make it drop. The Count, catching hold of it, exclaimed: "He is quite in earnest; this masked opponent aims at my brains."

His adversary's face, the same as mine, was concealed under a thin piece of paste-board; but I could not help shuddering when I saw the same *frac Anglais*,<46> in which, on that same morning, the Marchioness had appeared before me at Justin's lodgings.

The Vicomte de Florville, for I could no longer entertain any doubts, had turned round, full gallop, to reach the extremity of the avenue. Rosambert, who did not lose sight of him, said: "That is truly my lord's national frock; but, by St. George; I do not see his round belly. Gentlemen," he added, in a tone expressive of spite and audacity, "I never could have presumed to offer such an offence to an Englishman, as to imagine he would fight by proxy. I shall try, however, although the best shot in the three kingdoms had been sent against me, whether there is no possibility to prevent a foreigner, were he one of Old Nick's tribe, to have occasion to boast of being victorious over a Frenchman, without incurring some danger. Where art thou, my dear Faublas, who never missed a flying swallow? Oh, that I were possessed, on the present occasion, for the honour of France, and to punish a traitor, of thy quick sight, and steady hand."

The Count, having loaded a second time, a new signal was given. Rosambert, this time, did not remain motionless: he spurred his horse forward, and the two adversaries, meeting half way, fired at the distance of five or six paces. The Count's ball only went through the collar of the coat of his antagonist, who, more succesful, fractured his right shoulder, and brought him to the ground.

Illustration: His antagonist fractured his right shoulder, and brought him to the ground.

The conqueror, immediately taking off his mask, produced before the eyes of the stupefied vanquished, the face of Madame de B****.

"Look! Base traitor!" said the Marchioness, "Know me again, and blush! You die by the hand of a woman! You showed courage and dexterity only to insult her!"

Rosambert appeared, for a moment, to be overpowered by the pain he suffered, and the disgrace of his defeat. He cast a wondering look at the Marchioness; but, resuming his natural disposition, addressed her in broken accents, his voice being nearly extinct: "What! My fair lady, is it you that I am so happy as to see again? How times are changed! Our last interview, to speak the truth, I found more entertaining; and so did you, my beauty, though you might pretend to deny it. Ungrateful creature! Was it here—was it in this way that you were to disable a complaisant young man who, in former days, went from Paris to Luxembourg, for the sole purpose of procuring you some pleasing occupation?"

"Rosambert," replied the Marchioness, "in vain are you striving to dissemble your rage, and the pain you endure. Heaven is just; I am entitled to congratulate myself; I have reaped a double revenge; your punishment, which now commences is

not near being at an end. Remember our terms; remember that my enemy is to keep my secret wherever he may go, and bring me back my victim on this very spot."

The Count, lifting up his head, with great difficulty, turned towards me: "This young man, he said, is certainly the Chevalier de Faublas."

"Faublas!"

I took off my mask, and went up to him. "First let us embrace," he continued. "She has overpowered me, my friend; be not surprised at it; it is not the first time that she has brought me down. And while I was invoking your name, sir, here you stood, your wishes were not in my favour, but against me: I forgive you, however. She is such a lovely creature! Come and see me in Paris, if I do but reach it time enough just to get buried there."

The Marchioness then took me aside, and said to me: "Chevalier, pardon my mysteriously concealing from you the peril to which I was going to be exposed, and the artifice I have used to oblige you to witness it. My lover, alas! had seen the offence offered: I deemed it proper my friend should be present at the reparation. Faublas, I knew well, still felt so concerned in my behalf, that he would have willingly espoused my quarrel, but he, perhaps, would not have esteemed me so far as to think me worthy of maintaining it myself. Yet," she added, with a mixture of joy and pride, "I have just evinced, that half a year back, I did not take an engagement above my power to fulfil, when reduced to the hard necessity of living merely to gratify my revengeful spirit, I took the oath of surprising you by the manner in which it was to be accomplished."

"Now, Faublas, what appeared to you equivocal, or obscure, in my discourse of this morning, is clearly explained. You may conceive what apprehensions I was a prey to, when, with tears in my eyes, I asked my friend whether it would not be a cruel thing never to see one another again. You must be no stranger to the inquietude that tormented me, when Sophia's lover informed me that he had just found her again. Ah! believe me, I comprehended immediately that du Portail might have recognised you on the road to Montcour; I should feel extremely sorry if this trip to Compiègne had left your father-in-law time to carry away your wife once more. Faublas, if such a misfortune has happened, be not so unjust as to charge your friend with the sad accident. Consider, that when I had a challenge under the name of M. de B*** delivered to you, nothing could induce me to guess, that on your return with Madame de Lignolle, you were to meet Sophia. Reflect, moreover, that there was no further necessity this morning of sending you back to Fromonville, since it would have been impossible for you, though you had travelled ever so quick, to arrive there before the faithful emissaries which I immediately dispatched, with express orders to watch every motion of M. du Portail, if he still inhabited the same retreat; or to go in pursuit of him if he had left it Now that there is no impediment to detain you, go and—"

Madame de B*** was interrupted by screams that seemed to issue from Rosambert's post-chaise, which had remained in the cross-road, towards, though at some distance from, the main road. We all ran, with the exception of the surgeon, who was busy in dressing the Count's wounds. As we drew near, we perceived behind the Count's vehicle, a gig, in which we saw a female struggling very hard; she was held by the same masked men who had secured Rosambert's postilion and servant. "My stars!" she exclaimed, "It is all over then! They were not able to conquer, and have murdered him! Ah!" she said, with a joyful exclamation, "There he is! There he is!"

Then in a mournful tone, "Perfidious man! It is true, then, that you have been so cruel as to take the advantage of my being asleep!"

The Marchioness asked me in a whisper, whether that was not the young Countess?

I answered yes, and rushed into the arms of my mistress.

"Is it all over?" resumed the Countess: "I have heard several shots. Who are those people that have stopped me? You were to fight with swords! I am all in a tremble, seized with fright. Where is your antagonist? Is the day yours? He was not to bring anybody with him, wherefore all these people, these weapons, these masks? How glad I am to see you, my dear. How frightened I am. Barbarous Faublas! How angry I am with you, for having left me in so base a manner."

Thus did Madame de Lignolle by the disorder of her questions, announce the confusion of her ideas: that in her person may easily be described. You might have read in her looks, so lately mild, now gloomy and dazzling, successively and almost at a time, the sweet mistakes of hope, the deadly reveries of fear, the intoxication of happy love; the rage of betrayed love; you might have seen in her countenance, the wonderful mobility whereof alarmed me, all the impetuous passions militating against each other; each muscle seemed to be agitated by a convulsive movement, the expression of each sentiment passed as quick as a flash of lightning.

"Would you believe it!" she continued; "I have slept, though you were no longer there! I slept till noon! But what sleep! Great God! Horrid dreams disturbed it! You ran away from me at every moment, and I then found myself surrounded by dreadful objects only; the Marquis, the Marchioness, your wife! Your wife! I am your wife! Am I not, my dear? Never forget it, sir! The Marquis, have you killed him?

"No, my dear."

"Come," said Madame de B***, whom this conversation most probably rendered uneasy, "Come, Florville! Mount your horse! Be mounted! Quick! You have no time to lose!"

"What do you mean, with your *no time to lose*?" exclaimed the Countess, casting a terrible look at the Vicomte de Florville; "is he losing time when he is with me? Who is that saucy youth?"

"A relation of M. de B***."

"Hear me, my dear; I am afraid of all that family. Oh, how much I have suffered since yesterday! What a torture to be continually fretting for myself for him! Unceasingly to be thinking of that rival who wishes to rob me of him! Of that enemy who threatens his life! Have you wounded him?"

"No, my dear."

"You have not even wounded him? Sir, only think, I had prescribed him though to wound the man! But how comes it? Perhaps the Marquis has not arrived yet?"

"Florville," resumed Madame de B***, "hours are flying, it is getting dark"

"What does this stranger trouble his head about?" replied the Countess. "Faublas, do not listen to him, stay here. How much have I suffered since yesterday!

How fatal will love turn out when it ceases being happy! How unbearable will its tortures appear when there is no sharer in them!"

"What are you saying, my Eleanor? How I grieve at your sorrows!"

"Do you! Well, if it is so, I shall feel comforted; I am satisfied, let us begone."

I repeated the words *let us begone*.

"Chevalier," cried out the Marchioness, "are you forgetful of a pressing duty summoning you?"

"Alas! It is not in Paris that you are wanted."

I got loose from the Countess's arms, and from the shaft of her gig, leaped upon the horse which the Marchioness was presenting to me. "He is going to fight!" said Madame de Lignolle. I will follow him! I wish to be present at that fight!"

The Vicomte, anxious to quiet her, answered: "Make yourself easy, he is out of danger; the fight is over."

"Over! repeated she, sorrowfully, "Over! He is at Fromonville then? The ingrate forsakes me once more! The barbarian sacrifices me!

She wished to stop me, the Vicomte's men stopped her. She uttered screams of inquietude and of rage; she fell senseless to the bottom of her vehicle.

Alas! Who could not have pitied the too feeling woman, and been melted at sight of her sufferings? I shuddered at her perilous situation. The Marchioness did not attempt to oppose my dismounting, and getting into the Countess's gig again; I even felt extreme emotion at seeing Madame de B*** lavish attention upon Madame de Lignolle. With one hand she supported her head, with the other she rubbed her face and temples over with spirituous waters; with her own handkerchief she wiped off the cold sweat that moistened her forehead; poor child! She said, "See how extinct are those eyes, which but a moment since shone with so much lustre! What paleness overspreads those cheeks that I have seen coloured with so blooming a vermilion: poor angel!"

"You alarm me, my dear! do you think there is any danger?"

"Danger? Perhaps. The Countess is of a violent temper, and she already seems to love you much."

"Very much, indeed! Besides, of late she has been slightly indisposed; she frequently is sick."

"What!" cried Madame de B***, "is she with child already? So much the better." But this effusion of lively joy soon made room for a tone of commiseration: she then continued thus: "So much the better—for you; but for her! For her it is a dreadful, fatal, cruel event; attended with many dangerous consequences."

"She is really exposed; but how much am I to be pitied too! What a state of embarrassment I am in! The one is here dying lest I should leave her, and the other grieves because I have left her. Tell me, then, what am I to do! Let me hear what I am to determine?"

"Just now," she interrupted, "I invited you to begone; I now confess that if I were in your place, I should be equally at a loss to resolve the question. It is proper you should consult your own heart, but you must also be actuated by circumstances."

"Consult my own heart; there I find only irresolution and strife. With regard to circumstances, are they not, on either side, equally perplexing, pressing, and imperious Oh, my dear friend 1 I beg of you, pity the situation I am in, it is really cruel! Put an end to my perplexity; advise me."

"What can I say to you? The laws which duty imposes are not to be misinterpreted. It is true, however, that it would appear cruel to forsake the Countess, situated as she is. She is of a violent disposition, you believe she is with child, and the poor little creature loves you, as you must be loved, a great deal too much! To go now, would certainly be delivering her up to agitations which might cost her her life. It seems to me probable, that Sophia, being of a much milder temper—Sophia, long since accustomed to your absence, to her being forsaken, will perhaps, support less impatiently—yet, I would not warrant it so. It is very possible that your wife, not seeing you return, and thinking herself deserted forever, may become a prey to despair."

"To despair! Yes!" repeated Madame de Lignolle, in a feeble voice, and who had just recovered the use of her senses—"to despair!"

She knew me again, and said: "Is it you, Faublas! You have not left me, then! You have acted right: stay here, I insist upon it, stay here. You, barbarous unknown," she said to the Marchioness, "Leave us. Cruel man, you do not feel for my miseries. You never have wanted another to pity you! You have never loved, then—"

The Vicomte, laying hold of her hand, interrupted her: "If you knew to whom you are addressing that reproach; if you knew that Madame de Lignolle, although very miserable, is less to be pitied than the unhappy creature who is now speaking! I, too, have experienced a similar flame to that which devours you. I also have known the transient delight of love, and its inconsolable regrets. Countess! Unhappy Countess! You have much more to suffer, if you are doomed to suffer as much as I have!"

My eyes happened to meet those of the Marchioness; they were bathed in tears; and the sight of them caused my heart to throb.

"Can it be true," she continued with greater vehemence, "that a malignant deity presides over human destinies, and takes an abominable pleasure in making the most unequal distribution of his precious gifts? Is it true, that, by means of the refinement of a barbarous calculation, he is prodigal only towards a very small number of privileged mortals, that he might more certainly torment the immense crowd of individuals maltreated by his avarice? What! Tell me, young man, has an unmerciful deity, who has favoured you too highly, endowed you with graces that attract, wit that seduces, talents that are envied, beauty which is admired, feelings that please, and eyes that charm the soul—with all these accomplishments, besides a thousand more, the collection whereof, perhaps, has never shone but in you, merely with a view of causing your rivals to despair, and of torturing your mistresses? Constancy, that single virtue you are deficient of, has that jealous god refused it to you in order that, in this world, no female might expect high felicity without a mixture of sorrow; and that no man can be an absolute model of perfection? What! Are all of your same sex, who, as yet unacquainted with you, would presume to contend for the prize of valour, or of tenderness of heart, are all such as nature has favoured the most necessarily to appear as having incurred only his displeasure, when the moment of comparing them to you is come? What! Must all the fair who happen to see you, be

invincibly compelled to love you, without the least delay?—Alas! And reduced to repentance of the longest duration? Oh, destiny!"

The Countess had listened to the Marchioness with a mixture of attention and surprise. "Whoever you may be," she said to her, "love is well known to you. You speak of it as I might do myself. Now I am reconciled to you a little; but allow us to leave you. Let us begone, Faublas; let us begone. What! You are struck dumb?—won't you come?"

Still agitated by various apprehensions, and as many desires, I cast my eye upon the Marchioness, expressive of my irresolution, and to what degree I wanted her to guide my determination.

The Vicomte comprehended my meaning, and explained: "Truly I would not hesitate; I would go to Fromonville."

"To Fromonville?" interrupted the Countess.

"Tomorrow," resumed the other; "but this evening I would return to Paris with Madame de Lignolle."

"That is what may be called good advice exclaimed the Countess; I approve highly of the latter part; and you, Faublas?"

"So do I, my Eleanor."

In the first transport of her joy, Madame de Lignolle embraced Madame de B***; and I confess it was not without a lively pleasure, that, during some minutes, I felt united, and pressed the hands of those two charming women within mine.

"Sir," resumed the Countess, addressing the Vicomte, "we are going to bid you adieu; but, before we part, permit me to ask you a question. I am jealous, and I plainly confess it. You were nearly weeping just now; you are unhappy in your amours, and it is the Chevalier's fault. Do me the service to inform me who the fair lady is, whom the Chevalier has seduced from you. Sir," pursued Madame de Lignolle, who was at a loss to guess at the cause of the embarrassment which the Marchioness could not conceal, "you will excuse his friend for thinking that he deserved being preferred; but at least I believe, and I do not aim at paying you a compliment, that you merited the lady."

Hesitating for a while, "Sir," she continued, "I beg you will conclude the unasked-for confidence; you have nothing to apprehend for your secret, you have been made acquainted with mine."

"Madame," answered the Vicomte, who had settled in his own mind the answer to be returned to the very interesting question: "In a moment of anxiety one is liable to complain of a thousand things."

"Ah! Pray tell me what mistress of yours Faublas has?"

"Madame, as this gentleman has been telling you, I am related to M. de B***; I adored his wife."

"His wife! Do not mention her! I detest her!"

"You are ungrateful then, for she loves you."

"Who told you so?"

"Herself"

"Does she know me?"

"She has had the pleasure of seeing and of speaking to you."

"Where?"

"That question I must not answer."

"Never mind! Yes, she is wrong to love me, for I repeat it over again, I abominate her."

"May I ask for what reason?"

"For what reason! She is a dangerous woman!"

"Her enemies will protest she is."

"An intriguer."

"Courtiers will report she is"

"Not handsome enough to be so much spoken of."

"Women will say that of her."

"A woman of gallantry."

"She wants neither wit nor attractions. How were it possible not to make of her the heroine of some adventure?"

"Some! She has had a thousand."

"Are any favourites of hers mentioned?"

"There are, indeed! I, who see very little company, know of three."

"Will you please to name them?"

"The Count de Rosambert"

"A true coxcomb, he always denied it."

"A palpable reason! Faublas."

"Oh! As for that one, I do not dispute it."

"The third, M. de ——"

"M. de ——!" inquired the Marchioness, whom I saw at the same moment several times to blush and to turn pale.

"Yes, M. de ——, the new minister, to whom she surrendered her person, to obtain the Chevalier's release. What I am saying now hurts you?"

"M. de ——", resumed the Marchioness, with less perturbation, but more conspicuous astonishment.

"That hurts you!"

"I can see that you are still deep in love."

"M. de ——! this is a very new charge."

"Because the intrigue is of no ancient date."

"But at least, there should be some evidence."

"How can there? They did not call any witnesses."

"Yet, Madame, you presume to certify—"

"Because everybody does."

"Everybody! Chevalier, you knew of it then?"

"I have been told so, Vicomte, but I would not believe it."

"That does not signify," returned he, "with a discontented air, you ought to have let me know."

"To be sure," said the Countess, "to apprise a man of honour of the bad conduct of a coquette, who imposes upon him, is rendering him a great service. I sincerely pity you, sir, for having been caught in that lady's net, you seem to be deserving of a better lot. Let us now return to what concerns me. You are no longer uneasy about the Chevalier, I hope?"

"I beg your pardon, Madame, I am."

"Mind that, sir," exclaimed the Countess, looking at me. "Does he visit the Marchioness often?" she asked the Vicomte.

"Sometimes."

"You see, sir, you go to her sometimes! So then he is still in love with her?"

"A little, I believe."

"So then, sir, it appears you are in love with her!"

The Vicomte interrupted her, saying: "You must not quite abide by my assertion, however, I am a party concerned, perhaps I don't view things in a fair light."

"Oh! You do though, sir, you can't be mistaken. As for you, Faublas, I shall know how to prevent your visiting that coquette and loving her!"

"We are going to leave you," she pursued, addressing Madame de B***. "After the scene which you have just witnessed, I rely upon your keeping my secret, although I were not to beg of you so to do; for the whole of your appearance is truly prepossessing."

"If I had room for a third person in my gig, I should be very happy to offer you a seat."

"I confess I should be proud of being further acquainted with you. Come and see me at Paris. The Chevalier will oblige me by introducing you. But you may do better still, come by yourself, you don't want anybody to introduce you. Come, and I promise, since it really grieves you too much, never to speak ill to you of the Marchioness, though she is a wicked woman."

We departed. I gave a few louis d'ors to the postilion who took us back to la Croix-Saint-Ouen, where the Countess had hired him, and who promised not to speak a word of all he had seen. Madame de Lignolle thought it incumbent upon her to silence, by dint of a remuneration, her man-servant, La Fleur, who she had been obliged to take with her, and who of course was made acquainted with our amours.

My youthful companion meanwhile loaded me with caresses, which I repaid in kind: with reproaches that I was no longer deserving of: and with questions which it was impossible for me to answer. In vain did I observe to her, that she ought to be satisfied at her lover being neither killed, wounded, nor obliged to leave her and his

native country: she disapproved the secret which I was bound to keep by my word of honour, which, she said, I should not have given.

The Vicomte de Florville naturally became the topic of our conversation. The Countess, who appeared to observe most attentively the impression her discourse made upon me, said: that young man is very amiable!"

"Very amiable, indeed."

"Adorned with graces."

"Very much so."

"A pleasing countenance."

"Very agreeable."

"A very handsome face!"

"Yes, very handsome."

"His voice is as sweet as yours."

"I think so."

"His, however, is rather too clear: it seems to want a something—"

"He is but a youth."

"You are right. How old may he be? Sixteen?"

"At most."

"Never mind," repeated she, with affectation, "I find him a charming young man."

"Charming."

"He seems to have a deal of wit, and exquisite feelings."

"He has, my dear."

I thus spoke by monosyllables, for fear of saying too much; and affected great indifference, in order to remove all manner of suspicion.

"Will you have the goodness to answer me otherwise," said Madame de Lignolle, in a pet."

"What is the matter;"

"The matter is that your *sang-froid* hurts me."

"My *sang-froid*!"

"Yes, I seem to have paid particular attention to that young man; I speak of him in high terms, and you do not appear to be alarmed in the least."

"What should I be alarmed at?"

"That is what I complain of. You do not manifest the least inquietude!"

I replied, laughing, "Because indeed, my dear, I can find no occasion."

"How so, sir, wherefore should not you feel a little jealous? For my part I am of a jealous disposition."

"I shall repeat it, my Eleanor, the Vicomte cannot alarm me."

"Don't laugh, sir; I don't like people to laugh when I am speaking reason to them. Be pleased to tell me wherefore the Vicomte cannot?"

"Wherefore? Because he is a mere child."

"Would you have people think that you are old?"

"My security besides is founded on the esteem with which you inspire me."

"The esteem, sir, the esteem! Let me have less esteem, and a little more love. I have often heard it said, at the time when I did not comprehend it, and now that I understand it well, I am sensible it is but too true; one is never truly in love unless one is very jealous. Become jealous if you wish to please me."

"Be you content, Madame, then; I confess that I was very uneasy while you were surveying the Vicomte."

"That," she interrupted, by giving me a kiss, "that is what I call speaking plain; that is what you should have said at first. Nevertheless, Faublas, you need not be alarmed. I only admired the Vicomte, that I might admire you more. I was saying to myself: That youth looks very well, but my lover looks still better. The face of my lover is not less charming, and he has a much finer shape. One may observe in his countenance, in his whole person, I know not what, more imposing, more stately, which astonishes without causing terror. That does not frighten me, it gives me pleasure—he has wit! And feelings! Could the Vicomte be possessed of as much as you, who keep me all day long laughing, and sometimes makes me shed tears! Then it is that I feel very happy, for you are not like other men who make game of our tears: on the contrary, my good friend, you console me by sharing in my grief; you know what it is to weep; you can weep too. Be perfectly easy. I know you to be as much superior to that young man, as he appears to be above all those I have ever seen. Tell me, does your father love the Vicomte?"

"Very much."

"Well, he ought to have your sister married to that young man. They would make a charming pair."

"This idea, which appears so very simple, never would have occurred to my mind. To be sure, I see some obstacles in the way: the Vicomte is smitten with his Marchioness."

"'Tis a great pity. Do you know why I invited her to come to my house? I shall tell you, for how could I conceal anything from you? He is jealous of you, for he is in love with Madame de B***."

"He will let me know if you visit her."

"A good contrivance, certainly! I am not to be duped by your shammed gaiety! You don't laugh from the bottom of your heart, I know. I have ever intended to prevent you from visiting that wicked woman, and chance has just supplied me with means, which, I never would forgive myself if I were to neglect."

We were proceeding towards Paris, it is true, my Sophia; but do not fret; be comforted, it was also towards Fromonville. Sophia, I was going again to your rival's home in quest of one of those nights which I fancied were so short; but pardon me. Believe me, I thought less of the pleasures of the next night than of the delight of the

day following, of that day when, in the arms of my wife, I should at last enjoy that supreme happiness so long wished for. Rejoice, my Sophia; it is true that at this very moment I receive a kiss from Madame de Lignolle; it is also true that this sweet favour is the reward of a sigh which Eleanor had surprised; but, oh, my Sophia, rejoice that so tender a sigh I did not heave on her account.

We left off travelling post at Bourget, that same village where I had dismissed Jasmin; we took the Countess's horses which had been left there at an inn, and which soon brought us to Paris. It may easily be conceived that Faublas, now dressed in such clothes as he should have always worn, could not go to Mme. de Lignolle's to represent Mademoiselle de Dumont, previous to having changed his dress, at Madame de Fonrose's house, therefore we determined to alight.

"Naughty, cruel children," said the Baroness. "Whither have you been?"

"We are half-starved," replied the Countess, "let us have a bit of supper.

While we were beginning to carve a fat fowl that had just been brought up, Madame de Fonrose was saying to Madame de Lignolle: "I called at your hôtel at dinner time, and was much alarmed upon hearing that, exasperated at Mademoiselle de Brumont's flight, you were just gone in search of her. It was a few hours," she added, addressing me, "since M. de Belcourt, in company with Mademoiselle de Faublas, had paid me a short visit. Both were setting out for Fromonville, through a conviction that you were gone there to fight. They did not imagine that any other interest, short of that of honour, could prevent your running with them, to throw yourself at the feet of your wife. They both trembled for you; both, I must tell you openly, will be a prey to deadly inquietude, if you have not joined them before the middle of the day; it will soon begin to dawn."

The Countess could think no longer of her meal, which she had hardly begun. She interrupted the Baroness, to declare she could not suffer me to leave her; she even added that it appeared very surprising that Madame de Fonrose, who pretended to be her friend, would take the liberty in her presence of giving such advice to her lover. The Baroness was not in the least at a loss to find an excuse. "If you adore the son," she said, "I love the father. M. de Belcourt would never forgive me, if in a circumstance of this kind, I was to keep his son away from him. Besides, my dear friend, what do you demand of the Chevalier? That he should violate, to no purpose, all the laws of common decorum! I am far from advising him to commit a base action; I do not prescribe his forsaking you; I advise him to go and meet Sophia, to bring her back, and after that to behave like a true man of the world, like the best husbands, who know how to conciliate the love they bear to their mistresses, and the good proceedings their wives have a right to claim. If he were to adopt another mode of conduct, it would be the ruin of you. Tell me, for instance, can the Chevalier continue to live in the house of his mistress, when his wife will be no longer absent? Is he thus publicly to expose the despair of the one, and the favours granted by the other? Admitting that you were so blinded by your passion as to expect from him such an extravagant behaviour, and that he were weak enough not to refuse you, I ask you whether everybody would not soon know that M. de Faublas has turned himself into a female under your roof, because he had grown tired of being a man in his own home! I shall not speak of M. de Lignolle; let us hope that the protecting God of lovers will do in favour of that husband as much as he generally does in behalf of others; let us hope that that worthy husband will be the last man in Paris to know that you have

rendered him an object of ridicule; but will his friends view with tranquility that he is daily made to be laughed at?"

"His friends! What care I for his friends!" answered the Countess, who so far had only opposed tears and nonsensical exclamations to the prudent counsels of the Baroness.

"What care you?" replied Madame de Fonrose. "Alas! But do you expect to detain the Chevalier, in opposition to the sobbings of his widowed wife, who will not fail to claim him, notwithstanding the inexhaustible gossiping of your loquacious aunt, who will come every morning to stammer out her gothic principles; in spite of Captain de Lignolle, that famous man who might leave his plundering crew to ride hither post, to frighten you with his broad mustachios and long sword: regardless of the public, ever jealous, indiscreet, uncautious, that will forever be trumpeting either those follies which ought not to be mentioned, or revising scandalous tales which should always be buried in oblivion; that public, which, respectful to no one, not even to themselves, will ridicule the husbands whom they pity, protect the wives whom they blame, and severely condemn those faults with which they daily amuse and feed their malignity; finally, notwithstanding the Baron, who—"

"In spite of the whole universe, Madame."

"What an answer? Are you out of your mind, or do you think I exaggerate? M. de Belcourt, of whom I was going to speak to you, is little known to you. If you provoke him too far, he is capable of forcing his son away from your very bed-room."

"And if people are not afraid of carrying matters with me—"

"What will you do?"

"I will kill myself."

"What a nice resource! I pity you. I pity you, since you are not sensible that it is better to sacrifice for a moment a precious object, to recover it afterwards, and possess it undisturbed, than to expose one's self by keeping it a few days too long, to die from the regret of having lost it."

Madame de Fonrose was still speaking, and to no purpose, when we heard a carriage entering her yard. It could only be that of M. de Lignolle, I had time to embrace my friend, to seize a leg of a fowl, and to make my escape into the dressing closet of the Baroness.

A moment after I heard the Count enquire of the ladies how they were. Wondering at his wife, who seldom eat out, not having returned home at three in the morning; he had guessed that she had supped at the Baroness's, and was taken ill there. He asked her whether she had been able to join Mademoiselle de Brumont that day.

"I have, sir, and I hope she will return to my house."

"She certainly will," he interrupted, "for I have exacted a promise to that purpose, from her father. Till such time as she does come, think, Countess, that it is late; accept a seat in my carriage."

"I am much obliged to you," she replied, dryly, "I don't wish to return home before daylight"

I might easily have heard the end of that conversation, in which I was concerned. Sophia, dearer interests still occupy my mind.

The all-powerful seduction of the object present, ceases for a moment to act immediately upon me; and that decisive moment may fix in your favour a victory which has remained too long uncertain. Your rival is no longer by the side of me to make me forgetful of your troubles, by the sight of her sorrows; and of your love by her caresses. Her voice alone strikes mine ear, but reaches not my heart; filled up with the recollection of you, Sophia, I have just seen you fainting away: dying! I have gazed upon your charms, and been penetrated with your despair! I have shuddered at the pains you endure; the idea of the felicity that awaits us has caused me to shiver!

Whoever is reading my narrative with some attention, must remember, that not long since a pretty chamber-maid dressed my hair exactly in the same closet in which I was now standing. That same reader will also recollect, that on that day, pressed by the desire of meeting the Countess and escaping the Baron, I was conducted by a private staircase into Madame de Fonrose's yard. Now, on the reverse, to join my father and fly away from my mistress, I felt, in the dark, to find my way out of the house, which I knew something of, I reached the private staircase nest the yard, and soon after I got into the street.

Replete with tender solicitude, M. de Belcourt had guessed at what no other father could have foreseen. "As it was not impossible," he said, when setting off, "that some particular reasons might compel me to return through the metropolis, the porter had been ordered to sit up all night in waiting; and my servant to keep a poet-chaise ready for me. The Baron and his son were too much liked for the commands of the one, and the interest of the other to be neglected. Upon my arrival at the hôtel I had only to step into my chaise, and my faithful Jasmin insisted upon accompanying me as a courier. At every post-house, in consequence, there were always horses ready; and, thanks to my prodigality, the postilions did not complain of being called up too early; they would call me *monseigneur*, and we flew on as if we had had wings.

XXII.

I had travelled that same road two days before; but what a happy change in my situation had thirty-six hours only produced! I am not now going to a foreign land, there to regret my native country; I carry not with me the remorse of having immolated an enemy, who sought a too just revenge. It is at Fromonville that my father, ere long made easy by my presence, will press me to his bosom. There it is that my wife presently—"We shall never arrive! Postilions, drive on!"

Presently I shall cover her with kisses, embrace her knees, solicit the reward of my extreme tenderness. Adelaide, it is true, will be there. Can't we send her away? What! Must we defer till night? What an age! But the night! The night! I shall never spend one more delicious! "How slow these hacks go! Postilion, why don't you go on?"—And tomorrow, tomorrow I shall be on this road again! But I shall have Sophia by my side! I shall bring my wife back to Paris! I shall take her to my parental home! to the chamber of Hymen, close to that *du celibat*<59> which will be empty! Forever empty! I shall leave my wife's apartment no more! There I shall spend the day—my whole life! I shall hear her tell over and over the recital of the sufferings she has endured whilst separated from me! And I shall relate a hundred times over what I have suffered, all the misfortunes that have befallen me. Ah, no! I will not tell her how much the Marchioness is to be pitied, and how tenderly I commiserate her affliction. Sophia, who is of a suspicious disposition, might feel uneasy; and I propose not only to remain faithful to her, but to spare her the tortures of jealousy. Neither shall I mention the Countess. The Countess! She is now very lonely! Very much astonished! Very sad! She is weeping; and accuses me of being a barbarian! In truth, I ought at least to have spoken a few words to her, to let her know, to prepare her— "What a rate this fellow drives me at! Postilion! You fly! Gently, gently! Whither are you going so fast?"

"To Villeneuve-Ste. George," he replied, holding his horses, "on the road to Fontainebleau, to Fromonville."

"To Fromonville! That's right! Well! Why do you stop?"

"Is it not you?"

"See, what a deal of time is lost I go on; use your whip, and go faster!"

"Gently! Go faster! You don't know your own mind. Hitherto I have been driving full gallop; I can do no better."

"You are right, my friend, perfectly right; but I beg of you, go a little faster.

The chaise, which I cursed a thousand times, rolled for seven hours longer. At length, I discovered the bridge of Montcour, and, on the road to Fromonville, two beloved persons, I soon receive their embraces, and partake of their joy. One of them enquires whether I have not been dangerously wounded; the other, whether I am obliged again to leave France? No, my dear Adelaide, I am not wounded. No, father, we shall not leave our country. But I beg of you, let us run. How many thanks I am bound to return to you. You have left her to come and meet me how kind! Come, let us fly, present her husband to her, witness— What! Father, you cast down your eyes with sadness! What! Sister, you weep!

It is all over! Sophia! Absence! She has not been able to resist her being forsaken."

"She still breathes," exclaimed the Baron, but—"

"She loves you, interrupted my sister, but—"

"I understand you! This is the third time then that her tyrant has robbed me of her."

They returned me no answer; both continued silent; attentive, however, to prevent, lest the effect of a first movement might cost me my life, M. de Belcourt seized my sword and pistols; Adelaide stretched out her trembling arm to support her brother, whom she had seen to turn pale and stagger. My dear beloved, you are not strong enough! Faublas has just fallen, almost lying, upon that same turf which two days before he scarcely skimmed over, when to follow a mistress, now deserted, he hurried away from his wife, whom, on the present day, he regrets so vainly too!

"Adelaide! Alas! I entreat of you, pity your brother. Father, leave me! Let me die! She is taken away from me! She thinks I am guilty! Sophia does not know whom I have left for her; Sophia does not know that I would give one half of my existence to be allowed to consecrate to her the other half. She is carried away from me! She believes I am guilty! let me die."

Meanwhile, Adelaide was holding me within her arms, and lavishing upon me the most tender caresses; the tears, which I could see watering her eyes, softened the bitterness of those that I shed, and my father soothed my affliction by sympathising with me: "Too dear, and too unhappy son," he said, "will not the most ardent passions cease tormenting thy stormy youth? And adversity, which so long since has taken the charge of offering thee cruel lessons: will adversity, henceforth, leave me no other duty to perform, than to offer thee consolations, either too weak or totally impotent? Oh, my eon, I pity thee, but thou owest me also some compassion."

"Father, is it known, at least, what is become of her? Which way, on which road has she been carried off by her ravisher? You don't answer me! It is true then that I have lost her entirely, that I have no hope left! Now a long interval stands between us; the day before yesterday I saw her yonder! Yonder, sister, look, my dear Adelaide, look, and your sobs will redouble: from this spot you can discover the gate which my weak hands could only shake, that gate which I ought to have broken down. Your friend was there, my dearest. Now we are separated by a long interval! Sophia! Sophia! A persecuting god presides over our amours. One might say, that he sometimes points out to you your husband, only in order that you may feel more acutely the pain of his absence; that he allows me to have a glance at you, merely, to awaken in my heart the grief of losing you: yes, that cruel god occasionally brings us near one another, but to enjoy the dreadful pleasure of parting us afresh.

"I fly to Luxembourg, my lover follows me there; a few hours after she finds a father, who, on the following day, carries her away from her husband! Through a thousand perils I penetrate as far as the convent wherein she is confined; and I am allowed to admire her only for one moment! Chance at last brings me near her new prison: a dolorous scream informs me that my wife is there, that she knows me again, I myself can see her, and I see her dying, and yet honour—honour! At least I thought so. Fatal Marchioness! This is not the first time that you have made us miserable. Imperious honour summons me away, and when I return, I have lost my whole! Sophia's ravisher! Is it possible a father should act contrary to nature? The barbarian! What has he more to reproach his adorable and unhappy daughter with? Of what fault does he accuse me but that which my marriage has made amends for?

"Of what crimes, but those which my miseries have expiated? Wherefore would he have two married lovers perish, consumed by their useless desires? Why would he wish to plunge both his children into the same grave? Oh! Father! Father!"

"This once," he said, "du Portail did not go away from us without apprising me of his motives and his determination. A letter that he has left for me.—"

"A letter! Let me see it; show it to me, then."

"Let us first, my good friend, reach the nearest village."

We entered an inn at Montcour. The Baron wished to read my father's last letter to himself; but compelled to yield to my entreaties, he handed it over to me:

> Since your son once more has discovered my retreat, since he obstinately perseveres in pursuing his victims, it is requisite, Monsieur le Baron, I should inform you, at least, of all the misfortunes of my daughter, that I should reveal horrid dealings.
>
> You know into what a nearly unavoidable snare my Sophia was allured: you will never forget in what place, and how the unhappy Lovinski found his long-wished-for Dorliska, less deserving of blame than of pity, though ever so guilty. Baron, the rape of that unfortunate, and no less respectable child, was not the most heinous offence your unworthy son had committed.

"The most heinous offence of your unworthy son! What expressions! What a shocking imposture! You shuddered at it yourself, father! Monsieur le Baron, I protest it shall be washed off in the blood of the calumniator. But what have I said? He is your friend! He is the father of Sophia! Make yourself easy, sister; fear not, father! Forgive the first transport of surprise and of anger! forgive—"

"Hand it to me," said the Baron; let me go on with the letter."

"Oh, no! Allow me, I beseech you.

> The day on which I bestowed upon him his beloved, at the very moment when preparations were making for their union, I heard, in the High Street of Luxembourg, a stranger inquiring after the Chevalier de Faublas; and notwithstanding her disguise, I knew her to be the first who trained your son in the detestable art of seducing the wives, and deceiving their husbands. She was come, most likely as agreed upon, to join in the place of his exile, the murderer of her husband.

"Great God! Father, I can take my oath it is not true! I was ignorant of the Marchioness intending to follow me to Luxembourg. I did not know—"

"I willingly think so, my son. I cannot think you are capable of committing the black outrage which du Portail has so promptly suspected. But he is a father, and an unhappy one. We must excuse him, pity him, strive to find him out again, and to soothe him—go on."

> At this fatal apparition, I foresaw all the misfortunes that threatened my Dorliska; I saw but one way of rescuing her from the danger of opprobrium, and of being publicly deserted; I, however, reached the church, doubtful as yet whether I should adopt a resolution which I deemed most violent. An audacious rival, a total stranger to decorum, appeared nearly at the same time with us before the altar. Sacrilegious

> woman! In the face of that God who hears the oaths of husbands, she was come to summon him to violate all his!
>
> What did your cruel son, the unworthy pupil of a shameless woman, the base seducer of a defenceless girl, expect? What did he expect when he tore her away from the respectable retreat which her virtues embellished, when he obtained from the other the pompous sacrifice of a corrupted world, by which she was idolised? What did he expect! To make an exhibition of himself before all Europe; to become intoxicated with the glory of dragging, fastened to the same car, a seduced maid and an adulterous wife; to associate his two mistresses to similar diversions, to a similar ignominy; to carry from country to country Mademoiselle de Pontis, who had to share a universal lover, and public contempt, with the Marchioness de B***?

"Mademoiselle de Pontis to share public contempt with the Marchioness de B—! Ah, father I what an imposture! Ah, sister! What a blasphemy!"

> Such were his objects, which I had foreseen; the execution whereof I prevented. Thanks to my vigilance, Dorliska was saved: but events have justified all my suspicions. It has never been known exactly what became of the Marchioness during the six weeks that your son continued in the vicinity of Luxembourg. They were undoubtedly living there together.

"Is that true?" said Adelaide.

"It is true that Madame de B*** would come to see me now and then; but I did not know it was she who came."

"How so?"

"My dear, that is what I cannot explain; it would require too much time."

"I am not satisfied with that answer. I find it obscure; what pains me most is that M. de Portail is sometimes right, when he addresses to you his reproaches; that proves that you have behaved extremely wrong towards my dear friend. I tire you, brother? Well, let us see. Go on."

> She was seen, with unprecedented effrontery, to re-appear at Court, a few days after the return of her lover to the capital; and although all her intrigues could not prevent the Chevalier being sent to prison, everyone knows that it is by means of prostituting her person that she has procured his release.

"By means of prostituting her person! No, father, I cannot give credit to the assertion! It would be too painful for me to believe it."

"Weak-minded youth!" he replied; "what can I care for the grief you might feel upon the occasion? Resume your reading!"

> What use did he make of his liberty! Sophia not returning, her place must be filled up by another. The Chevalier de Faublas is not a man to be satisfied with one single conquest; he must absolutely have two victims at a time, two victims at least. What I am at a loss to conceive is, that after having recently discovered my retreat he has thought fit to come and exhibit to Sophia the new rival whom he prefers to her.

"Whom I prefer to her! While it is for Sophia that I forsake the Countess! The Countess who is now calling after me, and who mourns! The Countess! Ah, father! If

you knew how dear I am to her! What feelings she is possessed of I how lovely she is! How—"

The Baron interrupted me: "Do you know, sir, what you are speaking to me about?"

"I am wrong, father, I am wrong, but I find myself in so embarrassing a situation—I beg you ten thousand pardons."

> That inconceivable step, the motions whereof I cannot guess at, is most likely the forerunner of some other iniquitous mystery, which will be discovered at some future period. Who is that young person in whose company I have recognised your son, dressed in female attire? Some simple maid, whom her innocence will not suffer to protect, or some inexperienced wife, whose rising virtues he is going to corrupt. Who is that middle-aged man that accompanied them? Some unfortunate husband whom he will blast with ridicule and shame, or a credulous, confiding father whose friendship he will betray.
>
> Baron, you are also a father; but you appear never to be willing to remember it. I shall tell you candidly, your indulgence is inexcusable. Dread, my dear friend, being soon brought to shed tears of blood on account of it; dread lest heaven, tired at last, should punish at the same time the disorderly conduct of the son and the excessive weakness of the father; dread lest one day in his anger, be may send an avenger to my daughter, and a seducer to yours.

"An avenger to his daughter! Du Portail, I shall see that avenger whom you announce! Du Portail, if he is tardy in coming, Faublas will go and fetch him!"

"Be calm," exclaimed the Baron; "you were promising just now"

"How, sir, not satisfied with threatening me in an indirect manner, he, besides, dares to insult my sister! A seducer to my dear Adelaide!"

"See, my friend, how inconsiderate and cruel passions will render us: the bare idea that Adelaide can be seduced throws her brother into high rage! He will not forgive it to the man whose daughter, replete with the love of virtue, was yet induced to commit the most blameable excesses of criminal amours! Faublas, on account of a surmise which he finds offensive, speaks of arming against his father-in-law; and yet at Luxembourg Lovinski did not think of avenging the misconduct of his Dorliska upon a foreign ravisher!"

"Allow me, father, to be informed of his final determination."

> Let my example at least be to you a useful warning. I contributed myself to the wanderings of the Chevalier, and although I was but an involuntary accomplice, it was not long before I was punished for it. All the misfortunes that overwhelm me proceed from that ungrateful young man and his mistress, whose criminal amours I continued a tranquil spectator of. Engaged soon after in an unjust quarrel, I had the mortification of violating the wisest law of an hospitable state that had supplied me with friends, and almost a mother country; my hands, besmeared with blood, made my unjust cause to triumph;<60> I myself, in short escorted my daughter in her elopement, and assisted her ravisher in degrading her. Ah! How much less to be pitied than myself is the adored wife, whose tragical end I bewailed twelve years ago! She reposes in peace in the forests of la Sula; a premature death has protected her against the sad misfortunes which pursue her daughter, and her friend.

> Thanks, however, be given to Thee, Eternal Providence, whose decrees are ever to be blessed; thanks be rendered to thee, merciful God, even in thy persecutions. Thou did'st ordain that Lovinaki should survive Lodoiska, that he might one day offer her abused daughter an assistance, alas! Very tardy; to oppose at least her complete shame, her approaching disgrace; to protect Dorliska against the last humiliations which her unpitying seducer kept in reserve for her.
> Yes, my sullied daughter, however, has escaped becoming notoriously disgraced. My child may constitute the consolation, joy, and pride of her father.

In this part I was interrupted for a moment by my sobs; "Certainly," I exclaimed, "the pride of her father, of her family, and of her husband!" Then, leaving out a word which a father never ought to have written, which a husband was not to repeat, I read over again that phrase which coloured, in some degree, my resentment and grief, that sentence in favour of which Sophia's lover forgave du Portail the horrors imputed to the son of the Baron de Faublas. I next resumed my reading.

> Yes, my sullied daughter has escaped becoming publicly degraded. My child may still constitute the consolation, joy, and pride of her father. Adorable girl! The excuse lies in the virtues she has remaining, in her regret for those she possesses no more."

Her regret! What! Sophia! Is it possible you should regret! Alas! I thought absence alone was to excite regret! This is the blow which hurts me the most poignantly.

My tears began to flow in greater abundance. Adelaide wept also; but the Baron seemed willing to take back the fatal letter. I, therefore, was obliged to arm myself with renovated courage to proceed reading it; and was cautious when reading another consoling phrase, to omit, as I had done before, some words which in my opinion should not have been inserted.

> Her excuse lies in the virtues she has remaining in her—and, shall I speak it? in the numberless invaluable advantages which nature has so prodigally lavished upon her seducer, that wonderful young man that we would all have admired, if he had exerted towards doing good, one half of those efforts it must have cost him to act wrong; if he had been willing in a proper manner to apply to the practice of virtue, the rare qualifications he abused, to perpetrate heinous crimes.

> I have given you, Baron, an account of my just motives, I shall now proceed to inform you of my irrevocable determination. From the impenetrable retreat in which I have sought a refuge, I shall always watch my persecutor. My Dorliska is infinitely dear to me; I adore in her, the living image of a wife, whom I regret daily. Judge, whether I do not wish her most ardently to be happy. Ah with what transport would I sacrifice to her fondest desires the resentment of my personal injuries! But the man who seduced his lover, shall never obtain his wife, but after having deserved her, and whoever availed himself of Sophia's innocence to impose upon her, shall never deceive me. I have too well learned how to dread his artful mistress, even to trust to mere outside. In vain would he now be at the pains of assuming the man of good morals, I would only consider him as an hypocrite, so long as the Marchioness is an inhabitant of this world. I give you my word of honour for that; although Faublas should appear entirely reformed, he shall not see Sophia again, till such time as righteous heaven has ordained the confinement or death of Madame de B***.

But I dwell upon suppositions which flatter without blinding me. I speak of an amendment which I do not expect. No doubt but a God, too equitable to encourage great disorders by granting impunity, has in reserve for the Marchioness a memorable catastrophe. But that example of her punishment, though it were exhibited this very day to alarm all such as resemble her, would come too late for your son. Your son was no sooner corrupted than he became a corrupter. He will grow worse, daily more and more in the company of his associates, who are professional libertines. He will be seen coolly to prepare with them those base tricks which they have called *roueries*.<61> In default of husbands, and fathers who seldom know how to be revenged, ennui, infirmities, and sorrows, will soon attack him in his exhausted prime. Though young he will be afflicted with premature old age; and if he does not attempt his own life, he must fall by the sword of an enemy; he must unavoidably meet with an untimely end.

Meanwhile, I shall have laboured without ceasing to cure my daughter of her fatal passion. The same God that pursues the wicked, watches over the righteous. When Sophia's persecutor, heart-rent with remorse, descends into his grave, she, reinstated in her own estimation, will breathe a new life: my attention will also contribute to heal the wound in her heart. Subsequent to dreadful storms, I shall see her enjoy days of sunshine; my Dorliska will transfer to me her lees lively but milder affections. The happy moment will come, when her reason will confirm what her excellent natural disposition has already whispered to her: a daughter, such as she is, can have nothing to regret, so long as she has such a father left as I am.
"I remain, with an esteem which the errors and wrongs of your son have not altered, Monsieur le Baron,
Your friend,
LE COMTE LOVINSKI.

Surprise, inquietude, and even despair, had supported me during the perusal of this long and cruel letter.

When I had finished reading it, I collected all my powers to ask M. de Belcourt how far my wife had been followed; and he had no sooner answered me, that she had not possibly been traced beyond La Croisière,<62> than I fainted away.

I soon recovered the use of my senses, owing to my sister's attendance upon me; my spirits were revived when I heard the voice of my father. This dear parent, flattering me with hopes which, perhaps, he did not entertain himself, urged me to commence, in company with him and my sister, researches which, he said, would prove more successful. While he was speaking to me, my whole attention was drawn upon a paper that had fallen almost under my feet, by the side of my sister. It was the Countess's letter, which my father had neglected to put in his pocket; I thought of picking it up unperceived, had the good luck to succeed, and felt as highly pleased as if I had got possession of a treasure. The letter was abominable, and it was unjust: I was very much maltreated, but at every line I could see the name of Sophia. The cruel and so dear paper, however, I captured. Ah! Faublas! Ah! wretched Faublas! where were you to lose and to find it again?

An unforeseen accident was very near detaining us at Montcour. As we had just stepped all three into the carriage, to reach at least the village of La Croisière, Adelaide, too delicate to undergo, at the same time, the fatigue of a long journey, and the sorrows of her brother, besides her own agitation, felt, on a sudden, very much indisposed.

"Those steeples which you can see from here, father," I said, "I know again, they belong to Nemours. Twenty minutes at most, will take us to that town, where we shall find every assistance my sister can stand in need of."

We alighted at an inn, where we had scarcely attended my dear Adelaide for a quarter of an hour, when a courier enquired after me, and presented me with a note, written by an unknown hand, and containing the following intelligence:

> "The Vicomte de Florville sends information to the Chevalier Faublas, that M. du Portail, who, towards the evening, the day before yesterday, had left off travelling post, at La Croisière, has, notwithstanding, procured post horses again at Montargis, on the following midnight."

Come, father, let us run! Let us fly! You, sister, are not able to follow us!"

"Can I," said the Baron, "leave my daughter at an inn alone, and on a sick bed?"

"You are right. How sorry I am myself to leave her! Yet father, so pressing an interest calls me. Ah! Permit me to set off immediately, let my servant alone accompany me. You have my pistols and my sword, give them to Jasmin, and forbid his returning them to me. Your commands will be respected. Rest assured, however, that such a precaution is superfluous; restore my arms, and be easy; I will use them neither against myself, nor against Sophia's father. Fear nothing from my irritability if I should meet him, nor from my despair, in case I should not. Sophia's husband will not attempt to obtain her from du Portail, except by means of a speedy justification, supplications, and tears, if requisite! I renounce all other means. Though he were unable to meet his father-in-law, though he should still find him unjust and inflexible: your son, though he were doomed to be the most miserable of all lovers, will live for the sake of his sister, and of you. Faublas promises it to his father! The Chevalier swears it."

M. de Belcourt, agitated by many inquietudes, could not, as speedily as I had wished, fix upon a determination. He dreaded, perhaps, the danger of leaving at his own discretion, a young man of an impetuous temper, whom fresh adversities threatened with new trials; and most undoubtedly he formed a determination from his apprehending, lest, in case he would persevere to detain me, my painful impatience should prompt me to commit still greater excesses. He, nevertheless, only granted me the long sued for permission to go, but after having exacted my formal promise, if I should make any discovery, to acquaint him with it immediately; that on the contrary, I engaged to return speedily, as soon as I found it probable that longer researches would be superfluous; and finally, that whatever was to take place, I would let him hear from me every day.

"Adieu, sister, my dear Adelaide, farewell. Believe me, I am very sorry to leave you in your present situation. You will be so kind as to send me a bulletin every day; father I beg of you—"

At the same time I was so uneasy about my sister's state of health, mine was not much better. Two days filled up by painful excursions; nearly ninety leagues travelled over in less than thirty-six hours; one night out of two entirely lost in journeying on; the other employed in amorous sports; the agitations of the mind and heart, more overpowering a hundred times than bodily fatigue; less would have been wanted to overpower me; and, indeed, my courage and hopes alone supplied me with strength.

Notwithstanding we had travelled with all possible haste, yet we could not reach Montargis before seven in the evening, and there not one single horse was left in the stables of the post office. I had met with a similar disappointment at Puy-la-Lande; but I had forced the postilion from Fontenay to proceed further.

Here, in spite of my offers, prayers, and menaces, the cursed lazy fellow refused going on, producing the regulation to convince me that I could not compel him to go beyond two stages.

Whilst my servant was calling to my relief and help all the infernal spirits, I was making enquiries. The post-master told me that, in fact, a man of a mature age, a very young lady, and two foreigners, came to procure horses in the middle of the night, nearly forty-eight hours since; but he added, that they had only been taken to a distance of half a league, in a cross-road, where they had got out of their carriage. I interrogated the postilion; he was unable to tell what was become of them, but offered to conduct me exactly to the spot where he had left them. I was forced to walk it, tired as I was. Alas! I was put to unnecessary trouble; no one had seen my Sophia!

Sad and dejected, yet unable to give up my last hope, I endeavoured to persuade myself, that M. du Portail, for fear of being pursued, might, by means of horses, stationed purposely in different parts, have taken a long circuitous tour, to go a little further on the same road, and then proceed on his journey. I therefore despatched Jasmin to fetch post-horses from the next office, with an injunction to have them brought, with all possible speed, to such an inn, at Montargis, which the man, who was going to take me there, indicated, so as to prevent any mistake.

"Sir," said the maid, "would you wish to have any supper?"

"I want it, but do not feel in the least inclined. Show me a room; give me a light; I wish to be left quiet."

Quiet! When love has raised within my breast the most raging storms! When a violent fever already caused me to shiver and to burn! Quiet!

Where shall I go to fetch it? The most is near at hand which is going to destroy my last hopes! M. du Portail has an advance of thirty-six hours over me; he seems to have neglected nothing to evade my pursuit. I shall never see her again!

The events are also leagued against me. Madame de B*** gets into a scrape precisely when I stand most in want of her all-powerful assistance: my sister takes it into her head to be ill at the moment when the Baron was my only support. It is all over with me: the propitious star which favoured my enterprises has withdrawn its influence from me. The days of my success are gone forever! Formerly, fortune anticipated all my wishes: now, she delights in opposing my most important designs. It is not a twelvemonth since everyone might have envied my destiny; but I shall, ere long, be made the object of universal pity.

Universal pity! Yes, I am, in fact, the most unfortunate of all mortals. I shall never see her again! Not satisfied with carrying her away from me, he is labouring, he says, to cure her, and to this effect imputes atrocious offences to me. Could she imagine, for a single moment, that I was capable of committing them? Could she believe that I am deserving of her resentment or her contempt, worse than her hatred. Her contempt! To be despised by Sophia! I shudder at the murderous idea.

Has ever anyone been so unfortunate in his amours? It is enough that a female should notice me, and that I should feel interested in her behalf, for mere chance and

fate to wage a most cruel war against her. Madame de B***, whom they all accuse; Madame de B***, whom their implacable enmity pursues—what has she done so reprehensible? She has loved me too tenderly. That is the offence which they will never forgive. They want to forbid my ever seeing again the dear woman that has already been too severely punished! They pretend to force me to abhor her! They are not satisfied with having contaminated her when in the prime of life, made her miserable, and perhaps abridged her days of existence, they would wish me to rejoice at, and boast of it! They are bent on my wishing her a premature death! How barbarous! Their jealous rage, I suppose, will soon attack the Countess, too, for she adores me, and I cherish her. The Countess! The Countess is in the family way! Oh, my child! My child! Alas! Never, never will my father call him his son! My Sophia will not bring him up! Adelaide will refuse to caress him! He will not bear the name of Faublas! and, perhaps, his birth will cost the mother her character, her life! Spare this once, cruel gods! Persecuting gods, respect her! She is my Sophia! In vain do I implore them! They already arm her own parents against her; they prescribe and command parricide. I can see Absence and Calumny digging her grave! I see my wife descending into it, and she is no more than fifteen! My destiny had ordained it so! The dearest victim was to be sacrificed the first!

By this means love, which had procured me pleasures, and promised happiness, will now only leave behind bitter regret, inconsolable chagrin, and, what is more horrid still, I shall have occasioned the death of all who have loved me! Unhappy wretch! Let their former troubles be avenged, and their last tortures be prevented! Let my death prevent theirs! Let a suicide—!

Destiny, not I, will have perpetrated the crime. Let Faublas be immolated to save his three children; let them be saved by separating their destinies from his: I shall then not perish wholly, part of me will remain. They will have it in their power to forget me and live. Forget me! Never! Neither Sophia, nor the Countess, nor the Marchioness, nor any one. Every creature will retain the recollection of my devotedness. The husbands, meanwhile, joyful at the mourning of their wives, will congratulate themselves upon my not having lived long—not above a short day! The fathers, trembling for their sons, will not fail in exaggerating the errors of my life, and the horror of my death; they will delight, especially, in observing, that I had scarcely made my appearance upon the earth. But what care I for the triumph and cruel joy of the former; for the terror and false pity of the latter? What do I care? Ah! that once, only once, two lovers deserving of being so, two true lovers stopping before my tomb for one moment, should recollect my very short errors, and the glorious death that will have expiated them all; let them grant me a tear, and pity me; that, in the first paroxysm of their commiseration, they may say: "This generous youth died for many! Had he not deserved being able to love one alone, and living to make her happy?" Let two lovers say so, let Eleanor and Sophia repeat it, and my *manes*<63> will be consoled.

But who will console my father? My father! Wherefore does he leave me to myself at this dreadful moment? Wherefore does he suffer my Sophia to be carried away from me? Du Portail, you must return her to me; you shall return her to me, or your blood—I am mad! I speak of subduing him, and cannot even join him! From his retreat, which he says is impenetrable, Lovinski braves my menaces, equally impotent as my researches! It is myself who must die.

Poignant regret for a treasure irrecoverably lost, cruel desire of a vengeance not to be obtained, how insupportable you are to me! How you rend a heart susceptible of mild passions only. In vain would I escape your fury. Pursued by frightful thoughts, surrounded by horrid spectres—are they remorses? Are they furies? By what transports am I agitated? I feel uncommon powers! My rage is proportionate to my strength! I could crush to atoms, and annihilate that hell which is called world. I could bury myself under its ruins!

I could, I will! What are you going to do? Stop! Eleanor, whom you are going to immolate, and Sophia! Sophia! Your lover, your child, your wife, the Marchioness, entreat you also to spare them. Your father and your sister embrace your knees. My hand trembles, my strength fails me. I must sit down! How hot I feel! How thirsty! Oh, my God!

Here is the letter in which my unjust father-in-law prognosticates my tragical end! I just meet the similar passage: he does not attempt his own life, he must fall by the sword of an enemy, he must meet with an untimely end! Barbarian! Your predictions are commands, commands which I am going to fulfil! But, ferocious tyrant, you yourself will not be able to refuse pitying me, when you will see, that previously to my putting the fatal sentence in execution, I have almost erased it with my tears.

How gloomy the stillness that reigns around me! How alarming the profound silence! A concentrated despair! The image of death! Why am I left here alone? Where is my sister? Who keeps my father away? What is the Marchioness about? What is become of my Eleanor? How came they not to unite, to prevent her being taken away from me again, or to force his returning her again to me? But they all at the same time desert me. I am robbed at once of my only consolation. I have no relatives, no lovers left. Such among my friends as think of me, shun my presence; and they who do not shun my company, forget me. I am now left solitary, quite alone in the universe! Well! Death I have left me! Death is less dreadful, than the situation I am in.

Oh! My father! I was forgetful of my promise; one of the pistols that you had returned to me, had just been placed on the same table as du Portail's letter. I took, I know not why, cruel pleasure in contemplating alternately the sentence and instrument of my death, brought to the last degree of despair, I felt neither agitation, remorse, nor terror: my last hour, perhaps, was come.

On a sudden, my door flew open; and I leave you to guess who rushed towards me: guess whom I press to my bosom, who lavishes caresses on me, whom I overwhelm with my thanks! "Look," she said to me, "you voluntarily occasion me the bitterest sorrows, and I come running to comfort you: as soon as you have it in your power you make your escape, whilst I am never tired of coming first to meet you."

You have imagined, perhaps, for a moment, that I was embracing the most cherished of the three. Alas! No, Sophia was not restored to me; but I had found again that wife, almost as much so as my own, young, handsome, sensible, and unfortunate, I had found Madame de Lignolle.

You are no strangers to my impatience, and her giddiness, my prompt ardour, and her vivacity. Gently squeezed between her arms, could I still think of plunging into an eternal sleep? My blood boiled already with a desire quite contrary to that of destruction, and the fever of despair turned entirely to the profit of love.

Everyone knows in what a shocking state the chief article of furniture is generally found at those country inns. Now who will take the trouble of apologising for the Countess and the Chevalier, *qu'un même desir entrains sur le grabat le plus miserable*. [Who were forced to a most wretched pallet by the same desire] I might observe, for the justification of them both, that those which Morpheus prefers, are not the most agreeable to Venus: this once, however, I shall pass condemnation respecting a fact which I would have kept secret, if the concatenation of events had not compelled me to relate it. I shall therefore confess, that in the present instance, both the sacrificer and the victim were equally guilty of blameable precipitance; that the latter with too great irreverence was immolated *au pied d'un autel qui n'avait pas même de rideaux* [at the foot of an altar without even any altar-cloths.]; I shall own especially, that prior to commencing the ceremony of the grand sacrifice, Faublas ought at least to have shut the gates of the temple against profane intruders.

We were worshipping the deity whose fires consumed us, when we were disturbed in our devotions. The room door was opened on a sudden, and someone precipitately entered the place. A voice which was expressive of mingled surprise and pain, a voice which I thought I recollected, let immediately escape this very single exclamation: "Good God! What do I see!" Alas! For my part I could no longer see anything; I had not even strength enough to move and try to look at the intruder. Whether the plaintive accents of that voice, still dear to me, had produced over my whole frame so sudden a revolution, or rather whether nature finally exhausted by so many extraordinary fatigues, accumulated within so few days, was now too weak to support the last efforts; I dropped senseless into the arms of the Countess, who, plunged into a swoon of a most desirable kind, was unable to assist me.

I recovered my spirits upon hearing the jolting of a berlin. A favourable moonlight afforded me the opportunity of viewing, in all its details, the situation I was in. To speak the truth it appeared to me sweeter than I felt my illness to be painful. My man's clothes had been taken off, and my female attire put on again; I was almost extended at full length in the carriage, on the back seat. On the same side in the right corner, Madame de Lignolle, who had scarcely elbow room, supported most of my body, truly become a burden; my weary head rested on her bosom; with both her hands she covered my frozen forehead; over my face, which was kept warm with hers, were poured tears and kisses; the vivifying breath of a lover, reanimated the uncertain breath of my life nearly extinct.

Facing both of us, on the front seat, almost in the left corner, a youth, whose charming countenance, exhibited certain symptoms of a great alteration, supported my legs on his knees, and by means of stooping a little, gently leaned upon mine. He was endeavouring to warm my hands, that were watered with his tears, by holding them within his. He seemed to undergo with uncommon fortitude, the most fatiguing posture. He was waiting with inquietude, though not impatiently, the moment when his friend, opening his eyes at last, would repay his attention with a look.

"Good evening, my Eleanor! And you, Ma—" (I stopped) "my friend, dear Vicomte, generous Florville! How are you this evening?"

They both answered me by their caresses, by their sobs, by the moving expression of their alarms, and of their hopes.

"Vicomte, I have not been mistaken, then? It was you who surprised us?—"

"It was!" she interrupted, with a sigh.

"Truly, I am quite ashamed," said Madame de Lignolle: "Most luckily, the gentlemen knew nearly—but it signifies not! What a difference! Sir, I conjure you do not mention it to anyone, not to the Marchioness de B*** especially. I beseech you, for you would mortify me to death!"

He replied, in a tone of great feeling: "You may rely, Madame la Comtesse, upon the most inviolable discretion."

"It is this young gentleman," resumed Madame de Lignolle, "who yielded you assistance first; it is he also who has taken the trouble of dressing you, for common decency would not allow me."

"Sir! He is laughing," interrupted the Vicomte.

"Ah, so much the better," said the Countess, with an exclamation of joy, "most likely he suffers less. I truly admire him; his liveliness never forsakes him; Faublas is always laughing; sometimes he weeps too! My lover knows how to weep!"

The Vicomte was satisfied with saying: "I know well he does!

After a moment's reflection, Madame de Lignolle embraced me tenderly.

"Sir," she said to me, "you laugh at your mistress speaking of decency after having been surprised in your arms, and yet I am right. Could a female dress you when still in a state of confusion, in an inn, and before a number of spectators, whom your accident had brought upstairs? The Vicomte, by taking that care upon himself, has rendered me essential service, he has helped us both at the same time. Thanks to him, no stranger has witnessed the disorder I was in, and the troublesome visitors speedily retreated. You were dressed from head to foot in the twinkling of an eye. It is impossible to find a more complaisant, more attentive friend: or a dressing-maid more expeditious, or more clever. Indeed, Vicomte, you possess, in the most supreme degree, the art of assisting and of dressing women. But, my dear, admire his foresight! Hoping to meet us together, he had brought with him the clothes you now have on."

I was listening with a secret pleasure to the Countess praising the Marchioness. "Dear Vicomte, you are, in fact, the most generous, and the most attentive friend. How shall I express my gratitude?"

"Take care of yourself, do not speak, keep from all manner of agitation," he answered.

"Did my servant meet you at that inn?"

"No."

"What! Are my father and sister to see me come without previous notice?"

"Hold your tongue; I know they are at Nemours; we shall send them word tomorrow morning."

"Tomorrow! Where are you taking me, then?"

I am ignorant of the answer that was made; I had a relapse of my lethargy, which was agitated by horrid dreams, and lasted longer than the first attack; when I awoke, it was broad day-light, and I felt very weak.

I recollected the chateau in Gatinois, the apartment of Madame de Lignolle, her bed—that charming bed, in which Eleanor's lover had lately passed two nights with her. There it was that Mademoiselle de Brumont now laid languishing in bodily

pain, and mental sorrow. On his right side, Florville, in deep despair, was sobbing, and kneeling by the side of the bed; she held a handkerchief over my eyes; her hands were extended towards me, and her head reclining on my bolster. I beheld, on my left, an object no less deserving of my compassion; this was my Eleanor; her hair was dishevelled, her eyes half dead, lifted up towards heaven, she looked extremely pale; it was my Eleanor, who, rather stretched than seated on the bed, sobbed as she said: "The cruel man, if he spoke of his wife, only! But he wishes for my most detested rival! He unceasingly calls after that Madame de B***, whose name I cannot bear; he calls to her as often as he does his Eleanor! Alas! I thought I had to put up only with his love for Sophia; I did not imagine he bore a true attachment to the Marchioness! How does he manage to love so many at a time? I can only adore one man! I can idolise him alone! What female could I have to dread, if the ingrate would repay my love with a proportionate affection?"

The Vicomte, entirely awakened from the state of torpor in which I had seen him plunged, replied: "Why, but, Madame, you have him now under your own roof. You already have, over those you term your rivals, the advantage of being a mother; and ere long you will have the greater advantage still of having saved his life. Are you not happy to have him in your house?"

"I am," she exclaimed, with a transport of self-gratification: "I shall save his life, that his wife had exposed, that the Marchioness would have curtailed. It will be my happy lot, perhaps, to prolong and to embellish his existence. To me it will be consecrated, for it will be my property. Yes, let me save his life; let me use this new mode of making myself beloved, since all others prove insufficient; let me fasten, with this new knot, the bonds that unite us already; let gratitude coalesce with love in the heart of my friend, to secure to me a preference which I have merited. I must save him; but it will be in my power—if his illness was continually to make new progress!- if his fever was to redouble!—if, as just now, in the excess of a transport of rage, he offered to jump out of bed, to leave this apartment, to run after Sophia, whom he imagines he can see, to Madame de B***, whom he thinks he can hear! By what means can I expect to quiet him, when I myself am so disabled? So laborious a night! A night partly spent in the liveliest alarms! I feel quite exhausted! You, Vicomte, are stronger than I am, and possessed of more presence of mind; yet you look quite overpowered. Alas are both his friend and his lover out of spirits? Oh, my God! supply us with fresh powers! But I am imploring you in behalf of a passion which you condemn Which you condemn? Ah, you are unjust Look within my heart, and judge! Judge! Have mercy on a weak mortal! If, however, my prayers should not be heard! If Faublas should breathe his last! If he should! I shall not have to reproach myself with his death; it will be his wife, no, his unworthy mistress, the Marchioness de B***! The remembrance of Sophia occasions him, in fact, lively agitations; but I can see very plainly it is the recollection of Madame de B*** that pursues, torments, and inflames him. She is the one who makes his blood boil! Who kills him! If Faublas should die, I will go to that wicked woman: 'Your inordinate passion,' I shall say to her,'has destroyed the most perfect object that heaven ever created; your artificial rage has deprived me of the mortal whom I idolised; Take this! Receive the merited prize of your villainies!' This said, I shall kill her; I next shall go to the tomb of my lover. I shall go! No longer shall I weep! I shall plunge a poniard into my poor heart!"

Thus would Madame de Lignolle, in her grief, apprise me of my dangerous situation. What I mistook for a lethargy, were the slumbers attending my fever; what I called dreams was a real delirium.

I felt extremely tired; and, in order to procure some relief, by changing my posture, I tried whether I could not sit up in my bed. My two nurses, seeing me move, caught hold of both my arms, and uniting their efforts, kept me in the position which incommoded me so much.

"Wherefore do you wish to leave your friend?" said the Marchioness.

"Stay there," cried out the Countess: "Stay there! Do you hear me?"

"Eleanor, my beloved, I do not want to go away; make yourself easy."

"Ah," she said, embracing me, "so then you know me again. Stay there, I beg of you; do, I shall take great care of you; do, you will be supplied with all that you may want."

I addressed Madame de B***: "And you, too, my dear beloved; keep up your spirits."

"His delirium is not yet over!" interrupted Madame de Lignolle.

"Quite the reverse," resumed the Marchioness, "I believe he is perfectly recovered. He addresses the Vicomte, and yet it is to the Countess that he is always speaking! He looks at me, to be sure, and sees you all the while! What have you then to complain of!"

"My dear Florville, what o'clock is it?"

"Twelve."

"Twelve? Countess, have you sent word to my father? Have you sent to enquire after my sister?"

"My messenger ought to be back," she answered.

At that same moment we heard a noise in the passage: it was La Fleur, just returning from Nemours. The Countess ran to open the door of her apartment for him, and shut it again as soon as he had got in.

He had seen M. de Belcourt: my sister was much better; my father was to come in the evening to pay a visit to the Countess.

"Very well, La Fleur," she said, "but speak the truth: Did Julien set off immediately after I had ordered him to take his horse, and inform M. de Lignolle in Paris, of our arrival here?"

"Before two in the morning he did, Madame."

"Very well, my man, leave us; hark, La Fleur, take this money, and hold your tongue. Send up, directly, M. de Despeisses, who must be downstairs."

This M. Despeisses was not long coming. He felt my pulse, looked at my eyes, desired me to put out my tongue, and with the greatest assurance declared there was not the least appearance of danger. He only added that his patient wanted rest. The Countess, in the first transport of her joy, jumped at the doctor's neck, kissed, and immediately dismissed him.

For some minutes Madame de B*** had appeared involved in most serious thought. She at length, however, spoke, in order to give Madame de Lignolle an advice, not altogether disinterested. "Most fortunately," she said, "there is no further occasion for us both staying with the Chevalier. Would it not be advisable for you,

Madame la Comtesse, to go and lie down, without taking off your clothes, on the tent bed, in the adjacent closet?"

"But yourself, sir—"

"I am in no hurry," replied the Vicomte; "I am not by far so worn out with fatigue as you appear to be; besides I shall have plenty of time in the afternoon. You, Madame, will have the Baron's visit to receive."

The Countess declared she would not leave me; and I believe that the solicitations of the Marchioness would have proved of no avail, had I not, in support of them, urged my pressing entreaties; and, even then, Madame de Lignolle, before she complied, exacted from us a promise, not to let her sleep above two hours.

After we had kept silent and quiet for some moments the Vicomte left me without making the least noise, walked tiptoe several times round the apartment, looked, I know not under what pretence, through the window of the closet, in which the Countess had retired, and then, resuming her accustomed seat at the head of my bed, said to me, in a whisper: "She is fast asleep." She then added, with an air of inquietude: "Chevalier, I have a thousand things to say to you: but beware of interrupting me, do not grow uneasy, only listen to me."

Here Madame de B***, collecting herself a little, seized one of my hands, which she held between hers; and cast a tender look at me.

She at length began to speak to the following purpose: "See whether I am not entitled to accuse destiny! I, whom for the last six months have been, and am now forever condemned to repentance, indifference and regret, could see but one consolation within my reach, namely, that of contributing to your felicity, have recently become the author of all your miseries. I would willingly sacrifice for my friend, what I hold dearest, and it is through me that he has lost what be cherished most! Am I miserable enough? For a long time past you must have ceased loving me, Faublas; in future you are going to abominate me."

"I cease to love you!"

"Don't speak so loud," she interrupted, "or rather do not speak at all. Don't offer to speak, my good friend, it hurts you. Faublas," repeated she, "you are going to hate me;" and as she perceived I was ready to interrupt her again, she hastened to add: "but no, no, it would be too unjust. Faublas, since you do not wish to find me reprehensible or guilty, re-say to yourself for my justification, what I said to you in the forest de Compiègne. Ah! Your friend must own it, in order that she may feel less unhappy, she deems it essential that you retain no resentment against her."

"Oh, you, who are ever dear to me, believe me, I only retain the remembrance of an incomparable generosity, of an unparalleled delicacy, and, shall I speak it? Of a __"

The Marchioness, who probably was afraid of hearing me utter the word, interrupted me bluntly: "Of a friendship which will last as long as I live. I understand you well; but don't speak, Faublas; dread all manner of agitation. Suffer me to speak alone; allow me to let you know how busily engaged I have been, for your interest. I thought, since our separation in the forest.

"Tormented by the apprehension of not being able to prevent the cruel event which I dreaded, I hastened to arrive soon enough, that I might offer you all the assistance a friend could bestow."

She then added, in a tone of great sadness: "It is true that I was taking a useless trouble; love already afforded you consolation: a more cherished woman—"

"More cherished! You could not vouch for that, for, indeed, I know not what to think of it myself."

"What?" she answered, pretending to misunderstand my meaning, "You don't love Madame de Lignolle as much as you do Sophia?"

"As much as I do Sophia? No, undoubtedly. Neither Madame de Lignolle, nor—" I believe I was going to say, "nor Madame de B***"

She prevented me. "But, sir, don't speak so loud! Must I tell you so a hundred times? Faublas, you will awaken the Countess, you will do yourself injury, my friend! I have forgot what I was saying to you."

"That you had hastened to come in order to offer me consolation."

"To console you! I did not say that! To assist you, Chevalier. In fact, as soon as Madame de Lignolle had taken you away, as soon as Rosambert—"

"*Apropos*, what is become of him?"

"I had him conveyed to Compiègne, to the house of a friend I have there."

"Of one of your friends?"

"Yes, of my friends. The surgeon spoke of venturing the journey to Paris, but I opposed the Count being exposed to the fatigue of such a long travelling, neither would I suffer his being taken to an inn; perhaps he would not have been attended properly, and in his present situation, the want of due attention might have cost him his life. The traitor deserves to die, but the death-blow I am to strike; I shall not trust to the common accident of life for the care of chastising him; that concerns me alone. What I wish for most—"

"But hear me: are you not afraid of the consequences? Can you rely upon the discretion of so many people?"

"Do, my good friend, hold your tongue, you tire yourself. I have used the common means, which are no bad ones; I have magnificently purchased secrecy: promises and threats have been lavished at the same time as gold."

"Those precautions are not always sufficient"

"Silence. I have taken others," she continued, with an air of embarrassment, "and that is the reason why I returned to Paris, where I lost a few hours, but as soon as I was at liberty again, I flew towards Fromonville, where I thought of arriving before you, as you were to stop that night at the Countess's. Half way I met one of my emissaries who was going to Paris to apprise me of what his companions had discovered at Montcour. He had attentively examined all the travellers he had met on the road. From the intelligence he brought me, I was informed, not without some surprise, that you were far before me, and that Madame de Lignolle was also several stages in advance of me. Upon hearing this piece of news, I made double haste, and would have reached Montargis before the Countess, only I could procure no horses at Pui-la-Lande."

"Oh! Yes, but she arrived first; and even, *apropos* of that circumstance I must return you many thanks, and beg your pardon especially; you found us. How came I to neglect shutting the door? How—"

"Chevalier, have the goodness to spare me the particular details; and believe me; let us have nothing more to say about that adventure—"

"Permit me, however—"

"I will not permit anything; you will not speak one word more upon that subject, if you retain for me the least—"

The Marchioness stopped a moment, to find out the proper expression she was to use. It was the word esteem, which she pronounced first; that of respect she only hazarded afterwards, in a trembling voice, and with almost an air of humility.

Yes, I entertain for you great esteem, high respect, much friendship—"

"I understand you, say no more. Faublas, I am fully rewarded; the certainty of your complete recovery is the only thing respecting which I want to be made easy in my mind. You have been speaking a great deal too much, take some rest; try to sleep, if it were only for a quarter of an hour, I beg of you, I insist upon it.

Although she had not ordered me, I should have soon been forced to ask her leave to do so. But my painful slumbers did not last long. I awoke so soon and so suddenly, that the Marchioness was quite disconcerted: I surprised her shedding tears over a paper which she hurried to conceal from my sight.

I took the liberty of asking her: "What is this fatal piece of writing which occasions your tears thus to flow?"

"Alas! Wherefore should I tell you?" she answered with a sigh.

"Undoubtedly," I returned with some bitterness, "the time is past when you kept no secrets from your friend.

"Secrets from you! If I had, I should have but one, and that, Faublas, you might guess without much trouble; but that, through commiseration as well as through delicacy, you should help me to keep."

"Commiseration! what a word!"

"It is the proper one. My sorrows—"

"I will endeavour to comfort you."

"But if now," she exclaimed in a fit of despair, "if now, more than ever, I am not to be comforted, let me conjure you, my good friend, not to put any more questions unto me; ask me nothing more; leave me to bewail my troubles by myself: complaints and tears are my last resource! And yet I had thought myself capable of bearing patiently the hard trials reserved for the most unhappy of women, the most unfortunate of all women! I was proud enough to think I was forever secure against the injustice of men, and adverse fortune! How silly I was! On this day at least my sad experience has convinced me of a truth that I had always suspected, and which consoles my weakness: that that courage of which men are so proud, is the most easy and common. It is easy when prompted either by a spirit of revenge or glory, to expose one's life for a moment; it is not so to endure, with an equal perseverance, several unexpected misfortunes. Many other reverses greater still, equally unforeseen, and as undeserved, had not entirely overpowered me; wherefore does this present one

crush me beyond recovery? I cannot account for it, but my heart is oppressed by an enormous weight; if I obtain not a speedy relief it will be all over with me, I shall be totally undone, let me weep, my dear friend, allow me to sob and groan."

I wished to speak; but to hinder me she stopped my mouth with her hand. I caught hold of that sweet and pretty hand, I squeezed it, I kissed it, I placed it on my heart, greatly agitated.

One would have thought that Madame de Lignolle had been waiting for this moment: she rushed out on a sudden from the closet in which I imagined she was fast asleep. The first thing I did was to push the Marchioness away from me. She, forever wonderful upon pressing occasions, preserved more presence of mind than I did. Persuaded that it was too late, she would neither withdraw her hand, nor change her place.

"You would have suffered me to sleep till tomorrow," said the Countess. Then looking at the Vicomte, she added: "What is the matter?"

"A palpitation," he answered coolly."

"A palpitation! But you weep! Is a palpitation dangerous, then?"

"Not so in general; but in his present state every agitation may be attended with bad consequences."

The Countess then addressing me: "Do you feel worse, my dearest?"

"Quite on the contrary, I feel better."

"Because you see me?"

"Because I see her who is dear to me, her to whom I have caused too great sorrow, her whose inquiet tenderness watches to prolong my days."

"You have said enough," interrupted Madame de B***, who squeezed my hand; "she understands you; she is repaid for her attention."

"I understand him, undoubtedly," exclaimed the Countess, embracing me; "but never mind, let him go on, he speaks so well."

Notwithstanding the Countess manifested a desire to hear me talk, I remained silent. What could I have said more? I had just explained myself in such a manner as to please everyone present.

This satisfaction, however, did not last long, on account of M. de Lignolle arriving much sooner than he was expected. Julien, who was dispatched after him, had met him on the road. He enquired after me with eager interest; but the air with which he looked at the Marchioness rather alarmed me. "This gentleman," said the Countess, "is an intimate friend of Mademoiselle de Brumont." The Count, nevertheless, appeared equally uneasy and surprised: "A friend!" repeated he. The Marchioness immediately said: "We have been friends from an early age."

"I suppose, sir, you are a nobleman?"

"I am a Vicomte."

"Vicomte of?"

"Florville."

"That is a new name to me."

"Can all names be known?"

"I don't wish to boast, but there are very few unknown to me." He then took a seat; and casting a contemptuous look upon the Marchioness, added: Your family most probably is not very ancient?"

"My great grandfather's grandfather was admitted into the king's carriage."

"Ah! Ah! Sir, I am your most humble servant." He rose from his seat, and advanced to pay his compliments. "You seem to be very young."

"I am not of age; nothing near it."

"The day will come."

"How came we to have the good fortune of the gentleman paying us a visit here in the country?" he asked of his wife."

"How? Why—but it would happen that—good fortune would have it, that—"

The Vicomte seeing the Countess so perplexed, said: "Shall I tell how?"

"Do, pray."

Madame de B*** then began thus: "For a long time Mademoiselle had given me the hope of seeing her come and dine with me at my house. She hitherto had deferred being as good as her word, because she must have taken a pretty long ride."

"Where do you live, then?"

"At Fontainebleau. I spend eight months out of the twelve there; as I have an apartment in the king's palace." M. de Lignolle bowed to her.

I heard the Marchioness with as much pleasure as surprise. Was it the same woman who, but a moment before, lamenting some new misfortune, appeared to strive in vain to suppress her groans, stifle her sobs, and resist her despair, I now saw, but a moment after, with an admirable *sang-froid*, play her tricks upon the Countess! Was it her whom I likewise now heard, with a steady voice, a tranquil countenance, and a tone of truth, telling M. de Lignolle an extempore, ingenious, and probable story? Oh! Madame de B***, how well you know, according to circumstances, how to compose your face, dry up your tears, dissemble your passions; in short, how to have a proper command over yourself! Oh! To what a degree have you, within a moment, justified and increased the high opinion I entertained of your abilities?

She proceeded as follows: "Mademoiselle, however, came yesterday."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Count, addressing me, "that was the indispensable business which forced you to be gone for a whole day! It was for a party of pleasure that you left the Countess, who was confined to her bed, and seriously indisposed! Were I in her place, I never would forgive you."

The Marchioness resumed: "She came, and, to make me more happy still, she brought the Countess with her."

"What!" said M. de Lignolle to his wife, "have you dined at the house of a young gentleman who was an entire stranger to you, and from whom you had not even any invitation?"

"A truce to your morality if you please, sir, and hear the story to the end."

"You may easily conceive how delighted I was at seeing the ladies. Alas! My joy was of no long duration, Mademoiselle felt ill in the afternoon. We thought at first it would be nothing; but she grew worse in the evening. We were at that time very much embarrassed, as you may well imagine; for there was no possibility of a young lady who was ill, continuing under the roof of a bachelor. Most fortunately, Madame la Comtesse, who is possessed of great presence of mind—"

"—Much less than yourself, Vicomte, I must do you justice—"

"determined upon having Mademoiselle brought here, where she had the goodness to allow me to accompany her."

"Wherefore here sooner than to Paris?" said the Count to Madame de Lignolle.

"Wherefore? Why, faith, ask the Vicomte."

He replied immediately, "because it would have been a journey of fourteen long leagues, whereas from Fontainebleau to this place is only seven."

The Count, who found that was no bad reason, remained silent for a while: he seemed to observe with particular attention M. de Florville and Mademoiselle de Brumont. He at last said:"Since you are a friend of Mademoiselle, you must understand guessing riddles?"

"I do, sir," replied the Marchioness, "but not at present, if you please; I do not feel in the least disposed."

This answer M. de Lignolle would take it in his head, threw a new light upon the business; he drew the Countess aside; but we listened attentively, anxious to know what he had to say.

"Madame, that young man is not the friend of your *demoiselle de compagnie*.<49>

What will you have him be then?"

"He is her lover, Madame."

"That is an excellent idea of yours!"

"Don't laugh, Madame, you know I am a connoisseur."

"I know you pretend to be one."

"I believe it is proper to keep a watchful eye over Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"Do you say so, sir?"

"She should be watched close."

"I intend as much."

"That Vicomte is young, he has a pretty face; he does not seem to want wit, nor manners: I can read something of a high rank in his countenance and deportment, I must have seen him somewhere; he has all the look of a seducer, Madame."

"I admire, sir, the sagaciousness with which you can read through people at one glance."

"That is the result of being acquainted with the human heart, Countess! I am afraid little Brumont has already been made the dupe of that young man."

"Don't you tell me such a thing!"

"What became of her the day before yesterday?"

"She spent the whole day at her father's."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I am."

"But yesterday, that dinner in the country? That looks very much like a private secret appointment."

"I don't understand what you mean by a private secret appointment, sir."

"A private secret appointment is—a secret appointment, is—it was a private secret appointment; believe me."

"But once more, be explicit."

"I am: a private secret appointment is the meeting of two persons—"

"We were three, though"

"I am thoroughly persuaded, that in consequence, they were provokingly deranged."

"Have I acted wrong?"

"You ought to have consulted me."

"Well, go on, sir."

"I have many proofs already, of that young man's inclination towards that young girl."

"Come, out with them, quick,"

"His eyes are red, because he has been crying; his eyes have wept, because his soul was affected; his soul was affected, because his sweetheart has been taken ill; he therefore loves Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"Your logic is pressing, sir."

"And his soul must be deeply affected, since he would not guess my riddles. Don't laugh, Madame! This is a serious business: look sharp after your *demoiselle de compagnie*<49>; either dismiss her at once, or don't lose sight of her for a minute."

"Be it so, I prefer not parting with her"

As to that young man, I shall desire him very politely, to take himself home again."

"I beg you will not, sir."

"But, Madame, only consider.—"

"No buts, if you please; I will not."

"So much the worse for you, Madame; those young folks will play you some foul trick, I tell you so beforehand."

M. de Lignolle left the room rather discontented with his lady, but much pleased with himself. The Countess then returned her best thanks to the Vicomte. "You have," she said, "most ably extricated me from the extreme trouble I was in; and next to Faublas, you are the most witty and amiable young man in existence."

He answered: "Lose no time in complimenting me: you are still threatened with impending danger, which you must think of warding off. The Count is here, the Baron is coming; if they should meet at the same time, they may enter into an explanation, the consequences whereof you must dread."

"You are right, but what is to be decided?"

"Send word to M. de Faublas not to come."

"Ah! I shall be glad to see and to speak to him."

"I shall, nevertheless, take the liberty of representing to you."

"Let me tell you, sir, all your representations are useless: if the Baron had not promised to come, I would send for him."

"That being the case, I must find some means then of sending M. de Lignolle away."

She had him called, and she said wished for some game. Delighted at her expressing such a wish, the Count made haste to eat his dinner, and set off to go shooting. The Marchioness, now quite easy in her mind, went to rest on the tent-bed in the closet, the place, which an hour before, was occupied by Madame de Lignolle.

The Countess and I had not been enjoying the pleasure of a tête-à-tête for a quarter of an hour, when we heard a loud rap at the door. Judge of our surprise and apprehensions; it was M. de Lignolle, already returning. He hallooed out: "Quick, open the door, I have brought you Madame de Fonrose, yes, Madame de Fonrose, who was coming to see us; I met her as I was getting out of the park. How happy!"

The Countess was going to the door.

"A moment, my dear Eleanor, stop a moment, let me tell you, it is Madame de Fonrose! Don't speak to her of the Vicomte."

"Why not?"

"Because, my dear, I should have told you of it sooner; but I was so ill, I did not give it a thought. The Baroness and the Vicomte are sworn enemies. It appears that Florville has been making love to her, and although she did not ill-treat him, they quarrelled, and detest each other. You may open the door now; somebody knocks again: above all things, mind what you will be saying; don't speak of the Vicomte."

"No, no, make yourself easy.

I can here relate, verbatim, one of the most singular scenes I ever witnessed, and in which I was a performer: true, indeed, the situation I was in did not allow me to hear all that was said; but such details as had escaped me then, I have heard since, from the very mouth of her whom her imprudence and ill-fate reduced to act the chief part in it.

The COUNT (as he entered.) Where is the Vicomte?

The COUNTESS. Hush!

The COUNT. What do you mean?

The COUNTESS. Hold your tongue!

The BARONESS (looking at Madame de Lignolle with an air of surprise.) Do I interrupt you, Countess?

The COUNTESS. Not in the least.

The BARONESS (to Faublas.) Well, how is this dear child?

The COUNT. It is nothing, I tell you; a little fever.

FAUBLAS. I have dared to flatter myself that my father—

The COUNT. Your father is a very strange man, mademoiselle!

FAUBLAS. How say you, sir?

The COUNT. How! He descries me from a distance! On a sudden he gets out of his carriage, and runs across the fields as if he had seen the devil; that I call being savage to a degree!

The BARONESS. We have already been telling you a hundred times that M. de Belcourt had secret business.

The COUNT. What! Upon my estate?

The BARONESS. No, but in the neighbourhood.

The COUNT. Ah! At M. de Florville's, perhaps?

The COUNTESS. Why don't you hold your tongue?

FAUBLAS (with great warmth, to the Baroness, who stood gazing at Madame de Lignolle.) How comes Madame la Baronne to be in this part of the country?

The BARONESS. A messenger was despatched last night to let me know that your father was in great want of my immediate services.

FAUBLAS. To be sure; is my dear Adelaide better?

The BARONESS. Much better.

The COUNTESS (to Faublas.) Don't speak too much, take care of yourself.

The BARONESS. What an alteration in one night!

The COUNT. One night? Say several, Madame; for believe me, the origin of this illness is of no recent date. Those two ladies, during their first coming to these parts, thought only of amusement, and God knows how they have enjoyed themselves, all day long running about the park; returning, out of breath, to go and begin over again! Madame, they would play like two children, and fight like two school-boys; and at night—Oh! It was quite another thing in the night.

The COUNTESS (laughing.) Do you think, sir, you are telling anything new to the Baroness?

The COUNT. At night, their beds were in the same room, and, would you believe it instead of sleeping, they were forever whispering. They did nothing but chat. What I am going to say, Madame, is exact to the letter; they did nothing else but chat; I could hear them very plain, because, you see, there was only this thin partition between us. Now every rational being may conceive that, going through a deal of exercise in the day-time, and to undergo a deal of fatigue in the night, is enough to kill one. The Countess, on her return to Paris, found hereself very ill in consequence; she was afflicted with the sick-headache, and has been sick, too.

The BARONE88. You have been sick, Countess?

The COUNTESS. Pooh! that's nothing.

The BARONESS. Take care, though.

The COUNT (delighted.) Is it not true that she must take care of herself? Mademoiselle, who enjoys a stronger constitution, has stood it longer; and, perhaps, if she had rested herself at our house, instead of going to that Vicomte de Florville's—

The COUNTESS. Hold your tongue, I tell you!

FAUBLAS (with great warmth, to the Baroness, who still looked amazed.) Madame la Baronne!

The BARONESS. Well I what's the matter?

FAUBLAS. A secret! (speaking very low) you have passed through Nemours?

The BARONESS (speaking low.) There it was that I found your father. I left my waiting-woman with Adelaide.

The COUNT. Yes, I think that if he had not dined at the Vicomte's—

The COUNTESS. He will not hold his tongue!

The BARONESS. I understand. These ladies did not wish to let me into the secret. I must, then, inform them that I knew of it. I know that they dined yesterday at Fontainebleau; the Count had told me of it.

FAUBLAS (with a sign of intelligence to the Baroness.) Madame la Baronne knows the Vicomte?

The BARONESS (with a cunning look.) Do I? What a question you are asking me! He is a very fine fellow, has an elegant deportment, wit—

The COUNTESS (in a whisper to Faublas.) Methinks she does not speak ill of him.

FAUBLAS (in a low voice.) Mere dissimulation; wait a moment.

The BARONESS. The grandfather of his great-grandfather has mounted in the king's coach.

The COUNTESS (low.) You are right. I believe she speaks ironically.

FAUBLAS (low.) Undoubtedly she does.

The BARONESS. Notwithstanding, I know a great defect in him.

The COUNTESS. Ah!

The COUNT. What is it?

The BARONESS. At least, I have my authority: the Count has just told me the poor young man knows not much about riddles.

The COUNTESS (with bursts of laughter.) That is the reason, perhaps, why you are angry with him?

The BARONESS (looking at the Countess and the Chevalier.) Am I angry with him?

FAUBLAS (with a sign of understanding.) Certainly, you have quarrelled; would you wish to keep it a profound secret?

The BARONESS (cunningly.) Be it so! We had quarrelled, I confess; but, indeed, he has used me very ill.

FAUBLAS (low, to the Countess.) You see! (Aloud, to the Baroness.) I did not wish his being mentioned to you, but since the Count—

The BARONESS. Yes, we have ceased being friends, (to the Count, after a moment's reflection), and, candidly speaking, that is what prevented my accompanying the ladies, for they had asked me.

FAUBLAS (low to the Baroness.) Mighty well!

The COUNTESS (low to the same.) Very clever; I return you thanks.

The COUNT (pacing the room, to the Baroness.) These ladies—these ladies would have acted very right, if they had followed your example (to the Countess); but where is that gentleman?

The COUNTESS. He is asleep.

The COUNT (looking through the closet window.)—Truly, there he is on the tent-bed, with his clothes on.

The BARONESS. Shall I not see him?

The COUNT. If you wish to see him, go in.

FAUBLAS (with impetuosity.) Don't go in! He is overtired, and wants rest.

The BARONESS (wondering.) My gracious! How fiery, mademoiselle! You will do yourself injury.

FAUBLAS (apparently composed.) What an idea! To go and disturb a youth who has been up all night?

The BARONESS (observing the Chevalier.) Is it impossible to go near him without making a noise, and, at the same time, grieving you?

FAUBLAS (in a faltering voioe.) I am out of the question; but, if you should awake him; if—

The BARONESS. If I awake him, he will go to sleep again. there will be no great harm done.

FAUBLAS (much embarrassed.) No great harm! No great harm! I say there would be a great harm done.

The BARONESS. You may say what you please, mademoiselle; I am very curious to see your intimate friend, whom you are so apprehensive of my disturbing. (She rises.)

The COUNTESS (with a cunning air.) To what purpose? you know him very well.

The BARONESS. I wish to see whether he is much altered since I saw him last. (She draws near the closet.)

FAUBLAS. Stop her.

The COUNTESS. Why, perhaps she loves him still; she wishes to have the pleasure, at least, of looking at him; what should prevent her?

FAUBLAS. Don't you know the Baroness? She will make such a bustle.

The COUNTESS. What then? Wait a bit, I am going to speak to her. (She runs to Madame de Fonrose.) Go in, look at him, if you like, but don't awake him, for he must be tired.

I leave you to judge of my situation; I had not one single reasonable objection to urge, and my weakness kept me in bed; I laid upon thorns; the Baroness was already near the glass door, and I could scarcely conceal my extreme inquietude. What a fortunate obstacle composes me on a sudden! I perceived the Vicomte had locked the door of the closet. The Marchioness, therefore, was safe! No, alas! No, that precaution will not save her; Madame de Lignolle has just given her key to Madame de Fonrose.

As soon as the Baroness had got in, I heard the following words: "Yes, that is a pretty face enough, but it is exactly the one I know."

"No!–Yes!—Not at all!—But is it?"

"That it is—the very one. I durst hardly to suspect as much. The adventure appeared to me too incredible. Awake, charming young man! Come, Monsieur le Vicomte! Come and join the company: come, come then, I shall lend you my hand."

It was her arm, however, which Madame de B*** seized as a support, for she was so sleepy as to be unable to stand.

Whoever, only once in his life has been awakened suddenly from a profound sleep, knows well what I have so imperfectly described. One cannot pass suddenly from that state of death to a state of life: the eyes at first open, but they continue obscured by a thick cloud: the ears do hear, but catch only the minutest parts of the words that are conveyed to them, and of which they alter the nature; it is especially in the brain that the confusion is extreme. They happen to be at the same time loaded with recent ideas, the remnants of an interrupted dream, and ideas often contrary to the former, and which are transmitted by a loquacious intruder. From this unforeseen shock the inevitable result is a total confusion.

It is in that excess of disorder that we look without seeing, that we listen without comprehending, that we speak without thinking; but, expect not that I shall explain what mechanical instinct causes to move a body without a soul. Such did Madame de B*** appear when supported, or rather dragged, by Madame de Fonrose, she entered the room in which we were.

XXIII.

The Marchioness at first cast around her a stupefied look. What object has struck her eyes? Is it a dream that torments her? Her mouth utters a few incoherent words; and tired with a first effort, her eyes close again. Soon after, for the second time, her hands drop down, and she re-opens her weighed-down eyelids. Madame de B*** is enabled to consider anew the female phantom whose presence creates her surprise. She has recovered, at last, the entire use of her senses; a more composed survey convinces her that it is no dream, but that she has fallen into the hands of her most mortal enemy.

It was less difficult, however, to surprise and attack Madame de B*** than to intimidate and overpower her; it was she who commenced the contest: it was Madame de Fonrose whom the first blow was aimed at.

The MARCHIONESS. Although I was in greater want of rest than of visits, I am delighted to see you, Madame la Baronne.

The BARONESS. Delighted is saying a great deal, I apprehend M. le Vicomte exaggerates.

The MARCHIONESS. You are so modest, Madame!

The BARONESS. You are so polite, sir!

The COUNTESS (to the Baroness.) You are not so yourself; wherefore did you awake him! had begged of you, Madame. Let me tell you that I should be very much displeased if you were to pick a quarrel with him in my house.

The BARONESS (with a laugh.) Do scold me, I advise you.

The Marchioness, astonished at what the Countess had been saying, looked as if she was asking me for an explanation. I was going to give it her in a whisper; the Baroness prevented me.

The BARONESS (running between the Marchioness and Faublas.) No, by no means, if you please. I doubt not but you have many things to say to one another; but you must speak aloud! Well! Do I disturb you? Speak, M. le Vicomte, you who have been better trained.

The MARCHIONESS. Madame is going to persuade me I am. no one knows more about it than she does, her suffrage is worth a thousand; her long experience—

The BARONESS (in a faltering voice.) Long! Would not one think I am a hundred years old!

The MARCHIONESS (apparently concerned.) Ah! I beg pardon, I have hurt you, Madame.

The BARONESS. Hurt me! Not in the least.

The MARCHIONESS (ironically.) I have though. Madame has retreated, Madame has ceased the attack, to think of the defence. Ah! How sorry I am!

The BARONESS. You need not grieve much, for there is no harm done. (To Faublas.) You do not speak, my fair young lady.

FAUBLAS. I am listening to what is said, I suffer much, and I am waiting.

The COUNTESS. And I likewise wait very impatiently for the end of this contest.

The COUNT. For my part, so far, I don't understand much about this quarrel. what I can see very plain is, that your souls are all affected.

The BARONESS (to the Countess and Faublas.) This contest tires you. Keep up your spirits, it will not last long. (Pointing to the Vicomte.) I am certain this gentleman will have the goodness.to put an end to it presently, by bidding us farewell.

The COUNT. I have caught it at last. You are of my own opinion; it is a love affair of these young persons!

The COUNTESS. You presume, Madame, in my house, to use an individual so bad, to whom I lie under the greatest obligations!

The BARONESS (laughing.) The greatest obligations!

The COUNTESS (giddily.) To be sure, the greatest. Had it not been for him, all Montargis—

The COUNT. All Montargis!

FAUBLAS (with great hurry.) It is all Fontainebleau, Madame means.

The COUNTESS. Yes, yes—All Fontainebleau—all Fontainebleau.

The MARCHIONESS (to the Countess.) How so? We might have procured assistance for Mademoiselle there. It was much better undoubtedly to leave that place; but when I advised you so to do, I only rendered you a very little service.

The COUNTESS (low to the Baroness.) How witty he is!

The BARONESS. Be it so; but notwithstanding all you may say, Countess, I wish to become entitled to your everlasting gratitude; I wish to rid you of that gentleman.

The COUNTESS. What an obstinacy!

The BARONESS. Don't be angry. Hear me, I appeal to the Vicomte himself; he will own—

The COUNTESS. Your behaviour, Madame, is very strange, quite unpardonable; and although this gentleman had been guilty towards you of fifty infidelities—

The BARONESS (laughing.) Infidelities! He!

The COUNTESS. Certainly.

The BARONESS. Infidelities towards me? He!

The COUNTESS. Yes, infidelities towards you. Do you think I am ignorant of his having been your lover?

The BARONESS. He! My lover?

The COUNT. Hush! Hush! Don't let us speak of those things. I don't like such topics of conversation.

The COUNTESS. Indeed, sir, I admire you. What has this to do with what you dislike!

The BARONESS. He! My lover? What a pleasant story! (She bursts out laughing.) Countess, pray inform me who told you? Little Brumont, probably. (To Faublas.) Cunning little miss! How! Truly, don't you know better? How could you presume to make me a present of the kind? Would you be so daring as to repeat the burlesque accusation before my face?

FAUBLAS. Why not? If you force me.

The BARONESS. Well answered! And you, M. le Vicomte, will you dare also to maintain it? Indeed, that would be the only thing wanted to render this adventure truly ludicrous.

The MARCHIONESS. Madame, there are conquests which a young man publishes through vanity. There are *des bonnes fortunes* [strokes of good luck] which prudence will not allow him to acknowledge having fallen to his lot. It rests with you to decide whether I can be indiscreet.

The BARONESS. Why, truly I consider that you would be strangely puzzled if you were obliged to reveal all your conquests. Without compliment, I believe they have already been numerous; at Versailles for instance, you are in a fair way—

The COUNT. Exactly so! There it was that I saw him.

The BARONESS. Is it not owing to women introducing you, that you are patronised by the Minister?

The COUNT (low to the Baroness.) Oh Oh! But if he is patronised by the Minister, you must not speak to him as you do; you should keep upon good terms with him.

The MARCHIONESS. There are some folks who don't believe it, and who notwithstanding will set the example. The lady, meanwhile, has eluded answering my question. she has not presumed to determine whether I should be indiscreet.

The BARONESS (in an ill humour.) I have decided you should.

The MARCHIONESS. You act from modesty! I refuse your decision; I demand that we call the votes.

The BARONESS. I agree to it. Let us see. Monsieur le Comte, speak first.

The MARCHIONESS. No, no, you do not understand me. When the accused party is a person of your consequence, it is not before a small committee that the enquiry is to take place; in a case of that sort, the court, town and country, are to be applied to.

The BARONESS. That is too impertinent.

The COUNTESS. You deserve as much. Why did you awake him? Why do you offer to turn him out of my house?

The BARONESS (to the Countess.) To speak the truth I ought not to be angry, for it is only to be laughed at; what might amuse me much is to see you side with them against me. However, there must be an end to all this. I am expected (she looks at her watch) I have no time to lose. Monsieur le Vicomte would not walk back home. he is of a delicate constitution, I beg of him to hand me down to my carriage, where he will not object to take a place. I engage to carry him back to Fontainebleau. is that polite enough?

The MARCHIONESS. I am very thankful for the obliging offers of Madame la Baronne; but since Madame la Comtesse will permit, I shall stay here.

The COUNTESS. You are right.

The BARONESS (to the Countess.) He is right, undoubtedly, and you do very well to applaud him. (To the Marchioness.) Are you in earnest?

The MARCHIONESS. Quite so. I shall stay here so long as Mademoiselle is in danger, and I shall not be troublesome to the Countess.

The BARONESS. Do you expect I will leave you here?

The MARCHIONESS. I can't see by what means you can force me to go away.

The BARONESS (angrily.) How audacious1 Only think, I need but speak one single word.

The MARCHIONESS (with great composure.) You will not speak it out?

The BARONESS. Who will prevent me?

The MARCHIONESS. A moment's reflection. I am well aware that you are acquainted with my secret; but look round, and tell me what advantage could those to whom you reveal it, derive in consequence?

The COUNTESS (low to Faublas.) What does that mean

FAUBLAS. That concerns your husband. I will explain it to you by and by.

The MARCHIONESS (to the Baroness, in a friendly tone.) The Countess is light-headed; in a fit of rage she might forget herself; I beg you will not provoke her.

The BARONESS (low.) I shall find means to send M. de Lignolle away.

The MARCHIONESS (aloud.) I do not believe it.

The BARONESS. Who will prevent me?

The MARCHIONESS. That lady, mademoiselle, and myself.

The BARONESS. Monsieur le Vicomte, let us both go out together.

The MARCHIONESS. No.

The BARONESS. I will speak out.

The MARCHIONESS. I defy you.

The BARONESS. I had heard prodigious encomiums on your incomparable merit; but Fame, who publishes feats of gallantry deserving of being kept in memory, and who commonly exaggerates—

The MARCHIONESS (ironically.) Do not flatter me. That Fame has not spoken to you about me. You know well she has no longer time of speaking of anyone else, since you have made it your business to find her occupation.

The BARONESS (ironically.) She, nevertheless, has some leisure hours left to chatter about you. She says that after having selected from the throng the fortunate object of your affection—

The MARCHIONESS. Selected from the throng! So much the better for my mistress and for myself. It is an example which I set to some females of my

acquaintance. They, when they take a lover, do not select him from the throng, but make him an additional member.

The BARONESS. You will never be ranked among them. you who distinguish yourself by so many divers talents; you, who, according to circumstances, know so well how to change your tone, temper, behaviour, name, and so—

The MARCHIONESS. Hush! take care, Madame la Baronne, your *sang-froid* has left you, you are going to say something; (looking at the Countess and at Faublas) you will expose us; take care. It is seldom dangerous to hold one's tongue; but frequently it is perilous to speak.

The BARONESS. A word in your ear, if you please, Monsieur le Comte!

The MARCHIONESS (to the Countess.) Believe me, Madame, allow no secrets.

The COUNTESS (to her husband.) I will not have you speak to her.

The BARONESS. But—

The COUNTESS (to the Baroness.) Neither shall you speak to him.

The BARONESS (to the Count.) Since it is so, I beg your pardon, but I must beg of you to leave us for a moment.

The MARCHIONESS (to the Countess.) Do not let him go.

The COUNTESS (to her husband.) I will not have you leave the place.

The COUNT (muttering.) Never mind, you need not mention it; nothing escapes me. I can see, notwithstanding her assuming a good countenance, that the Baroness's soul is affected; with regard to that young man, since he has so much credit with the minister, I conceive he must not have occasion to complain of being ill-treated in my house. But I know the world. a man, a master of the house especially, always commands respect; (aloud) so, then, I must stay to prevent quarrelling?

The MARCHIONESS. Yes, do stay.

The COUNTESS. Stay.

FAUBLAS. Stay.

The BARONESS. Since everyone will have it so, stay then. This turns out in a pleasant manner; it would occasion me too much ill-humour, if I were not amused. (She laughs very heartily.) Countess, give me your hand; they are playing you some trick; let us shake hands, for I am made game of also.

ALL TOGETHER. Explain.

The COUNT (rubbing his hands.) I entertained a confused idea, and was saying so to the Countess. They are making game of her. (To the Baroness.) But I should not be sorry to know in what manner. Explain it!

The BARONESS. Why, truly, they know I cannot explain. I am sensible I must wait. Well! Patience. (She takes a chair.)

The MARCHIONESS. You were expected, Madame.

The BARONESS. The observation is not very polite, Sir! however, on account of your being rather awkwardly situated, I forgive you. I confess I was anxious to take

you away with me, but since your going is so positively opposed, I demand being permitted to stop with you.

The COUNTESS. Just as you please.

The MARCHIONESS (to the Count.) I beg you will not keep standing, sir. (She reaches him a chair.)

The BARONESS. Madame de Lignolle does not mind that excess of attention.

The COUNT. Quite the reverse, I am very thankful. (He reaches a chair to the Marchioness.)

They all sit round my bed, and their respective countenances deserve being noticed.

The Countess divides her affectionate attention between the Marchioness and me; and if sometimes she seems to recollect that Madame de Fonrose is present, it is to show her discontent, either by a sulky look, or a disobliging monosyllable.

M. de Lignolle absolutely neglects the Baroness; the whole attention of the courtier is directed towards M. de Florville, upon that young man who was in such high credit with the minister; he approaches, caresses, and strangely importunes him.

The Vicomte receives with modesty the thanks of Madame, and almost with dignity the advances of Monsieur. By the entire security which he affects, one would have thought that he had forgotten his danger and his adversary; but the less he seems to pay attention to them, the more I presume he keeps them in mind. Every now and then Florville casts at the Baroness a proud, imperious, and triumphant look; would it not be incomprehensible, however, if the Marchioness, exaggerating to herself her advantages, and losing sight of her position, should consider an enemy as beaten who had not yet left the field of battle! As for me, timid warrior, wondering at the first success, I dread the second attack; though the courage of my ally inspires me with confidence, the indefatigable obstinacy of her antagonist intimidates me; and doubtful which of the two is to carry the day, I hope, I tremble, I admire, and observe in silence.

The Baroness, though single-handed, makes game of them all. She punishes the Count, who impolitely neglects her, by praising enthusiastically whatever he says; to be revenged of my perfidious tricks, she darts at me, by stealth, a reprobating and caressing glance: a look which seems to convey at once congratulations and reproaches. To the unjust anger of the Countess, she opposes only long bursts of laughter; and with a bitter and threatening smile, she beats back the majestic glance of her haughty rival.

I see her at last involved in deep thought; next she rises from her seat, goes into the gallery, calls one of her servants, gives him orders and as she returns to us, is heard to say aloud: Let my coachman get ready.

"Let my coachman get ready?" Did she really speak those words? O my guardian genius! O protecting angel of the Marchioness! I return you thanks, the victory will be ours.

In compliance with the Count's desire, and the Baroness allowing it, the old topic of conversation was resumed. M. de Lignolle invited Florville not to neglect riddles, commenced a pompous eulogium on the affections of the soul, and of the soul

of a courtier. A quarter of an hour had elapsed: on a sudden, we heard a fowling piece fired, and in the yard of the chateau, cries of "To arms! Poachers! Poachers!"

At this hue and cry, M. de Lignolle thinks no more of riddles, the Vicomte, or the court, but rises, leaves us, and rushes on in a great hurry. The Countess, either to quiet or to detain him, offers to run after him; but Madame de Fonrose stops her, saying:

"Don't be alarmed, it is only a trick of my conception, to call away your husband, and in spite of you, to turn your rival out of doors."

The COUNTESS. My rival?

The BARONESS. Alas! Yes, my poor dear child! You suffer yourself to be made a dupe of! Only look at the supposed young man. By the shape, and the features, can you mistake a female? Can you witness her artifice, her perfidiousness, her incomprehensible audacity, and not know?

The COUNTESS. The Marchioness de B***! Great God!

The MARCHIONESS (to Faublas.) I leave you with regret my friend; but I shall hear of you. (To Madame de Fonrose, in a menacing tone.) Rely upon my gratitude, Madame la Baronne? And yet keep my secret, beware of exposing me by divulging this adventure. (To Madame de Lignolle.) Adieu, Madame la Comtesse; if you are reasonable enough to harbour no resentment against Vicomte de Florville, he engages not to reveal your unguarded conduct to the Marchioness de B***.

She went out; the Baroness followed her.

In order to form a just idea of the raging transports of the Countess, it would not suffice to be as irascible and violent as she was; one must, besides, burn with a like fire to that which devours her. At first, the excess of her amazement suspended the excess of her fury; but the frightening calm did not last long, and the explosion was terrible. I saw Madame de Lignolle shiver and turn pale; then on a sudden, her whole frame appeared agitated by a convulsive motion; her throat swelled, her lips trembled, her eyes were inflamed, her face turned of a purple violet colour: she attempted to cry out, but could utter only stifled groans, her feet beat the ground, her weak fist got bruised against the furniture, she tore her hair off; she even dared to lift a sacrilegious hand against her charming face, whence blood immediately issued from several scratches. What an accident for herself and for me; but I could not have foreseen that cruel effect of her despair.

Worn out as I was, I collected powers enough to be able to get out of bed, I tried to drag myself close to her: the unhappy creature did not even see me. She rushed towards the door, and in a stifled voice, said: "Let her be brought back to me, that I may be revenged! That I may tear her to pieces! That I may murder her!"

"Eleanor! My dear Eleanor!"

She heard me, turned round, and saw me in the middle of the apartment; beside herself, she hurried towards me: do you wish to follow her? Well go! Go perfidious man, and never let me see you again! What can detain you? She is waiting for you! She is waiting for the reward of her enormities. Go to enjoy with her my disgrace, your ingratitude, and her infamy. Go, run: but remember that if I can meet you together, I will immolate you both."

Illustration: *I fell prostrate and on my knees and on my hands.*

She had seized my arm, which she kept shaking with all her might; I fell prostrate on my knees and on my hands. She cried out: but it was not a scream of rage. Anger had already made room for fear.

"Eleanor, how can you imagine that in my present situation, I should think of following her? I wished to join you, my beloved, I wanted to justify myself, to sue for forgiveness, to offer you consolation. Eleanor, hear me, be calm, I beg of you! for my sake, for your own sake, spare your many charms; spare that skin so soft, so white, and those little sweet hands, those long floating hairs, that so charming face! Oh I you, whom the god of love purposely made so handsome, beware of altering one of his most pleasing works, respect a thousand attractions formed to be caressed, and procure the most exquisite pleasures."

Whenever you have the misfortune of making your mistress angry, you must endeavour to soothe her immediately; and whoever, in such an occurrence, feels incapable of acting, should at least say something, and for want of having it in his power to do better, he ought, as a substitute for tender caresses, to urge passionate encomiums, and season the flattering discourse with all the warmth the consoling action would have been susceptible of. Such is the ordinary advice which love suggests, and that love inspired me to abide by: yet I cannot positively affirm that the

Countess was appeased by that alone. It appeared to me very plausible, that fear, after removing anger, had made room for compassion, and that my tender-hearted friend, moved at the sight of my situation, more than by my fair words, forgot my wrongs, to think only of my danger. Be it as it may, if I understood the cause, the effect was not to be misconstrued. Madame de Lignolle raised me up, supported me, helped me to get into bed again, and then sitting close to me, she leaned towards me, and hid her face on my bosom, which she watered with her tears.

The Countess changed her attitude when she heard Madame de Fonrose approaching. "Gracious God!" exclaimed the latter, What a face!" And after applying a handkerchief to the face of her friend, she added: "Madame, I have told you many a time already, that when a young handsome woman was angry she might weep, groan, scold her maids, quarrel with her lover, and plague her husband; but that she must spare her own self, and, above all things, her sweet face. I, nevertheless, thought that in the first access of your passion, you would have acted rashly. But I could not have stopped with you."

"What is become of Madame de B***?" asked Madame de Lignolle.

"She nobly refused my carriage, which she had no occasion for. The sly Vicomte had made himself quite at home in your house: he kept a servant of his, dressed in gay clothes, in your hall, and a pair of horses in your stables."

"What a woman!" exclaimed the Countess, with extreme vivacity; "How audacious in her behaviour! How impudent in her discourse! When I met her at Compiègne, she told me she was a relation of the Marquis de B***, and you too, sir, you made me believe so! You have imposed on me most shamefully! What had brought her to Compiègne? Answer me! You keep silent—you are a traitor! Get you gone, leave my house, begone directly! I was such a simpleton as to give them credit! She followed us on the road, joined us at Montargis—in what a situation did she find me there My stars! As long as I live I shall be ashamed of myself, and weep through rage!"

"What I think more provoking still, is to be forced to acknowledge that if I had arrived a few moments later; yes, only some minutes later, it would have fallen to my lot to have surprised my unworthy rival in the arms of a perfidious—for he loves all those he meets with: whether the Marchioness or the Countess, what signifies to him? Provided she be a female. How many mistresses do you want? Do you wish me to have several lovers? Don't attempt to justify yourself! You are destitute of delicacy, of honesty, of good faith! Get you gone immediately, and never let me see you again!"

Madame de Lignolle's former rage returned by degrees; I trembled, lest her husband should come back. The Baroness, to whom I imparted my apprehensions, quieted me. "The supposed poacher," she said to me, "is my running footman, in a disguise. He is possessed of a pair of light heels, and is favourably inclined. He is aware of the Count going in person after him, and will procure that gentleman the pleasure of a long race. He will find exercise in plenty for the amateur, and I warrant you that we shall have as much time as we can wish for."

Meanwhile, the Countess, who did not listen to us, was going on: "She surprised me; she seemed as if she pitied, and wished to serve me. I addressed a thousand insignificant compliments to her, was lavish of ridiculous thanks, and this gentleman allowed me to proceed. He even did more than that; he coalesced with her

to make game of me. But you, Baroness, wherefore did not you let me know who she was, as soon as you had found her out?"

"You are making your jokes upon this occasion. Do not I know enough of you to be well satisfied that no consideration whatever could have silenced you: that you would have burst out; and that, too, even in the presence of your husband."

"Undoubtedly, in the face of the whole universe; I would have exposed the insolent creature; I would have put her to the blush; I would—"

"Let me tell you, Madame, instead of wasting time by quarrelling with her, you should have summoned up your servants, and have had her thrown out at the window."

"Ah, to be sure, I had at command that very simple and genteel mode of getting rid of her, without making a bustle, or scandalising the public! But, indeed, one does not always think of what might be done! I did not give it a thought."

"This impostor," continued the Countess, "looking at me, has made fools of us both, my dear Baroness: it was he who told me, as a secret, that that woman was your lover. If he had confessed to me that, formerly, you had been a man, I would have believed him, and yet that is the manner in which he has abused the blind confidence I reposed in him! He shall never betray me again, however! Let him begone, I detest him! And will see him no more!"

"How will you have him go?"

"When I reflect that that odious Marchioness has stopped here all night, with me near him and, besides, part of the day!" (She screamed aloud.) "Heaven forgive me! I left them tête-à-tête for a whole hour! For an age! Tell me, sir, what were you about together? Speak! While I was asleep what took place?"

"Nothing my dear; we conversed."

"Oh, yes! Conversed! Do not imagine you can impose upon me again; speak the truth, tell me what you have done together; I insist upon it—"

"Countess, interrupted the Baroness, laughing, you suspect him of having committed a crime, of which—without offering him any offence—of which, for four-and-twenty hours, he has been absolutely incapable."

"Incapable! He? never! When I returned, sir, she said you had a palpitation, and her hand—she must be very bold to dare to lay it on your heart—her hand!—and you must be very kind to suffer it! That heart is mine; it belongs to no one else—. Alas! What do I say? The ungrateful man! The flighty young man! He gives himself up to everyone indiscriminately! I am certain that, during my sleep—yes, I am positive; but I expect the avowal from your own mouth; I iusist upon it; I had rather be made certain of my miseries, than to continue in a state of dreadful uncertainty. Faublas, tell me what you did together. Hear me; if you confess, I will forgive you. Own it, sir, own it, or I shall discharge you; yes, I am determined. I will discharge—I will dismiss you."

"Wherefore dismiss her?" said M. de Lignolle as he was coming in. "You must not; I am even very sorry I went out, for you have sent away the Vicomte."

"The Vicomte! Once forever, sir, I declare to you, that I will never have him mentioned in my presence."

"Ah! but what ails you, Madame? Your face—"

"My face is my own, sir, I may do whatever I like with it; meddle with your own business."

"Be it so; but I repent having left this apartment; you have been availing yourself of my absence"

The BARONESS. It has not been long; the poacher has suffered himself to be caught much sooner than I expected.

The COUNT (throwing himself in an armchair.) Caught, indeed! The best runner could not achieve it in four-and-twenty-hours' time. Ah! what a devilish man! Since he is no bird, he must be the devil himself. Imagine a stag that has just started! Why, Madame, he ran as fast! He then would come back again. I could see him within pistol-shot; and, presto! At a hundred yards distance. When you would have thought him very far, he seemed as if he had dropped from the sky, you had him under your nose; he really put my men at defiance.

The BARONESS. But you, sir?

The COUNT. This alters the case; I was always at the head of his pursuers. This rascal easily found out whom he had to deal with; when I got close to him, he took to his legs with double efforts; it would have given you pleasure to see how afraid he was of me! Ten times I was on the point of catching him! But, notwithstanding he has made his escape. I remembered the Vicomte, and gave it up. Now that I am off, I dare to say all my servants will be unable to come up with him.

The COUNTESS (to Faublas.)Why will you not confess?

FAUBLAS. I swear there was nothing done.

The COUNTESS. Own it, or I will dismiss you.

The COUNT (to Faublas.) Never mind; give Madame that satisfaction; it will cost you nothing; confess.

The BARONESS (to the Count, with a laugh.) Do you know what you wish him to confess?.

The COUNT. Why that the Vicomte is a very agreeable young man! Most likely!

The BARONESS. Most likely! What do you mean?

The COUNT. How is not that plain language? I mean, that most likely mademoiselle finds the Vicomte is a very handsome fellow. (To the Countess.) But though she did confess, that is not a sufficient cause for you to dismiss her.

The COUNTESS (to her husband.) For God's sake let me alone, or I shall be angry. (To Faublas.) Confess.

The COUNT (to Faublas.) Oh! I beg of you, do confess. You do. We all here do. You may tell the Vicomte that I find him so; and do not forget to let him know that his going away has occasioned me severe regret; that he will always do us great pleasure whenever it will please him to come and see us, either in Paris, or—

The COUNTESS. If ever he dares to show his face in a house of mine, I will have him turned out.

The COUNT. I wonder at you; just now you espoused his cause most violently! I wish you could know your own mind.

The COUNTESS. You, sir, who now speak, were of a contrary opinion an hour ago.

The COUNT. For an hour back a great change has taken place.

The BARONESS. Quite so.

The COUNT (to the Baroness.) Don't I speak the truth, Madame? You have some knowledge of the world, you, Madame, and I don't doubt but that you guess at my motives for viewing things under a different aspect. (Much lower.) I thought at first that this M. de Florville, although of a tolerable good family, enjoyed, like most young men of his time of life, a very indifferent existence; I therefore could not see of what advantage Mademoiselle de Brumont's partiality to that youth could be productive. It is a maxim of mine that a man of rank more than any other, must be on his guard against new acquaintance, so as never to form but such as may be profitable. Now listen to this, Madame: that man who, upon no occasion, cannot be useful to us, must sooner or later be doubly burdensome to us, because, as he has nothing to give, he always ends by asking for something; in the course of ambition especially, whoever does not help, must necessarily check and consequently retard our march; that is the reason why I did not wish to form a connection with the Vicomte. But you tell me that he is in high favour at Versailles, and that has caused my disposition to be altered. I don't wish to meddle with your contentions, with the quarrels among women; neither is it my province to examine whether the means adopted by that young man, for his promotion, are very delicate; the essential object for me is, that they be very powerful. (Pretty loud.) Methinks, that M. de Florville, in that respect has nothing to wish for; it appears to me that, favoured as he is by nature, and so situated as to turn those advantages to profit, he cannot but rise high and very quick too. His acquaintance I consider as extremely precious for Mademoiselle de Drumont, who must think of getting a fortune, and for me who long to augment mine.

The COUNTESS. Go you, sir, and all your fine calculations. Go to. I am beyond myself! I repeat to you, sir, that I will never hear of that—

The BARONESS (interrupting her.) Impertinent creature! (To the Count.) That is the manner in which she treats him now.

The COUNT (to the Baroness.) Indeed! It is your fault, and I repent having gone out (in a low voice.) You know that at Versailles, one must be unceasingly soliciting—

The BARONESS. The worst that may happen is to obtain nothing.

The COUNT. By dint of importunity you always succeed provided you have friends, that is understood and as a proof, I have lately carried off a pension of six thousand francs. But Madame de Lignolle has insisted upon my resigning it to M. de St. Prée. Oh! I confess that has hurt me. The Countess is a child who does not know the value of money: she imagines that a man who is worth one hundred and fifty thousand livres a year, has no further occasion for the king's bounty; you, Madame, in whom she reposes great confidence, ought to make her a few representations on that subject.

The COUNTESS. All that you say is useless. I am no more to be made a dupe of by all your idle tales, but I insist upon your confessing all your wrongs. Do confess, or I will dismiss you.

The COUNT. Endeavour to make her comprehend also, that far from discharging Mademoiselle de Brumont, she ought to treat her with redoubled politeness, attention and regard, and above all things to invite M. de Florville to come as frequently as possible.

The COUNTESS. Sir, you have your apartment, I beg you will be so kind as to let me be quiet in mine.

The BARONESS (to the Count.) We are not at liberty here, we are interrupted at every minute; let us go somewhere else.

The COUNT. Be it so, with all my heart, because you understand reason—but wait a little.

The COUNTESS. Will you confess?

The COUNT. Before I go, I wish to give you good advice; you, mademoiselle, confess; for if it is not so it will soon be, we believe it, and so must you in the end. You, Madame, whether she confess or not, do not discharge your *demoiselle de compagnie*, for I am read in the affections of your soul, and you would be overwhelmed with grief an hour after. With regard to the Vicomte, I shall mention him to you no more; I shall make it my business to settle with him.

We were left by ourselves. Madame de Lignolle obstinately persevered in exacting an avowal of my supposed offence; whereas, under a persuasion that telling a falsity could answer no purpose, I persisted in speaking the truth. Chagrined, however, at my protestations being made in vain, I tried a last effort which was crowned with success.

"My beloved, I repeat it, and take my solemn oath, I think but seldom of the Marchioness, since I think continually of you; since you have been mine, Madame de B*** no longer belongs to me. This day, the same as yesterday, I was her friend only, and tomorrow it will be the same. Tell me, under the impression of what error could I think of her when I am by the side of you! Can it be possible for me to regret any of the advantages she is possessed of, when I see you endowed with a thousand qualifications she is in want of? Notwithstanding all her accomplishments, must she not envy all your natural endowments? Don't you look handsomer with your rising charms, your unaffected graces, your seducing sprightliness, than she is to be found beauteous on account of her dazzling youth, her lofty manners, her proud deportment? Has she, my Eleanor, a soul equally compassionate and liberal as yours? Do you believe that I can ever forget the joy of your vassals upon your return, the gratitude of your tenants, the praises your respectable rector saluted you with? I have witnessed them, and my heart enjoyed the sight; you are here the object of general worship; you are for all those good people a beneficent providence, which never requires being asked for anything, but which commands unceasing thanks. Could your lover be the only one to refuse doing justice to your virtues? The only one to repay your kindness with ingratitude? Don't you believe it, beware of believing it. Believe rather, my adorable friend, that I wish I were permitted to go with my Eleanor, far from every other seduction, and inhabit for the remainder of my life, the humble cottage which the Countess de Lignolle has had repaired for old Duval. Cease complaining and suspecting me; cease to dread too weak a rival; I esteeem her, but I revere you; I

retain some friendship for her, and the most tender love for you; it is true that for a time I have spent happy moments in her company: but I have since enjoyed delicious ecstasy in yours; in short, Madame de B*** might now offer me pleasure, whereas from you alone, my Eleanor, I can expect happiness."

Happiness! Thus engaged in drawing a parallel between two rivals almost equally seducing, but whom nature had gifted in a very different manner, I was forgetful of another woman more favoured still, who united in her person all the virtues and attractions of both; I was forgetful of Sophia, and so wildly prepossessed that I expressed wishes inimical to our being re-united together. Ah! I dare not hope that the avowal of so enormous a fault may ever be a sufficient reparation in the estimation of others as it is in mine own.

The more I became culpable towards my wife, the more occasion my mistress had of being satisfied. "Very well! said the Countess, throwing her arms round my neck, "If you had held out such language at first, you would have persuaded me immediately! Since you love me, and that you don't love her, I am content; since you have not committed an act of infidelity with her, I forgive all the rest."

"But I don't forgive you; you have not spared my property, the most valuable part of my property! You have been tearing your face!"

"Will you love me less on that account? It would be very wrong of you, for if I am less handsome, I am become more interesting."

"I will have none of that interest. Promise me that you will never commit similar excesses."

"And you, Faublas, promise that you will never make me angry."

"Ah! upon my honour!"

"Well," she said, laughing, "see how good-natured I am; I engage never more to fly in a passion."

The Count, who was coming in at that moment, exclaimed: "God be praised! She has confessed at last."

"She has confessed!" repeated the Baroness with surprise.

"Not at all" answered the Countess, who clapped her little hands together, and jumped for joy.

"How!" resumed M. de Lignolle, "She has not, and yet you are in such good spirits!"

"Exactly so, and the very reason is because she has not confessed."

"This," said the deep observer, "is beyond my conception. I however will deduce at least the truth of this principle: that the soul of a female is absolutely enigmatical."

"I shall draw no conclusion," said Madame de Fonrose, "but shall retire with an easy mind and content."

When she called upon us on the following day, M. de Lignolle had left the castle. Letters come from Versailles in the morning had induced him to set off immediately; and although we entertained not so high an opinion as he did of the

important business that summoned him to court, yet we attempted not to keep him at home, or have him postpone his departure.

The Baroness instead of congratulating her friend, damped her joy; my father had commissioned Madame de Fonrose to bring me back to Nemours, where he was waiting for me with my dear Adelaide, who had entirely recovered from her late indisposition and fatigue.

The first word the Countess spoke was to express that henceforth we were never to part; and when the Baroness had forced her to acknowledge that I was bound to obey my father, Madame de Lignolle, appealing to M. Despeisses, the surgeon, maintained that my extreme weakness would not allow my being taken away. She declared in addition, that so long as my existence was threatened, she was determined to nurse me herself until I should be in a state of convalescence, and that no human force should oblige her to part from her lover before he should be entirely recovered. Madame de Fonrose after having urged prayers, representations and menaces, went away rather dissatisfied at obtaining no more.

On the next day, my father called for me himself. As soon as M. de Brumont was announced, the Countess dismissed all her atetendants, and ran to meet my father. "See," she said in a joyous and caressing tone, "come nearer to him, he is no longer confined to his bed; there he is in an armchair, look at him! We have been pacing round the room several times. He has had a good sleep. He recovers his strength, he is getting better, much better. You are indebted for his preservation to my vigilance, and for his recovery to my care; I have guarded him against his despair, I have saved him from his illness; through me be lives, for me he is bound to live—solely for me—and for you, sir, I agree to it, but not for you alone."

The Baron addressed me: "To what difficulties do you expose a father who loves you! Is this what you had promised me? Was it in this place that I was to meet my son?"

Madame de Lignolle interrupted him: "Cruel man! Would you have preferred finding him dead at Montargis? When I went to join him there, he was by himself, delirious, holding a pistol in his hand. Sir, I must repeat it to you, I saved him from his despair. Alas! It was not however the grief of having lost me that deprived him of his rational faculties, that rent his heart."

My father continued speaking to me: "Since Madame de Fonrose has not been allowed to take you away yesterday, I am come myself to-day."

"He won't listen to me!" cried the Countess; "He even scorns returning me a word of thanks! How ungrateful! Not even a word of politeness! Sir, though you may refuse proper acknowledgment of my services, think at least of the attention and regard that are due to my sex, and remember that this is not Mademoiselle de Brumont's house."

"In order that I should think myself obliged to you, Madame, it were requisite I should be acquainted with your dealings only, and ignorant of your motives; you have done everything for this young man, but nothing for me. As to Mademoiselle de Brumont I don't know her, I am come here to fetch the Chevalier de Faublas, the husband of Sophia."

"Of Sophia! No, sir, mine! I am his wife! Oh! I am his wife!" (she kissed me) "and your daughter, she added and laying hold of one of his hands, which she kissed:

"pardon me for what I have been saying; forgive my inconsiderate behaviour the last time I was at your house; excuse my inexperience: remember only that I love you, and that I adore him. Let me tell you, I was extremely anxious to see you again, and to speak to you. I will inform you of every particular. For some days past a great change, a very happy change has taken place. The bonds which link him to me are now indissoluble: in less than nine months hence, you will have a grandson. Hear me, listen to me. Yes, it will be a boy, a pretty boy, lovely, generous, sensible, lively, witty, intrepid, replete with grace and beauty like his father. Hear me now, don't attempt to withdraw your hand. Are you sorry for my carrying in my bosom a pledge of his love? Or could you think—. Oh the child is his; his own, you may rest assured of that; it is not M. de Lignolle's, never has M. de Lignolle—. I protest that no one had ever married me, before Faublas. Ask him, if you think I speak an untruth. No one before him had, neither shall anyone after him espouse me."

"Unhappy child!" said the Baron at last, whom extreme astonishment had kept silent for a long time: "What transport misleads you? And how can you reveal to me similar confidences?"

"It is you, exactly, whom it is incumbent upon me to choose as my confidant; you, who only view me as the mistress of your son; you, who knowing only of Madame de Lignolle's frolics and foibles, form the most unfavourable idea of her character, and judge her most rigorously. It is true that I have suffered myself to be seduced—but in what manner, and by whom? Look at him first, and tell me whether I am not excusable? To speak the truth, his victory was carried in an instant, but that is exactly what renders my defeat justifiable. If I had calculated my defeat, it would not have been so prompt, and perhaps I would not have yielded at all, if I had known what it was to contend. But, in my profound ignorance, I understood nothing about those matters; I was only a married woman nominally. Do you doubt it? Ask Faublas, he will confirm it; he will tell you that it was him who taught me love! Can you conceive how a young person, thoroughly simple, totally innocent, unacquainted even with the privileges of Hymen, could have known and observed her duty? I took a lover as I had taken a husband, without reflecting, not from curiosity, but yet, I confess, determined by the desire of being revenged as soon as possible, for an affront which was represented to me as unpardonable. I took the Chevalier first, because he happened to be there at the critical moment; and next, because I know not what natural instinct apprised me of his being very amiable. You now may be sensible, sir, that although I may have strayed, yet I am not criminal. If, at my first step, I have happened to fall, the fault rests with those who, when they opened a new course for me to run over, left me there in the dark, instead of directing me and supplying me with a proper light. If ever I am unhappy and degraded, it will be the fault of Destiny which has sacrificed me, and of Chance, who has served me too late. Ah wherefore did he not offer himself to me a few months sooner, since he was to be the creator of my existence? Why did he not come on the first day of last spring to that Franche-Comté, where, for the first time, I felt ennui in my aunt's company, when I felt agitated by an inquietude entirely novel, consumed by an unknown fire, devoured by the want of loving, of loving Faublas, of loving him alone? Why did he not come, then? I would immediately have bestowed upon him my fortune with my hand; my person and my heart I would have given up to him, and would have been his lawful wife then! And, for the remainder of my life, I would have been, of all wives, the most happy and the most respected!

"But, alas! He did not come! Another presented himself—and what another! Great God! He was introduced to me; I was told: This gentleman wishes to marry, and

suits you; a maid must not continue so; become a wife. I, without even enquiring what it signified, promised to become one, and so I did one evening, at the expiration of two months. But it so happens, that I have two husbands; that the one who bears the title cannot perform the duty, and that he who performs the duty cannot enjoy the title. What am I to do in this distressing case? To sue for a divorce from M. de Lignolle, or to break upon a sudden with Mademoiselle de Brumont? The former of those two measures, equally extreme, by covering me with indelible ridicule, would have disturbed my tranquillity; the latter would have cost me my happiness, by reducing me to widowhood all my lifetime. I was therefore not so very wrong in suppressing my resentment against the unworthy husband, and in manifesting my contentment to the seducing lover. How could I help entertaining a higher opinion of him daily? How, from the bottom of my heart, could I forbear disliking the other more and more? Where is the possibility of expelling disgust and contempt, when it is that M. de Lignolle who constantly inspires them? By what means am I to trace the paths of virtue, when it is Faublas who unceasingly impedes my approach? You are made sensible now, Baron, that I am compelled to keep forever, the husband I detest, and the lover I adore. Now that I have presented to your view the faithful picture of my situation, you will, I hope, renounce every unjust prejudice injurious to my character. If ever, on the contrary, it should happen that the public were to watch my conduct, and to find it reprehensible, you will not give me up to the precipitancy of their decision. Ah! I beseech you, become the defender of Madame de Lignolle; show her to them such as she really is; tell everyone that her errors are not to be attributed to her; that her parents and relatives alone are responsible; and that fatality is chiefly to be accused."

"Madame," answered my father, with deep concern, "your confidence I deem very flattering, though bestowed upon me rather inconsiderately. I conceive that your excessive petulance, upon certain occasions, may serve you as an excuse; neither shall I conceal from you that I have been moved to compassion by the imprudent candidness of your avowals. I have hitherto blamed your irregularities, I now compassionate your passion; but you certainly do not expect me to approve of it; but do not flatter yourself that, although my indulgence should be carried so far, the public, who account for nothing the protection granted by the weak to the vicious, that public would judge you with less severity. If, therefore, you consider their opinion as something, if you are jealous of not forfeiting the friendship of your relatives, if you are desirous of preserving their esteem and your own, of obtaining the sentiment of a good conscience, stop on the declivity of the abyss towards which you proceed rashly between two guides, always blind, and oftentimes perfidious, namely, Hope and Security. Stop, if it be not too late. My duty, Countess, is to try mildness to bring you back to the practice of your obligations, and if you will not listen to me, to use my authority to compel my son to fulfil his. Both you and he have taken your oaths at the altar to love someone alone, and that someone is neither you nor him. You have both promised that same God not to love each other. Eternal respect is due to oaths: yours, although you have violated them, are not annulled. Faublas no more belongs to you, than you belong to Faublas; and as your love for him cannot make you cease being the wife of M. de Lignolle, in the same manner the frequent infidelities of which the Chevalier has been guilty of towards Sophia, will not prevent his continuing to be her husband. To Madame de Faublas he has bound his faith; to Mademoiselle de Pontis his love.

"No, sir, no!" interrupted the Countess, "for he adores me; he was telling me so but just now. Let me tell you, I shall not dispute his being the husband of another; but you confess, also, at least, that I am his wife,—and the mother of his child—that is what I am delighted at! That is what allows me over him an indisputable claim. It is an advantage I have over Madame de Faublas. How I envy the fate of Madame de Faublas! How far better is her portion than mine! She can boast of having him for her husband! She bears his name, his dear name! Ah! What has that Sophia, so highly favoured, done so commendable, to have deserved obtaining Faublas? And what had poor Eleanor done so very reprehensible as to deserve the torture of marrying M. de Lignolle?"

"Believe me, reproach not Destiny on account of your wretchedness; accuse your own weakness, and prepare, by means of a courageous situation, to recover entirely from it. In order to triumph over a fatal passion, cease to see the object of it."

"Cease to see him! I had rather die!"

"Cease to see him; you must try this only mode of avoiding the dire misfortunes which threaten you."

"I had sooner die!"

"Countess, I am going to afflict you, but, I canuot conceal it from you any longer: the present circumstances impose upon me a painful duty. I am compelled, if you refuse agreeing to the hard sacrifice which I advise, I must neglect nothing to force you to accomplish it."

"Mighty powers!"

"I shall take the Chevalier away directly."

"No, you shall not, you will not be so cruel!"

"I shall take him away, if requisite."

"It is not requisite! Who obliges you?"

"The necessity of securing him against too powerful seduction."

"Could you find it in your heart to reduce me to despair?"

"I shall have fortitude enough to restore peace to your mind."

"You wish to deprive a woman of her lover!"

"It is you who wish to rob a father of his son."

"Me!" she replied, with great volubility; "By no means! Don't be deprived of him. Stay here; who told you to go away? If I have spoken the word, I did not mean it. Stop with us, it will give me infinite pleasure, and to him likewise, for I love you much, but he loves you still more than I do. Stay with us, I will give you a very comfortable apartment, richly furnished; that of my husband; I have also a room for your daughter. Send for her; he will be glad to see his sister; let her come, and Madame de Fonrose also, the whole family. Let your whole family come and settle in my house, there will be room for them all—all, except Sophia!"

"Well," she added, addressing me, "you don't speak a word? Join me, to entreat his stopping with us."

"But, what is she saying?" Cried out my father. "Will you permit me to speak in my turn?"

"There is no occasion for long speeches," she replied, with great vehemence; "Answer plain: Yes."

"No, Madame"

"No?"

"The Chevalier positively must go"

"Positively?"

"Indispensably"

"Indispensably? In that case I shall accompany him; let us go all three."

"She is not in her proper senses."

"How, so, sir: Why do you say so, pray? I was very willing to keep you in my house. Why would you refuse to receive me in yours. Do you suppose it would be conferring too great an honour upon me? De you think—"

"She is entirely deranged! Faublas, prepare to follow me."

"Take care you don't," she said to me; she next addressed my father: "You must take me with you, sir, or you shan't take him."

"Countess, to what extremity do you wish to reduce me? What! Shall I be compelled to use force?"

"Force! You forget yourself! I shall use force. Ah! This time you are not in your own home! I, in my turn, will ring for my servant to come up."

"If it were possible, Madame, that my determination was not irrevocably fixed, what you have just given me to understand, would have sufficed to make it so."

"How so? Have I given you offence? It must have been most innocently, I swear. Whatever comes uppermost in my mind—out with it. Impute to my vivacity alone what may have hurt you in my discourse; indeed it proceeds neither from malice nor reflection. Think, remember that it is a terrified woman who is speaking to you, a mere child, and a child of yours! Your son's wife! Your daughter! O you, whom I am so delighted in calling my father, do not take my husband away from me—no, it is Faublas whom I mean; I have agreed to his not being my betrothed husband. Baron, do not take away Faublas, I beseech you! If you knew in what agony I have spent twenty-four hours by his bedside! How many times I have trembled for his life! and when, through my care, he has been brought to life again, when I begin to be revived with him, you would be so barbarously ungrateful as to part us! Alas! Less unhappy if he had died, I should have been at least permitted to follow him at the same hour into the same grave. Do not take him away, Baron: ere long, perhaps, you would repent, and your regret would be useless. I am sensible of it, neither am I afraid of saying it, I might, in a fit of despair—you are not aware how far, to what extremities my despair might carry me! Don't take him away, have mercy upon a mother; yes," she said, embracing his knees, "it is in favour of, for the sake of my child that I implore you!"

My father replied, with extreme agitation: "What are you doing, Madame? I beg you will rise, and not continue in that posture?"

"Ah," she pursued, "you feel for my sufferings! Wherefore would you deny it? Why would you wish to conceal it from me? Don't push me away from you so—don't turn your face aside from me, only speak a single word."

My father, in fact, was labouring under such emotion that he could not speak; but he beckoned to me to follow him, upon which the Countess ceased to weep, and her tender ejaculations were converted into accents of rage. "I see you," vociferated she, rising, "you seem to pity me, and only betray me, you wicked and ungrateful man!"

The Baron then stammered out these few words: "Did you not understand me, my son?"

"No," she replied, most impetuously, "neither will he, because he is not perfidious and unmerciful, like yourself!"

"Chevalier, quit this room."

"Mind you do not!"

"Faublas, it is a friend who begs of you to go."

"Faublas, it is a lover who entreats you not to forsake her!"

The Baron, seeing that I hesitated, said, in a very firm tone: "I command you!"

The Countess, observing that I did not show sufficient indocility, cried out to me: "I forbid you."

Alas! which of the two was I to obey?"

"Oh my Eleanor! It is with a broken heart that your lover disobeys you; but how can a son resist his father's order?"

Madame de Lignolle, surprised and grieved at seeing that I was leaving my seat, was advancing to lay hold of me: but the Baron stopped her: she then tried to pull the bell, he prevented her: she hoped at least to be allowed to call out: with one of his hands, he stopped her mouth: she immediately fell senseless into the chair I had just left.

My father supported me on his arm; and we reached the courtyard. There I saw in our carriage, a female, who hid her face; it was Madame de Fonrose. The Baron said to her: "You have not a moment to lose; go to your friend, who has just fainted away: we are likewise in a hurry to go, and it is impossible we could wait for you. Have your dinner at the Countess's, and this evening she will lend you her berlin to carry you home." This said, the Baroness left us, and we drove off.

XXIV.

For a long time, my father remained plunged in a deep reverie; I next heard him heave a sigh, and mutter the following words: "Poor creature! I pity her." He then cast upon me an affectionate look, and in a pretty firm tone, although still in a faltering voice, said: "I forbid you, my son, seeing Madame de Lignolle any more."

I found at Nemours, my dear Adelaide; at the sight of her sorrow, mine was renewed. Oh, my Sophia! I had lost you; but, notwithstanding Madame de Lignolle daily became dearer to me, you still were the one I preferred.

Madame de Fonrose returned to us in the evening; she had been at great pains to bring the Countess to recover her senses; and no little trouble to dissuade her from coming to quarrel with us. The Baroness, addressing my father, added: "I believe she is capable of committing all manner of excess within a short time, if regardless of her youth and unhappy situation, you refuse this young man leave to go, seldom indeed, but sometimes at least to offer that poor child the only consolation that may render her existence supportable."

My father, whom I was observing most attentively, made no sign, either of approbation or of discontent, in answer to the Baroness. I felt very much agitated during the whole night, as might well have been apprehended. On the day following, we returned to Paris, where I found three letters already come. The first was from Justine; my Eleanor had written the second; and as for the third, you will be obliged, the same as I was, to guess whom it came from.

—0—

I am informed, that Monsieur le Chevalier will return in a state of convalescence; I beg he will call upon me as soon as possible. He is desired to be so kind, as to let me know when. I may expect his visit, by a note, to be forwarded on the preceding day.

—0—

Your father is a naughty man; do you suffer as much as I do from his ill treatment of us? I must tell you, my friend, that if you do not wish my sorrows should carry me away, you will hasten to recover sufficient strength, to come and see me. Let me only see you, and I shall be satisfied. For two days past that the cruel man had parted us, I have been dying with inquietude, impatience, love, and ennui.

—0—

Monsieur le Chevalier,—The poor young gentleman is going; but he says it will give him pleasure if he can but bid you adieu, and that he has something of importance to communicate; that perhaps, through spite, you will not come to see him, which makes him quake through fear; and that is the reason why he has commissioned me to ask you. According to a custom of the law of nature, a dying man is indulged in all his whims; and with due regard, you, who are as he says, possessed of genteel behaviour towards everyone, you must bear a very hard soul within your heart, to refuse so trifling a matter to a friend, who is not void of indifference for you. It is in consequence of my waiting for you, to introduce you to my master, in order that you may cure him of his itch for talking, and have him resume and tune his jocular pipes: he who was always as merry as a cricket, is now-a-days, as dull as an owl. By the by, it would not be amiss, without interrupting your conversation, to give him, every now and then, a tight tug, for he has taken it in his head that would do him good. You must take care, however, not to smother him, for he is still very weak all over his body. To have done with it at last, you have no time to lose, since the surgeons contend that he may die in my arms from one moment to another, like a farthing rushlight. That is the

only reason why it would be totally impossible for him to wait long, till convenient for you; but that would not proceed from unpoliteness on his side, nor too great impatience neither; but do you see, when He above calls us, we must quit the company without ceremony or bargaining. In consequence of what I have been saying, if you have no objection, I shall send you his carriage, which he has not used since he has kept his bed; by this means, I shall expect you undaunted, as I remain most respectfully
Monsieur le Chevalier,
Your very humble and obedient servant,
ROBERT, his *valet-de-chambre*.

I called Jasmin: "Go," I said, directly to Madame de Montdesir."

"Ah! Ah! The lady whom you always keep waiting, as she is forever sending after you."

"Thank her for her note; tell her to present my respects to the person who desired her to write it, and let her forward this letter to that same person, observe that it is signed Robert—or rather, I shall put it under cover. You understand me? This is to be delivered to Madame de Montdesir."

"Yes, sir."

"You next will go to the Countess de Lignolle."

"Ah! the handsome little brunette, so droll, so alert, who the other day in the boudoir, gave you a good slap on the face. That woman must love you dearly, sir?"

"So she does, but you have too retentive a memory. Hark: you must not go in at Madame's, you will ask for her servant La Fleur; you will tell him that I adore his mistress."

"Since you bid me tell him so, he must know it already."

"You are right, he does know it."

"It is therefore proper that La Fleur and I should be upon good terms. If I were to offer him a glass of wine, sir?"

"Offer him two, to drink my health; Jasmin, you understand. me?"

"Yes, sir, you are the most amiable and most liberal."

"La Fleur must remember to inform Madame de Lignolle, that I shall wait upon her as soon as I have concerted with Madame de Fonrose the means of procuring my female attire, and of going out without the Baron seeing me."

"That part of my errand I shall not forget."

"Lastly, you will go to Monsieur le Comte de Rosambert."

"So much the better. That is another jovial youngster. I grew tired of not seeing him."

"Jasmin, if you would have the goodness to listen to me? You will speak to Robert, his valet de chambre, and apprise him, that notwithstanding my weak state I shall go and see his master tomorrow. I accept the offer of his carriage, Robert may send it to me in the morning at ten o'clock."

"Very well, sir."

"What! Are you going?"

"Undoubtedly."

"How so? To Madame de Lignolle with your livery on?"

"You are right. A plain dress, what a silly fellow I am!"

"You will tell all those people that I did not write, because I felt too tired."

"Yes, sir."

"Stop a bit. If M. de Belcourt should enquire where you are, I shall tell him that I sent you to M. de Rosambert; we must not mention the other errands."

"To be sure, amorous connections are your own concern only. Your father must have nothing to do with such business. But he will find that I have stopped long! He will scold!"

"Never mind, my good fellow, hear him with patience; above all things do not offer to reply."

"That is what hurts me though; I don't like to be scolded when I do my duty."

"The testimony of your conscience will make you amends; besides, can you object to suffer a little for my sake?"

"For your sake, sir, I could put up with anything; you will see what I can do and endure for your sake!"

My generous man was as good as his word; notwithstanding he returned in a state of violent perspiration, far from grumbling when the Baron complained of his tardiness, he nobly confessed that he had loitered on the road. Oh! Good Jasmin! What would thousands of young men of family give to have a servant like you!

M. de Belcourt did not leave my room that night, until he saw me fast asleep. Owing to my troubles I awoke at daybreak. I gave a sigh to the Marchioness; many a poignant regret to my Eleanor: a thousand sweet and cruel recollections to my Sophia. But, judge of my inquietude when wishing to peruse the epistle of her ravisher, I could not find it. I had my woman's clothes brought to me, and searched every pocket! The precious paper was not there. Ah! Without doubt I have left it at Madame de Lignolle's! And if it has fallen into her hands!—Merciful God!

Rosambert's servants came to fetch me at an early hour. It was Robert who introduced me into his master's bedchamber. "You may speak to him a little, he said, in a mournful tone, he is not quite dead yet, but the poor young gentleman will not carry it long—he but just now had a burning fever. Oh, I beg of you, sir, don't contradict him, adopt all his ideas."

"Whom are you thus whispering to?" asked the Count, in almost an extinct voice.

The *valet de chambre* answered: "It is Monsieur Chevalier de Faublas."

Rosambert, as soon as he heard my name, made an effort and lifted up his head; it was not without great difficulty that he stammered out the following words: "I see you again! I shall, therefore, enjoy the consolation of imparting to you my last sentiments! Come, Faublas, draw near to me. Confess without any partiality: Is not that ticklish Amazon a great savage and a romantic creature, thus, for a mere affair of social pleasantry, to take the life of one of her most constant adorers." Here Rosambert recruited his spirits; his articulation, which at first was weak, slow, and

embarassed, became, on a sudden, loud and distiuct. "That Madame de B***, he continued, that Madame de B*** who is so well acquainted with the world and its ways; with gallantry and its code; with the rights of our sex, and the privileges of her own; tell me, could she not, in good conscience, calculate that on account of the success of her last attempt, she and I were entirely quits. Punished in proportion to the offence she had committed, could she not inwardly confess to herself that, in truth, we should mutually forget the little tricks with which she first had enlivened the grand work of our rupture in one evening, and when, authorised by her example, I thought myself entitled to patch up a reconciliation adopted and revoked the same night, and at the same moment? How came it, then, that, forgetful of the general law, and of her own priuciples, she has formed the strange determination of coming, like a lunatic, at the peril of her life, so dear to love, and attack mine, which is not quite indifferent to the God of Amours? Who has suggested that truly infernal design? Honour? It is not at the place where I struck Madame de B*** that she ever would have thought of placing hers. She is too well versed in the widely differing science of words and things. It must, therefore, have been the demon of self-love! That I knew, every degraded female was ever ready blindly to follow its absurd advice. Yet I could never have guessed that it had power enough to invite a fair lady to murder whoever might be proud of gaining over her some advantage which might have hurt her vanity.

"I protest to you, my friend, that my only regret is to have offered to Madame de B*** a too lenient affront only. I do not pretend to say, nevertheless, that my behaviour, upon that occasion, was totally irreproachable; but I maintain that you alone had a right to complain of me. Faublas! What shall I say? I could not withstand the temptation, I only considered the sweet pleasure of catching the artful woman, as she had escaped from me, by a variety of strange perfidious artifices. Those considerations, which might have stopped me, did not even occur to my mind, entirely occupied with the idea of my whimsical thoughts of vengeance, and it was not till I had found my mistress again that I acknowledged having wronged my friend. What a dreadful punishment, however, has followed the most pardonable of all faults! What an enemy has espoused the quarrel of Faublas! And how that enemy has avenged it! Alas! Did Rosambert, for having inconsiderately occasioned you some transient trouble, deserve dying, at the age of twenty-three, at the hand of a woman?"

These last words were spoken in so feeble a voice, that I needed all my attention to be able to hear them. My heart was moved with compassion. "Rosambert, my dear friend, I pity you."

"That is not enough, he replied, you must forgive me."

"Oh, from the bottom of my heart."

"You, moreover, must restore me to your former friendship."

"With great pleasure."

"You will come and see me every day, until it is over with me."

"What an idea! At our time of life, nature has so many resources! Hope!"

"Why, truly, we always hope; but, notwithstanding, some fine morning we must bid our friends adieu."

"Repeat, Faublas, that you forgive."

"I repeat."

"That you love me as you did formerly?"

"As I did formerly!"

"Give me your word of honour."

"Upon my word of honour."

"Promise, above all things, that without speaking a word of it to the Marchioness, you will come, just to see me breathe my last."

"Rosambert, I promise."

"*Foi de gentilhomme*?<58>"

"*Foi de gentilhomme.*

"Well! He exclaimed gaily, you will pay me more than one visit. Come, Robert, open the sashes; draw the curtains, help me to rise. Chevalier, you don't congratulate me! Is not my *valet de chambre* a man of talents? What say you of his style of writing? Would you believe it, his letter has cost me ten minutes of deep meditation? My physicians told me yesterday, they would be answerable for my life. M. Robert immediately took up his pen: Why but, Faublas, wherefore this cold and serious air? Are you sorry for my recovering once more? When you forgave me this day, was it upon condition that I should get buried tomorrow? Do you find that the horrid woman who has overpowered me has not inflicted sufficient punishment? In order that you should be fully revenged, was it requisite that she should kill me? I did not kill her when her life was at my disposal: I only wounded her delicate person! Gently wounded her—Oh! Very gently!—I was certain she would not die of it, but I am very sorry she felt so grieved at her trifling accident as to become crazy in consequence. Was it because I had once beat her in her own art, that despairing forever of being able to use the arms of her sex, she took up those of mine to attack me? It is true that she has lately acquired the immortal glory of having almost dislocated M. de Rosambert's shoulder; most undoubtedly she derives infinite honour from her prowess, but as to profit, I do not see any. Faublas, I tell you now, as a secret, and at some future period, perhaps, the Marchioness herself will condescend to own it; by changing the nature of our combat, Madame de B*** has hurt herself more than she has me. When an old quarrel exists between two young persons of different sexes, love takes great care to revive it, never to put an end to it. The two charming enemies become irreconcilable, cease not to pursue one another, to join, and to engage. Everybody knows that in this contest, which seems to be unequal, it is not the weakest antagonist who triumphs the less frequently. If, sometimes, the female warrior, overtired, is seen to totter for a moment, the successful wrestler then wears himself out; neither does it fall to his lot to be capacitated to dissemble his defeat, to palliate it by excuses, or to rise more formidable after having had a fall. Alas! It is all over! I must no more measure arms with Madame de B***. The foolish woman has entrusted the sanguinary god of war with the care of managing our interests, and her revenge. Venus will no longer summon us to her sweet exercise; Mars henceforth will ordain our struggles—serious and bloody struggles. Instead of Cupids, we shall in future have Furies to be our witnesses, and the high road will be our field of battle, instead of a boudoir; our arms, even those courteous arms, of which we both, close to each other, made so jovial a use, will be exchanged for murderous pistols, which, at a distance—"

"Pistols! What! Will you go to Compiègne a second time?"

"Will I! How can you ask me such a question?"

"What, Rosambert! Would you go and fight a woman?"

"You are cracking your jokes: that woman is a grenadier! Besides, I have promised—I have promised, Faublas, it matters not to what god."

"How so, Rosambert? Will you go and expose your life—to threaten!"

"Your opinion therefore, Faublas, is that I am not in conscience bound?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, make yourself easy; it is mine likewise; I believe that our most scrupulous casuists would not deem me bound to fulfil a ridiculous and barbarous engagement, exacted by force, and surprised by artifice: I prefer leaving my heroic adversary glorying at my defeat, to committing myself with a woman, to send her into the other world, or to revisiting myself a foreign country. You moreover know, that I am not of a sanguinary disposition, that I hate duels, and I verily believe, that if I were obliged to fight again, death would appear to me preferable to a second exile. Ah, my friend! How tedious have been the days of our separation! Gracious God! What a dull country is that I am come from! How dull that England, so boasted! Go there, if you like discoursing on philosophy, talkative politicians, and lying daily papers. Go there, if you wish to see noblemen at fisticuffs with their chairmen in the arena of pugilism: popular farces in the double sanctuary of the law<64>, churchyards on the stages, and heroes on the scaffold. Go to London, endeavour to find out our manners and fashions, strangely disguised, or exaggerated most ridiculously by awkward imitators. Go, Faublas, and may you fashion automaton *petits-maîtres*! May you give life to their female statues! Should you, modern Pygmalion, succeed so far, how soon will they satiate you with pleasures, granted without obstacles, tasted without art, and repeated without variety! How they will overwhelm you with unlimited gratitude, and endless affection! I would venture a bet, that on the second night, you will find satiety in the arms of an English woman. What is there more frigid than beauty, when graces do not supply it with motion and life? What is there more insipid than love itself, if it be not enlivened by a little inconstancy and coquetry? That Lady Barrington, for instance, is a Venus—but I feel too much fatigued now; I shall relate to you tomorrow, the history of our eternal connection, which would have lasted to the present time, if I had not brought it to a conclusion by means of a new and ludicrous scheme.<65>

"Chevalier," he added, holding out his hand to me, "I wanted to see you and to revisit France again. My happy country, I shall find it so, is the only country for pleasure. We do not enjoy the right of bringing our peers to the bar; but every morning, at the toilette of some fair lady, we commence the trial of a novel, published on the preceding day, or the new piece which is to be performed on the next. We do not harangue our parliament houses, but in the evening we go and decide at the play-houses, and in company: we do not read thousands of daily publications; but the scandalous chronicle of each day, enlivens our too short suppers.

"I confess that it is not by their noble stature, and the dignity of their deportment, that our French women generally are remarkable; they possess that which is less admired, but more sought for; their shape, their figure, the vivacity of nymphs, the carelessness, taste, and elasticity of the graces; they are endowed from their birth, with the art of pleasing, and of inspiring us all with the desire of loving them indiscriminately. They may be reproached, indeed, with being totally unacquainted in

general with those great passions, which in London, in the course of a week, will bring a romantic heroine to her grave; but they know how to commence an intrigue, and to put an end to it in proper time; they know how to provoke by means of giddiness, to elude by artifice, to advance in order to engage, to retreat with a view of hastening their defeat when they wish to make it certain, to defer it, that it may be enhanced in value, to grant gracefully, to refuse with voluptuousness, occasionally to give, sometimes to allow a theft, continually to excite desires, never to extinguish them; frequently to retain a lover by coquetry, sometimes to bring him back by inconstancy, in fine, to lose him with resignation, to dismiss him skilfully; either through caprice, or for want of occupation to take to him again, to lose him a second time, without ill humour, or without scandal to forsake him again.

"Ah! I wanted to see my native country again. I daily become convinced of it; in my country alone, I shall find mistresses alternately fickle and affectionate, frivolous and rational, passionate and decent, timid and bold, reserved and weak; mistresses who, possessed of the great art of reproaching themselves at every instant under a different form, occasion you to relish a thousand times, the keen pleasures of infidelity; dissembling, deceitful, and perfidious mistresses, as witty and adorable as Madame de B***. The fortunate fair of Versailles and Paris, are alone allowed to meet with elegant young men, void of pretension, handsome without foppishness, complaisant without meanness, frequently inconsistent, only because an opportunity will offer, indefatigable, though apparently effeminate, and with a modest air enterprising to an extreme; young men who surprise and ingratiate themselves with the one by their high sentiments, with the other by their sprightliness, with a third by their audacity: with the mistrustful and timorous Emilia in her very drawing-room, which is open at all times; with the coquet Arsinoë, not far from the conjugal bed, where the jealous husband is watching; with the innocent Zulma in the alcove, where her watchful mother is just gone to sleep; young men, who favoured with the most expansive sensibility, can idolise two or three women at a time; in short accomplished lovers, such as Faublas, and—"

God forbid me! I was going to quote Rosambert; but I stop: I am sensible it would be polluting two great names, were I to associate my unworthy one to them.

"Must I speak alone forever? Come, my good friend, take a seat, and speak in your turn. Tell me, what has become of the fair Sophia?"

"Alas!"

"Unhappy husband! I understand you. What have you done with her rival?"

"With her rival? With her rival? Why—but—"

"That's it," he added, laughing, "he feels inclined to ask me which: that is as it should be. When he made his entrance into the world, he was endowed with every qualification, and his very first adventure brought him into celebrity. Happy mortal! Let us see how many mistresses he has got; let us count Sophia's rivals; how many are they?"

"Only one, my friend."

"One! What I does the Marchioness still hold you in her chains?"

"The Marchioness! Hold, Monsieur le Comte; I don't like to hear you speak of the Marchioness."

The tone in which I had made that answer, announced I was in an ill-humour, which however was calmed, for I still loved Rosambert, and his cheerfulness always pleased me. But his many questions to be informed of what had happened to me since our separation, were superfluous. I had fortitude enough to refuse gratifying his curiosity.

When he saw that I was ready to go: "You do not consider, he said, that without being at the trouble of asking, I shall henceforth be made acquainted with all your doings. Thanks to myself, to the Marchioness, and above all, thanks to your superior merits," he added, "with a laugh, for I do not pretend in the least to depreciate your abilities, you are become so notorious a character that the public will inquire with curiosity what becomes of you; but till such time as I hear from that public of your good fortune, Chevalier, I believe it is incumbent upon me to repeat it: if you love your wife, take care of Madame de B***; your wife, I apprehend, will never have a more formidable enemy. Farewell, Faublas! I rely upon your word, I shall expect you tomorrow; and remember well that the Marchioness is not to know that we are good friends again. Adieu."

As I had just returned home, I received a note from Madame de Montdesir. The Marchioness had commissioned her to inform me that the surgeons having two days since permitted the Count to be removed to Paris, he must not of course be so bad as described to be in the pretended letter of the pretended *valet de chambre*. Madame de B*** desired me, in consequence, not to pay a visit to Rosambert, as requested.

"I—I shall not—tell her I shall pay him that visit."

Such was the insidious answer which the tardy messenger took home with him.

Meanwhile, the recollection of Sophia haunted me without interruption; and, as soon as I was left by myself, a thousand regrets assailed me; I must confess, however, that the sweet hope of soon embracing my Eleanor, and perhaps also, for I should not conceal from my reader one-half of my feelings, perhaps also the desire of seeing the Marchioness again, lessened my chagrin and contributed to restore my powers.

The frequent messages brought by La Fleur and from Justine made me conscious that on both sides I was expected with an almost equal patience; but alas! If ever you have experienced to what degree passions, when opposed, become more ardent, pity the lover of Madame de Lignolle and the friend of Madame de B***.

M. de Belcourt, moved at the sorrows I was allowed to mention, but unfeeling for my secret sufferings, lamented with me the loss of Sophia, but would not hear the stifled complaints which the absence of Eleanor drew from me. Notwithstanding my indirect solicitations, and the representations of the Baroness, my father, inexorable this once, persevered in not leaving me at liberty for a moment. He would come and sit in my apartment during the whole forenoon, and in the afternoon accompanied me when I went out to take a walk. In this manner was my convalescence prolonged for a whole week.

On the Friday before Easter, a beautiful morning announced that the last day of Longchamps would be magnificent. Madame de Fonrose, who came to dine with us, proposed going to the Bois de Boulogne; "We shall take the Chevalier with us," she said to my father. Too unhappy in my mind to seek boisterous amusements, I was

preparing to beg to be excused; but a look from the Baroness decided me to accept; and M. de Belcourt having left us for a moment, Madame de Fonrose imparted the news, so much the more agreeable as least expected:

"She is going, because she hopes you will."

"The Countess?"

"Who then? Perhaps you would rather it were the Marchioness?"

"No, no. The Countess! I shall have the happiness of seeing her!"

"Of seeing her! Is that all you wish for?"

"All I wish for—yes, since it is impossible to—"

"To! She interrupted, and if it were not impossible to—"

"I would be in heaven!"

"In heaven," repeated she, "well, you will go to heaven! But let us agree upon what is previously to be done here below. First of all, don't think of burying yourself in a dark berlin with that wearisome Madame de Fonrose, and that troublesome Baron de B***, you don't hear me?"

"I beg your pardon, I am all attention."

"I believe him! He quakes with impatience! He looks as if he would wish to devour my words!. You will arrive on your charger. After you have capered for a while at some distance from a gig in which your friend intends to come; after the Countess has got intoxicated with the pleasure of seeing you, all at her ease, managing your beautiful horse with infinite grace; hers, whether she governs it worse or better, will run away with her on a sudden. For a time, without moving forward, you will not lose sight of the fugitive vehicle; but a moment after, your own horse will run away with you too, not in the same direction, though, sir."

"Not in the same direction!"

"No, yet don't fret; after long windings, an hour after—a whole hour, the animal that is not quite stupid will bring Faublas exactly where his Eleanor will be waiting for him; I leave you to guess."

"To her house, perhaps?"

"What an idea! Is it really you who have been speaking? To mine own home, young man. There you will find only my Swiss and my Agatha, two good folks who never see, say, or hear but what pleases me; people whom I can be answerable for."

"To your home! How thankful."

"Truly, she said, in a tone almost serious, I hope you will act like rational beings. If I thought you were going only to play childish tricks, I would not permit you to enter my drawing-room. (She burst out laughing.) But I know you both. Your time will, be devoted to business of importance, you will be making one, two, or three riddles, what do I know all that Faublas is capable of doing? Hold, here is the key of my boudoir. No scandalous behaviour, of all things; my character—"

"I am very tender of a good character!"

M. de Belcourt returned; we spoke of Longchamps again; I manifested an extreme desire of making my appearance there on horseback. My father observed that

too violent an exercise might prove injurious; but he made no further objection, when I represented that I should be spared the greatest fatigue, if he condescended to take me in his carriage as far as the Grille de Chaillot. It was farther still, it was at the entrance of the wood, that Jasmin went to wait for me with my horse. The Baron at the moment I left his carriage, knew the Porte-Maillot again, and as if he anticipated the hazardous meeting that awaited me: "This," he said with a deep sigh, "is a spot that will be present to my recollection forever! Here I have spent one of the most painful and one of the sweetest moments in my life."

I hastened to look for Madame de Lignolle, met her within a short time, and she likewise soon saw with a pleasure, not easily to be described, her lover pass close to her gig. Ye young folks who enjoy the triumphs of Faublas, make ready for him your warmest congratulations. He who already was ravished with the pleasure of beholding the Countess, and of being admired by her, had still the additional happiness of overhearing several people, as they looked at her, exclaim: "Oh! What a charming little woman!" If such as paid her a compliment so pleasing to my ears, had paid the least attention to me, they might have observed that I thanked them with a smile, a proud smile which seemed to answer: "She is my Eleanor! That woman whom you find so charming is mine;" and without being sensible of it, I repeated: "Charming little woman! Charming!" That eulogium was intended for her alone. Her dress, her vehicle, her attendants have no share in it. Her attendants! She has but one single servant, the confidant of our amours, the discreet La Fleur. Her carriage! It is the little gig that brought her to me in the forest of Compiègne. Her dress! It is never extravagantly rich, but always elegant and tasteful. She is come hither as she is seen at home, decked in all her native attractions. How becoming that gown of linen, less white than her skin. How I like to see her wear instead of diamonds, those flowers, symbols of her adolescence hardly commenced; those early blossomed violets, and those rose-buds, which seem to have naturally grown upon her head. Ah! In the midst of worldly pomp, how delighted I feel to behold her in plain attire, and in the most modest equipage, the benefactress of a thousand vassals.

But what Deity is that, carried in a superb whisky,<66> which persecuting chance has placed exactly before the Countess, in the long and double row of carriages? And who is the nymph that occupies the brilliant phaeton, which comes immediately behind the Countess?

I went up first to the magnificent car: a superb female offered herself to my view in all the splendour of dress, and all the lustre of beauty. The first sight of her imposed on all a silence of admiration; the brief exclamations of enthusiasm were next heard; those were followed by a slight murmuring, when on a sudden everyone repeated: "Yes, there she is; that's her, that's the Marchioness de B***."

Who, however, contended with her for the honours of the day at Longchamps? The pretty woman in the phaeton. Negligently seated in a lilac-coloured shell, silver plated, she carelessly handled the reins, so rich that one could hardly believe her delicate hands were capable of supporting the weight of them for a long while. She appeared playfully to curb four piebald horses, superbly caparisoned, covered with flowers and ribbons; four horses full of mettle, which proudly raising their heads, and beating the ground with their feet, covering their bits with foam, seemed to feel indignant at being led by a woman and a young lad. Everyone could discover that the nymph's countenance was not that of a person of rank, and that she had more *éclat* than real beauty: but no one could tell whether there was more indelicacy in her

deportment than wantonness in her looks; whether there was more opulence than elegance in the unbounded luxury of equipage and dress. At any rate, Madame de B***, could you have guessed that, that woman loaded with plumes, embroidery and diamonds, mounted on a triumphal car, surrounded by young noblemen, pursued by the joyous applause of the crowded multitude, was the little girl who for a twelve month had been your waiting woman? M. de Valbrun must have ruined himself! I passed several times near Madame de B***'s whisky: she looked as if she had not seen me, and I had prudence enough not to bow to her: but curious most likely of ascertaining whether I had come there on her account, the Marchioness cast her inquisitive looks on all sides. As she turned round she saw in her humble gig Madame de Lignolle, whom she honoured with a gracious smile; and on her splendid car Madame de Montdesir, whom she cast a protecting glance at. There was every reason to believe that Madame de B***, so near the Countess to whose jealous vivacity she was no stranger; and not far from Justine, who might indulge some imprudent familiarity, did not think herself safe. What is certain is, she got out of that line, and drove a little higher up. Perhaps she determined upon this measure, because she perceived at a distance her husband advancing towards me.

I intended at first to retire, that I might avoid meeting the unwelcome Marquis, but upon second thoughts, apprehensive lest he might, without a cause, suspect me of being afraid, I proceeded along, I even thought proper to advance slowly, and to look fiercely at the enemy, as he drew near me. I notwithstanding was resolved, as well may be imagined, to let M. de B*** pass by, in case he did not accost me.

He did though. "Monsieur le Chevalier, I am very glad that chance—"

"Say no more, Monesieur le Marquis, I understand you; but what signifies that word chance, pray? methinks it is not quite impossible to meet me about the town; and besides, whoever has anything very pressing to say to me, is always sure of finding me at home."

"Why, indeed, I wished to go to you."

"Who could have prevented you?"

"Who? My wife."

"Why then sir, you now think the Marchioness was wrong?"

"Not very wrong, in one sense. She had her reasons, you may depend on it."

"Her reasons?"

"To invite me not to pay you a visit; whereas I had mine for wishing to meet you somewhere."

"Our meeting then, as you were saying just now, is very happy?"

"So it is, because I wanted to have an explanation with you."

"Directly, if you choose, M. le Marquis."

"With all my heart."

"Let us withdraw."

"I have no objection.

"But I must beg your pardon a moment."

"For what?

As I was going, I thought I could not dispense bowing to Madame de Lignolle, and giving her to understand, by my signs, that I would soon return.

M. de B*** resumed: "You are continually looking on that side. Most likely it is that handsome lady in the phaeton that engages your attention. I am come in your way."

"No untimely jokes, M. le Marquis."

"I don't joke. Let us stop here."

"Here! the place will not be comfortable."

"Why not? Nobody will hear us"

"But everybody will see us."

"What does that signify?"

"Yon think it is immaterial; well, just as you please, I suppose you have brought your pistols?"

"My pistols?"

"To be sure. Neither you nor I have swords."

"What do we want with pistols or swords, M. le Chevalier?"

"Are we not going to fight?"

"To fight! Quite on the reverse, sir: I repent having fought you before."

"Indeed!"

"I repent having quarrelled with you without cause or reason."

"Ah!"

"To have been the cause of your exile."

"Ah! Ah!

"And subsequently of your imprisonment."

"You must own, M. le Marquis, that I could not have guessed all that."

"That is the reason why I have been looking after you ever since your liberation from the Bastille."

"Indeed you are too kind."

"And as I told you before, I would have gone to your house if my wife—"

"The Marchioness was very right to dissuade you; it would have been carrying matters too far."

"I believe not! In my opinion, a gentleman cannot be too hasty in repairing an offence. You have experienced it yourself; I am very irascible, a single word throws me into a rage, I am angry before I hear an explanation, but the moment after I am calmed, and candidly acknowledge my having been wrong. All my friends will tell you I gain by being known; at bottom I am a good-natured soul."

"I am fully convinced of that."

"Say you forgive me."

"Are you in earnest?"

"I beg you will speak the word."

"I shall never be able to—"

"What! You will never forgive me."

"That is not what I mean."

"Listen to me. I have confessed my wrongs, let me now mention my good offices: I have been the promoter of your emancipation from the Bastille."

"You! Monsieur le Marquis?"

"My very self. I threw myself at my wife's knees, to prevail upon her to solicit your release."

"And you succeeded in persuading her?"

"Why truly, it was not without great pains; however, I must do her justice: she afterwards took the business to heart as much as I had, and pressed the new minister with unrelenting ardour."

"She is said to be in high favour with the new minister?"

"In very high favour! They sometimes are closeted together for hours; that wife of mine is a woman of great merit; I knew her well when I married her; she had a promising look, and the Marchioness has fulfilled all that those looks of hers had promised. *Apropos*, if you should wish for some situation, or a pension, or a *lettre de cachet*—"<67>

"I thank you kindly"

"You need but speak the word: Madame de B*** will have a private conversation with—"

"I return you a thousand thanks"

"Now, to return to our first business, but you don't listen to me!"

"I was looking yonder, at that elderly lady: is not she the Marchioness d'Armincour?"

"I don't know her"

"It is her; pray, Marquis don't let us turn our eyes that way again."

"I understand you well! You don't wish to be obliged to go and pay your compliments to the dowager."

"I would not like it much."

"I shall resume my former subject: through me you got liberated from the Bastille; and had not I already been used according to my deserts? Had not I received a thrust from your sword?"

"I assure you, I was exceedingly sorry to have been forced."

"That was a masterly thrust! Do you know it nearly cost me my life?"

"I give you my word of honour, it would have been to me an eternal subject of sorrow."

"So then, you bore me no animosity?"

"Not the least."

"How then do you refuse to forgive me?"

"I am quite ready to forgive and forget"

"I am happy to hear it, M. le Chevalier."

"And do you forgive me also, M. le Marquis?"

"If I forgive you! But, from my wife's own declaration, in the whole of this affair, your wrongs towards me were but very slight, and towards herself very—very slight indeed."

This conversation, which at first I thought rather unpleasant, I now found very amusing, it excited my curiosity; yet I was sensible that Madame de Lignolle, wondering already at my absence, must be waiting for my return with killing impatience, and, if I delayed much longer, attempt some nonsensical trick.

"M. le Marquis," I said, "now that we have made it up, let us join the throng."

"We shall talk more at our ease here."

"We shall be quite as well yonder."

"I was right when I said that the pretty lady stuck to his heart!" exclaimed M. de B***.

In fact, it was near the damsel in the phaeton that I brought him back; but it was the lady in the gig, who drew my whole attention, and I have no need to tell, that she was delighted at seeing me again. I, nevertheless, could perceive, that the stranger whom she observed was following me, occasioned her some inquietude. Madame de Montdesir also appeared extremely flattered at the new homage which I seemed to pay her, by returning a second time, to swell the number of her admirers; but as soon as she recognised her former master in the cavalier who accompanied me, she smothered some bursts of laughter, to cast upon us both very significant glances. Meanwhile the Marquis was saying to me again: "Towards the Marchioness and myself your wrongs were but very slight, such as any other young man—"

"Is it not true, sir, would not everyone in my place, have acted as I did?"

"Undoubtedly. But it was M. de Rosambert, who, through the whole, has behaved uncommonly ill; of course, I will never make it up with him. M. du Portail is not altogether free from blame neither."

"He is not, indeed."

"So you confess it now?"

"Most assuredly."

"On that fatal day, when I met you all in the Tuileries, M. du Portail should have preserved more presence of mind, have drawn me aside, and have informed me that the honour and repose of a whole family obliged him to speak that untruth: could I have guessed?"

"Certainly not"

"Your sister would not have done amiss neither, if she had whispered a word in mine ear; but the young lady was afraid, her father was there. You, M. le Chevalier—"

"Ah! Me now!"

"Let me hear what you have to say!"

"No, no, speak yourself."

"After you."

"By no means, M. le Marquis, I have interrupted you."

"Don't mention it, go on."

"Go on yourself"

"I beg of you."

"Let me request—"

"Well then! You, M. le Chevalier, were not bound to tell me a secret; of course, it was rather unbecoming in you to apprise me of the little slips of your sister. This hurts you, but I am no babbler! I have given my word of honour—and beware of being angry with the Marchioness, I have not surprised your secrets from her, in the first place! It was not for the mere sake of gossiping, that she entrusted me with them."

"I believe so, I believe that the Marchioness is incapable of committing an act of inconsiderate indiscretion."

"Incapable! You have spoken the word. The wanton doings of your sister, a dangerous frolic, which M. de Rosambert had advised; and the last story, told by M. du Portail, had, in my estimation, strangely exposed the Marchioness. Oh! I have begged her pardon a hundred times, and I reproach myself daily; I accused my wife, the most virtuous of women! If it were only from principles, one might question—but, he added, speaking very low, her virtue is solid, it proceeds from a frigid constitution; for, would you believe it, through mere complaisance it is, that Madame de B*** will grant me now and then a night; to me, who am her husband, and whom she adores! Yet I accused her. It was requisite, therefore, that for the sake of her own justification, she should relate to me your little family troubles, which I was partly acquainted with already."

"What occasions me great satisfaction, M. le Marquis, is to hear from your own mouth, that I was not held to reveal to you the slips of Mademoiselle du Portail."

"Say no more, Mademoiselle du Portail, you see that I am acquainted with the business."

"Well then, Mademoiselle de Faublas, since you will have it so."

"That's it."

"In the first place, you should not; and next, if you had appeared disposed to solicit an explanation, I, who in a pet, was anxious to fight it out, would, perhaps, have been so unjust as to suspect you of wanting courage. It is most essential for a young man to display undaunted steadiness in his first affair of honour; and in this, I

said so to the Marchioness, who was forced to acknowledge it, you behaved in every respect as the bravest of men. You are a man of true courage, and whoever is a connoisseur must read it in your countenance. I entertain a very high esteem for you, and so does my wife. I would willingly invite you to come and see us; but the public are so stupid! Whenever they have been pleased to allot such a lover to such a woman, they never will retract. I find numbers of people, who, through mere complaisance only, do not contradict me when I affirm to them that I am not—and though you were to protest the same yourself, they would not believe you, and yet no one, except the Marchioness, knows as much about it as you do. But only observe the extreme difference: now that I am made easy in my mind, concerning your adventure, you, and a hundred thousand young men more amiable still, if there are any, would take their solemn oath in vain, before they could persuade me that they have obtained the favours of the Marchioness. I have already told you how many reasons I had to be convinced of Madame de B***'s virtue; there is another, which alone appears to me as strong as all the rest put together: I sometimes take it into my head to look at myself in the glass, and I don't find in my physiognomy one feature, one single feature that indicates my being a—By Jove! M. de B*** does not perceive at all, that he looks like a fool! And M. de B***is a knowing one. But pay me a little more attention; your eyes are constantly turned towards the fair damsel! Methinks that she now and then looks at you. Nay, she winks at you!"

"Not at all, Marquis, it is you whom she challenges."

"I don't think so; you are a much handsomer man than I am. At your time of life I did not look amiss, but now you have the advantage of blooming youth. I believe, however, that you were not mistaken, that I have my share in glances of the princess. I must confess, candidly, that I begin to feel rather awkward! This is quite a new thing to me; she must not have been long on the town. What's her name?"

"Her name? I can't tell."

"Where does she live?"

"I don't know."

"But yet you knew her?"

"Ah! As those creatures are known, by reminiscence—yes, I think I recollect my going frequently to sup at a certain house, where, sometimes finding her within my reach, I would set her to play, much about the same time as I had taken a fancy to one certain Justine, you know!"

"Yes, yes, one of the Marchioness's women, that little jade whom you would come to cajole even in my hôtel. Oh! You young rake, I behaved too kindly at the commissary's."

"Say whatever you please, M. le Marquis, I cannot be persuaded, that beauty is entirely unknown to you. Do me the pleasure, therefore, to draw nearer, and to look at her full in the face."

"Why, faith, you are right: I have seen that sprightly little face. We were speaking of Justine just now; this girl has a false air about her."

"Methinks there is a great likeness"

"Great! No"

"I find it so."

"Oh but" he cried, most vehemently, "you are no physiognomist! Since we are now speaking of likeness, do you know of two individuals, between whom I find a very striking one? Your sister, and you."

"Ah! That may be well mentioned."

"The most clever might be deceived. I, who am the first in the kingdom for the science of physiognomy, have been mistaken, several times mistaken! It appears, that your sister is very fond of pleasure. When she is tired, pale, and worn out, one may then find out the difference between you two. But when she enjoys her good health and spirits, the devil himself might see you side by side, without being able to determine which is which! *Apropos*, will you mention our meeting to your sister?"

"If agreeable to you."

"Do me the pleasure to tell her, that notwithstanding the grievous mistakes which her first disguise had occasioned, I love her with all my heart; and although your father is rather hot, he may rely upon my sincere esteem: even tell M. du Portail that I hold no grudge against him."

"M. Connoisseur, look in that gig before the phaeton, look at that young woman; that is a sweet figure; that is what may be called a charming little person! Not so finely dressed as the other, but much prettier, and she does not look like one of the frail sisterhood."

"A lady of fashion? Zounds! I know that livery! I am very glad, he added, in a tone of inward gratification, that for a long time also, this lady has been repeatedly looking at us. One would think that she wishes to speak to us."

Madame de Lignolle, indeed, was out of patience, and endeavoured to make me understand, by her signs, that I must, at any price, get rid of my troublesome companion, to go instantly and join her at the place of rendezvous, whither, tired of waiting, she was going herself. Several times yielding to her natural impetuosity, the Countess would rise, and stand nearly out of her gig. In the meantime, Madame de Montdesir, from the top of her vehicle, could notice the impatience of her rival. I do not think that it was possible for her then to see that it was Madame de Lignolle who attracted my whole attention; but no doubt she suspected as much.

It was with a view of ascertaining the truth that she immediately had her postilion ordered to quit the line, and to try to pass before the gig. During a few seconds, he kept close to it on the same line, and then passed before it. Justine, who then saw plainly Madame de Lignolle, took the liberty of saluting her with an air of familiarity; she even dared, whilst looking at her with insolent affectation, to burst out into impertinent fits of laughter.

Illustration: The vehicle was overturned, the idol fell.

I felt indignant; I was going—I cannot tell all I was going to do. The Countess did not allow me time to expose her by avenging. Too high-spirited tamely to endure a similar insult, she immediately cried out "Gate!" pushed her horse on, and, with her whip, cut Madame de Montdesir's face, and at the same time ran so violently against the light phaeton that one of the wheels was broke. The vehicle was overturned; the idol fell; I apprehended for a moment lest her head might be broken also. Most happily, as she fell, Justine mechanically threw her arms forward, her hands prevented her face being much injured, which had already been maltreated more than enough. It so happened, however, that by an accident quite comical, the feet of the nymph remained, I cannot tell how, fastened to the upper part of the overthrown vehicle. In a like posture, therefore, nothing could hinder her petticoats from falling over her shoulders, while uncovering another part; and, sportful zephyrs having timely agitated the fine linen that remained alone over her fair skin, Madame de Montdesir exhibited—our delicate tongue prevents us—it would be an unpardonable act of rudeness to call by its name what Madame de Montdesir exhibited: I nevertheless shall say what I am permitted, namely, that the whole assembly, finding this modern Antinous<68> very pretty, applauded its apparition by loud clapping of hands.

Some young men, nevertheless, flew to the assistance of the unhappy sufferer; I myself felt moved at the sight of her discomfiture, dismounted to offer her a succouring hand.

"Wait a moment," said M. de B***, "I shall go with you, for I feel for her, and, as I told you before, I have seen that face somewhere."

"Now, Monsieur le Marquis, this I cannot put up with from a physiognomist. In good conscience, can you call that a face? However, whether you are obstinate in maintaining that it is or not, I declare that it is not entirely unknown to me, and I question your ever having seen it."

Justine had already been placed on her legs again, when I came close to her. "Ah!" she exclaimed, as soon as she saw me: "Ah! M. de Faublas! What a figure she has brought me to—"

I interrupted her, and said to her in a very low tone of voice: "My dear child, you have no more than what you deserve; yet mind not to mention the name of the Countess, for if you do, upon my honour, you will not get off at so cheap a rate."

"Ah!" replied Justine, with an accent of deep despair: "So then you think she has acted right!"

She had pronounced my name several times; several voices repeated it; it immediately was circulated through the whole assembly, and flew from mouth to mouth. On a sudden, the crowd which encircled Madame de Montdesir gathered round me, so that the Marquis and I had scarcely elbow-room enough to cross our horses, and could only proceed at a slow pace. The number of gazers increased at every minute. Young and old, males and females, horsemen and pedestrians, all thronged before me; carriages even stopped. Never did our most renowned heroes, Destaing, La Fayette, Suffren, and a thousand more, on their return from their glorious expeditions, see a more prodigious affluence of people collected around them in the public walks. And yet it was—oh, the most light-headed of all nations!—it was only upon Mademoiselle du Portail that you were lavishing such honours!

What young man, however, could have had such a command over himself as to reject the charms of such a triumph? I felt intoxicated for a while; for a moment I felt proud at the sight of so many young men, who, known to possess the art of pleasing, and famous on account of their amours, seemed to proclaim me as their supreme chief. The ladies especially, the fair ladies!—it was with transport that I saw I was the object of their attention. The lively desire of being still more deserving of it must have supplied me with additional graces in my deportment, and fresh expression to my countenance; with a milder look I must have answered their caressing glances, which seem to prognosticate forever sweet connections; with a more greedy ear I must have devoured the enchanting eulogiums bestowed upon my external personal merits.

But forgive me, my Eleanor; forgive my mistake; the illusion was not lasting. Could Faublas tarry for a long time at Longchamps? Could he stop long, detained by the twofold deceitful illusions of vanity and coquetry, when love, impatient love, was waiting for him in Paris, to procure no less flattering triumphs, and more solid enjoyments.

"M. le Marquis, what think you of our removing from this crowd?"

"I have not the least objection, most willingly; but how comes it that you are known by so many people?"

"You know this part of the world. Whatever is not absolutely common, occasions a great bustle, and even four-and-twenty hours will bring a man into high repute: our duel, my exile, my imprisonment—"

He interrupted me: "Was it a mistake? Was it not my name?"

"Yes, it was your name that rang into my ears, and which is repeated aloud by two thousand people."

"Two thousand! No!" repeated he, with apparent satisfaction: "Yet I do not wonder at it; I have such myriads of acquaintances."

"The rumour goes increasing; dear me, what a terrible noise!"

"It is because all these people are glad to see us together! Yes, I can read it in their physiognomies, they are pleased; it makes them happy to be certain of a reconciliation having taken place between us. In fact, it was a great pity that the two men in France the most—"

"M. le Marquis, I believe, as you say rightly, that they are pleased; but let us make haste, to avoid hearing more of their plaudits."

They were pleased, for they laughed with all their hearts; and there was no further doubt but their desultory applause was directed towards M. de B***. The Marquis, notwithstanding, appeared more delighted with their frolicsome transports than I had been proud of their homage. It was in spite of myself, but to the great contentment of my illustrious companion, that I was forced to follow the multitude to the very top of the line. There I succeeded, though not without great pains, to break a passage through the less crowded ranks of our admirers. There I bade adieu to M. de B***, who nevertheless followed me as close as his horse would carry him. Several other gentlemen kept galloping the same way; but it was not after him they were intently hunting this time, for they passed him without slackening their course. I, for a time, was in hopes of making my escape; but as, subsequent to long and useless windings, I was on the point of being overtaken, I thought it necessary to try more powerful means to disperse those troublesome pursuers.

I turned round to them; they were pages; I counted eight of them: "Gentlemen, what can I do to oblige you?"

"Allow me to see and embrace you," was answered immediately.

"Gentlemen, you are very young, but yet you are of an age to act rationally; wherefore then, I beg of you, hazard against a man of honour a bad joke, which may be attended with dangerous consequences."

"It is no joke," replied the youth who acted as spokesman: "We would be extremely sorry to offer you the least offence; but indeed we long to embrace Mademoiselle du Portail."

"No," interrupted a better-knowing one, "not Mademoiselle du Portail, but the generous conqueror of the Marquis de B***."

Whilst they were speaking to me, I cast an inquisitive look over the country; I already could discern the famous Marquis, who was gaining ground, and trembled for my rendezvous: "Gentlemen, I do not know Mademoiselle du Portail, but, let me tell you, I have no time to lose, therefore put an end to your fun; if it be absolutely indispensable that Faublas should be embraced by you all, I agree to it, with this

proviso, however, that you will wait for, stop and detain, under some pretence or other, for a few minutes, that cavalier, whom you may perceive. You would even do me a great piece of service, if, for further security, you could prevail upon him to ride back with you to Longchamps."

As I was still speaking, a man, rather shabbily dressed, and whom I had at first mistaken for one of these young men's servants, drew near to me in a mysterious air. I then, notwithstanding his flopped hat covered the upper part of his face, recognised M. Després, the dear doctor of Luxembourg. He spoke very low: "Sir," he said, "I am not come here to embrace you, but I have made all the haste I could to inform you, that Madame de Montdesir begs you to give her a call for one minute only."

"Madame de Montdesir! Oh, yes! I understand! Tell her, my good friend, that I am very sorry, but that it will be two hours, at least, before I have it in my power to attend to her invitation."

The frolicsome pages collectively promised to stop, and to carry back with them the troubleesome horseman, who now was but at a very short distance. They gave me their word, embraced me, and saw me, with regret, depart from them in full gallop.

XXV.

It was high time I should arrive; Madame de Lignolle found the moments very long. As soon as she saw me, she loaded me with reproaches: "How unjust you are, my dear!"

"Is it my fault if that woman has the audacity—"

Yes, it is your fault. Why do you scrape an acquaintance with such creatures? Wherefore have you been unfaithful to me with that Madame de Montdesir?"

"What! Are you going to revive a quarrel long since forgotten?"

"Forgotten! Never! So long as I live, I shall remember having been silly enough to kiss the hand of that impertinent woman, who dares to avail herself—"

"You have punished her for it, you have cut her face sadly."

"I should have killed her."

"She was very near being killed; her carriage was overturned; and she fell from a great height."

"From a great height! Exclaimed the Countess with great inquietude: "Oh, my God! I perhaps, have hurt her dangerously?"

"No, but—"

I then, with a view of soothing Madame de Lignolle, hastened to relate Justine's misadventure; and I leave you, to think how amused the Countess was with my rapid but faithful narration, who, however, felt keenly, whether she was pleased or angry. I really dreaded she would be choked with laughing.

I pressed her within my arms, thinking that she was disposed for a reconciliation; but was very much mistaken; the cruel Eleanor repulsed her lover.

"You will forever be the most ungrateful mortal upon earth," she said in an angry tone. "I have been a whole age here, perishing with love and impatience. Yet it is to me that he leaves the care of inventing some scheme or other to procure a meeting."

"It is in vain, my dearest, that I have planned several."

"I succeed, at last, in finding a favourable expedient; I fly to that Longchamps, which I detest; I hurry there to see Faublas, solely that I may see him. Thither he comes, indeed, but it is to procure an opportunity of paying his court to my two rivals."

"Eleanor, I swear it was not so."

"And what a barbarous trick! The cruel man arranges matters so, that I, whose heart is torn by jealousy, find myself placed exactly between my two mortal enemies."

"What! Do you pretend to say that was my fault?"

"Yes, try, you story-teller, try to persuade me that it was owing to chance alone that Madame de B***'s carriage stood precisely before mine."

"Eleanor, I give you my word of honour. Madame de B*** was very right to go away; and so were you not to follow her! I had just seen her! One moment later, I would have given you both a lesson that you would have remembered long enough."

"My dear, if I had gone there for her sake, would not I have followed her?"

She, for a moment, seemed absorbed in deep thought, and immediately gave me a kiss; but on a sudden she cried out: "No, no! I am not as yet convinced! It is because you were indispensably obliged to assist Madame de Montdesir, that you kept me waiting here for upwards of half an hour!"

"No, my beloved; I have been kept a long time by that troublesome intruder."

"Who was speaking to you so vehemently, and whom you listened to apparently with so much pleasure?"

"Pleasure! By no means."

"What was that gentleman saying so remarkably fine?"

"He was speaking to me about my sister."

"Does he know her?"

"To be sure; he is a relation."

"A relation? This time, however, I believe you, because I have looked at him full in the face to ascertain whether he was not a female in disguise. Oh! You will never catch me again! I shall be on my guard."

"*Apropos*, my dear, tell me, did not you see your aunt at Longchamps?"

"No, I could see but you alone, whereas, sir, you paid great attention to all who surrounded you."

"I have paid some attention to the Marchioness, because I thought she was looking at me."

"Most luckily for us both she looks rather on the wane."

"But, Eleanor, if she could have known me again?"

"I don't think she could!"

"Faublas, it would be a most unfortunate circumstance—yet it is to be hoped she did not."

The Countess now spoke in a milder tone, and I soon convinced her of my being innocent. She then appeared to hear with transport my repeated protestations of love and fidelity; but I was no less grieved than surprised, when I saw her refuse my proving to her that my professions were sincere. "No, no!" she would say affirmatively, "You weep, my good friend! What occasions you to shed tears?"

"You no longer love me as you did."

"I love you more, sir."

"You never refused me then."

"No, to be sure, when you were in good health! You weep! Dear me, how childish!"

My so rational mistress now bade me kneel before her, that she might wipe away my tears with her kisses.

"Faublas, you must not weep, my man, it grieves me to see you. Let me tell you, my beloved, I still remember the day when you fainted away in my arms; your

illness since must have caused you much fatigue; you have not been long in a state of convalescence; do you wish to die? Indeed, if you should, I must die also. Let me speak the truth, would it not be a great pity now? Both of us so young and loving each other as we do.Ah! I beseech you, Faublas, let us die as late as we can, that we may adore one another as long as possible. You laugh, sir! Am I to be laughed at when I speak rationally? Well now! You begin over again! You consider all I say as nothing; It is all the same to you? Have done, Faublas, have done, my dear, leave me, sir, go away. You will make me angry!"

"Hark! Listen to me. Summon a little fortitude on your side."

"Faublas! My dear Faublas," she added, after giving me the most tender kiss, "it is no easy thing for me to resist mine own desires, if I must at the same time triumph over yours; I cannot answer to muster strength enough."

My adorable Eleanor was very right to mistrust herself, since after a few moments of voluptuous struggling, since subsequent to a short silence more voluptuous still, she said to me in a trembling voice, and through half stifled sighs; "You are sensible of what has just taken place: well! When I came here I had determined to allow nothing of the kind." And she swore that at least it would not be repeated.

In the like manner as I have been publishing her defeat, I am bound in justice to publish her victory; notwithstanding my pressing efforts renewed at every minute, I never could obtain a second time from my scrupulous mistress to forget her chaste determination.

"My charming friend! Fortunate hours slide on very fast! It is already time we should part!"

"Already?"

"If I was to be too late, it would be impossible for me to patch up a probable story to tell M. de Belcourt."

"One moment longer," she exclaimed with tears in her eyes; "one other moment! Faublas, we must part for three days."

"For three days?"

"Tomorrow I shall set off for Gatinois."

"For Gatinois without me! What to do there?"

"Alas! Without you! It is your father, that father of yours, will be the death of me! That festival, how dull it will be! When I was allowed to believe that my lover was to embellish it by his presence, what a pleasing idea I formed of it!"

"Eleanor, your tears occasion me too painful a sensation. Dry them up .Wait, let my lips—. Tell me my sweet dear, what sort of a festival it is that you are talking of?"

"To stand in the midst of a thousand unfeeling people, and not meet the beloved object! To be surrounded by a crowd when you would wish to be in a desert!"

"Tell me about that festival?"

"Every year on Easter Sunday, every year since I was born, the Rosiere has received from my hands—last year I was still ignorant of what I was performing, I

know it now! Now I do know it. I flattered my weakness with the hope that my lover would be there to console me, to support me in case I should happen to think, with secret dread, that I who was crowning virtue, was no longer virtuous myself. Alas! I shall not cease repeating it: it is not my fault; I shall say so forever: wherefore was I given away to that M. de Lignolle? What I am now speaking hurts you, my Faublas! But don't fret; I feel no remorse, not even regret: sometimes only, since your father, has been holding out to me his long speeches I surprise myself reflecting on the numberless dangers—make yourself easy however, so long as you love me, don't be afraid of my forsaking you: and when you have ceased loving me, when you will love me no more, my despair will supply me with a last resource."

"Be comforted. You weep! Come, my dear, come and give me a kiss, come, let us mingle our tears"

"I shall set out tomorrow; on Sunday the sad festival will take place; on Monday, at a certain hour everybody will return. I shall bring back with me my aunt, and Madame de Fonrose who loves us dearly; Madame de Fonrose and I will concert some stratagem that will bring us together in the evening of that same Monday."

Although it was late already; notwithstanding the Marchioness was waiting for me, and that my father might be out of patience on account of my absence, I repeated my adieus a hundred times to Madame de Lignolle, before I could leave her.

At last, however, we mustered strength enough to part, and I ran to Justine's lodgings to meet Madame de B***.

The Marchioness's eyes were red, she breathed with great difficulty, she looked quite dejected; she, nevertheless, saw me with some pleasure lay hold of her hand, which I immediately kissed twenty times over. "Was it totally impossible, she said with infinite mildness, for you not to make me wait so long?" And then, without giving me time to answer her, with apparent joy, and looking at me with an air of unbounded satisfaction, she added: "Here he is perfectly recovered. Who could imagine that twelve days back, this young man was dangerously ill? Would those ladies believe it, who just now at Longchamps wondered at his lily white and rosy complexion, who were not tired of admiring his beauty, the bloom of youth, his—"

Madame de B*** appeared obliged to use violence not to say more. Her looks on a sudden turned sad, uncertain, and pensive. In a feeble and languishing voice she proceeded: "I would not have ventured going if I had thought of meeting you there. But how could one have imagined that you were able to make your appearance in public, when little Montdesir had been waiting in vain a week for your apprising her of the day of your first visit."

"Ah! Don't accuse me! I had it not in my power to attend to your invitation. My father has followed me everywhere; even this day he went to Longchamps with me."

"Did not you see me there, at Longchamps?" she asked with a kind of inquietude.

"I did, but would not bow to you for fear—"

She interrupted me with an exclamation of joy: "I had presumed to flatter myself that he had known me, and that it was only from discretion—receive my best thanks: by that trait alone I could have known it was you whom I saw, the delicate friend of my choice."

"Wherefore, dear mamma, did you stop for so short a time only at that promenade of which you were the chief ornament?"

"The chief! No, no, I don't believe it: however, I only left it when I saw the crowd gathering round you."

"So then you may have witnessed Justine's misadventure?"

The Marchioness smiled. "Yes," she said, "I may have seen her accident. She next added in a very grave tone: "Has that accident punished her sufficiently? I shall be glad to hear you say in her presence, what is your opinion of the case, for which reason, if you are not tired of my company, we shall wait for her here."

We had not long to wait, for at that very moment the door of her antechamber was opened to her. A gallant cavalier was speaking to her very loud: "These young men accosted, and welecomed me on all sides; for my part I know not what it is to resist obliging manners, to the civilities of people that love me: in the meantime the other had a great advance over me. When I saw that I returned to Longchamps on purpose to meet you; I was struck with your physiognomy, child."

"Am I not mistaken," said Madame de B***, "is not this?"

"You are not mistaken. By his voice, and by his discourse I believe I know him again. It is him! It is him! Let us be off!

There was not a moment to lose; we ran to the door which communicated with the jeweller's. "My stars!" exclaimed the Marchioness, "what have I done with the key?" A lofty, though narrow cupboard, yet most luckily deep enough, placed in a corner, close to the fireplace, offered us a safe asylum. Madame de B*** got in first. "Quick Faublas!" I had but just time to rush in and to close the door after us.

They entered the apartment that we had just left vacant for them.

"Yes," he continued, "I was struck with your physiognomy; I longed to speak to you."

"So then you knew me again?"

"Directly! But how can you ask me such a question, when I know all faces by rote?"

"Ah, but the superb caparisoned horses, the brilliant equipage, the rich dress I wore, might have made me look quite a stranger."

"In the eyes of any other, but not in mine. You must have forgotten what a physiognomist I am. But now I think of your equipage, tell me, pray, who is the magnificent mortal who ruins himself to keep you? The Chevalier de Faublas, perhaps?"

"He! A perfect coxcomb!"

"Do you hear the impertinent hussy?" I said.

"Hold your tongue," replied the Marchioness.

"However," resumed M. de B***, "methinks that you winked to him at Longchamps?"

"To him, to that raw boy? I was looking at you!"

"You don't dislike me then?"

"Who could?"

"You are right, for to speak the truth, I am bearer of a most engaging physiognomy; I meet with none but people who love me; you might have observed to-day at Longchamps, the universal joy which my presence created. Everyone seemed to feel satisfaction at seeing me."

"No more than I did."

"Yet, my poor little dear, a very disagreeable adventure has just befallen you. Who is the woman who treated you so ill?"

"A little strumpet!"

"But do you hear this?" I said.

"Hold your tongue," said Madame de B*** again.

Her husband continued: "Her servant wore a livery."

"A borrowed, or hired one."

"Your elegant phaeton is very much damaged."

"I am sorry for it, and so much the more so as it is a present from a lady, a friend of mine.

At this part of the interesting dialogue, the Marchioness could not help repeating: "A lady, a friend of mine! How insolent!"

"Was it you, then, my charming mamma?"

"It was!"

"Well, permit me in my turn to say: 'Keep silent.'"

We lost some of Justine's words, before we heard her say: "To return from England on purpose!"

"A lady, a friend of yours," exclaimed the Marquis. "Zounds! You must have shown great complaisance to that lady?"

"I warrant you I have,—I hope, however—she is a lady of fashion, a lady of high rank, who is kept close at home."

"I understand, I comprehend now there is a stupid fellow of a husband, who has been made a dupe of."

"Or soon will be, Monsieur le Marquis."

"Dear me, what blockheads some husbands are! So you let her come to your bedroom that—"

"No, oh no! I am certain nothing dishonest has taken place between the two parties."

"Their intrigue has but just commenced then?"

"Quite the contrary, it is done away with; for a time it was a story worth knowing."

"Tell me, then, do! I am always excessively pleased when I hear the recital of the tricks played upon those stupid husbands!"

"The lady formerly has been connected with the young man, but he left her for another, and she wishes to induce him to return to her."

Here the Marchioness muttered, "What an impudent liar!"

"Oh dear mamma, please to keep silent!" and I ventured to give her a kiss which she could not help receiving. Meanwhile we had lost some other words.

"So far," was Madame de Montdesir saying, "she has not granted him the least favour, but the moment is near at hand when she will refuse him nothing."

"You are acquainted with all her secrets, I find."

"No, she is too mistrustful, and too artificious, she scarcely tells me anything, but I can see from her conduct—what do you laugh at?"

"At the countenance of those lovers, when they are together. I, who am a physiognomist, would willingly give a hundred louis d'ors to study at that time the expression depicted in their countenances. You ought to procure me that pleasure some day."

"To you?"

"To me."

"Impossible! M. le Marquis."

"Why so? I would hide myself somewhere."

"Impossible! I tell you."

"Though I were to creep under your bed."

"Under my bed! You could only see their legs then."

"You are right. Let me see! In a cupboard. You have cupboards here?"

"You see I have."

The conversation was taking a turn truly alarming; I was far from being at my ease, and I could feel the Marchioness to tremble.

"Wait a moment!" cried out the Marquis.

Most fortunately he went to that which was on the other side of the fireplace; and when he had looked into it: "This," he said, is exactly what I want. "A corpulent man could not get in, but I shall feel very comfortable. And, do you see, through the key-hole I shall peep at the actors quite at my ease. Come, Justine, let me prevail upon you. I will pay you liberally for your condescension, and will keep the secret to myself."

"Upon my honour, if it were not totally impracticable, I would consent; for the novelty of the case alone."

"Is the lady handsome?"

"So, so, pretty well; but she thinks herself a beauty."

"A customary thing. And the gallant?"

"Oh! A charming young man! Quite so!"

"Handsomer than the Chevalier de Faublas?"

"Handsomer no, but quite as handsome, indeed."

"Do you know that I am jealous of the Chevalier?"

"How jealous? Do you still believe that the Marchioness—?"

"No, by no means. But you, my angel?"

"I! Ah! You are wrong."

"Formerly, though."

"Formerly my inclinations were not solid. However, I always felt highly prepossessed in your favour, M. le Marquis."

"I don't doubt it, I tell you my countenance produces that effect upon all the women."

"It does; your wife, for one, adores you."

"Adores me! You have spoken the right word. But do you know one thing? Nothing in the course of time becomes more tedious than those adoration. Madame de B*** may be considered as a beautiful woman, be it so, but the same woman forever! Besides, notwithstanding all her tenderness, the Marchioness is of a cold constitution; and I only value that in amours. I am young and want amusement. I shall sup here with you, my dear."

"Do you eat suppers?"

"Yes, I always sup, you must remember it, and I go to bed, my queen."

"Where M. le Marquis? Here?"

"No where else, this night, I assure you."

We heard a heavy purse to fall on the mantelepiece. "Presently," said Justine, "we shall move into the dining-room"

"Wherefore into the dining-room? Let us stay here; we are so comfortable! Have our supper brought up here. Before, and even during our supper, we may have a thousand interesting things to communicate to one another."

Madame de Montdesir rang the bell; "Quick," she said, to the servant, who had come up, "quick, lay two covers; no one to be admitted."

"So, beautiful mamma, you and I are also going to sup and to bed in this cupboard."

"Ah! My dear friend," she answered, "I am not yet recovered from my fright."

Now that I have weighed the matter in my mind, I wonder why I dreaded spending the whole night in that cupboard, where I must find myself so well? I have already told you, that it was not wide enough to have held us; so then, since it was requisite the Marchioness and myself should occupy the depth, would it not have been very extraordinary, if I had impolitely turned my back on Madame de B***? I therefore had placed myself in the reverse direction. The consequence was, that in this sweet posture, my lips would unceasingly meet hers, and that I could feel her heart to beat.

What man, though he were born in the frosty huts of Siberia; though clothed in a chastely absurd gown, he had been brought up in the hatred of love, and the dread of

women; though he had been fed constantly on vegetables destitute of juice; though he had never been given any other liquor to drink but cooling emulsions; what man, allured by the powerful attractions of so pressing a temptation as that which agitated me, would not have felt his heart to be moved, his spirits to ferment, and his whole blood to boil? Mine burned within my veins; and you yourself, Oh, Madame de B*** yourself, Ah! what virtue could have resisted.

My first caresses, however, occasioned her a surprise, mingled with terror. "Faublas, is it possible! Think of what you are about! Sir! Sir!"

The Marquis, more promptly successful in his amours than I was, forced me to suspend the vivacity of my enterprises. The prevailing silence which reigned in the apartment would have led me to a detection, if I had offered to stir: "Methinks, my beauteous mamma, that your husband is unfaithful?"

"What do I care! Provided my friend retains some respect for me, provided he does not take the advantage of my truly chagrining situation, what do I care for the rest!"

Their close conversation, the same as ours, was interrupted by the servant, who laid the cloth upon a table, which we heard to be brought close to our cupboard. As soon as the supper was served up, Madame de Montdesir said to M. de B***: "Now that we are alone, M. le Marquis, let us have a little conversation together. I am glad to belong to you. It is a good fortune which I desired too ardently not to obtain it; but wherefore have I been obliged to wait so long for it? How came you not to pay any attention to me when I lived in your house?"

"What! Under my wife's own roof?"

"That was not it! Let me tell you, all you men are alike; be candid, you love me now because I am a something."

"You joke! Did I not see in your physiognomy that you would be a something? For you have a promising physiognomy, though a little spoiled this evening! That cut of a whip has marked you, but for a connoisseur that is a mere trifle; your features retain their original character. Justine, I assure you that I have already read in your countenance that you were to make your fortune; I have said to myself a hundred times when looking at you: I observe in the look of that girl, I know not what that will please me at a future period."

"Nevertheless, when six months ago you turned me out of doors!"

"I was angry. They wanted to make me believe that my wife—"

"*Apropos*, I am very anxious to know in what manner you have discovered her being innocent of the charge, for innocent she was. Is it not so?"

"I am certain she was, and, remember, I always maintained it."

"You have."

"But I would wish to hear from your own mouth, how you have acquired the proofs!"

"Why, Madame de B*** was compelled to supply me with all the information requisite. Listen to the narrative."

What the Marquis was going to say, must, in every respect, excite my lively curiosity; I therefore listened with redoubled attention.

"In the first place, M. du Portail has no children, that is true. Mademoiselle de Faublas, who is a very giddy, presuming young lady, had taken his name, to go to a ball in male attire. It is truly with Mademoiselle de Faublas, that the Marchioness got acquainted; and it is equally true, that it was Mademoiselle de Faublas who slept in my wife's bed. You, as you have at the time, repeated it to me a hundred times, know something about it."

"Certainly! I undressed her!"

"Besides, it was shocking in me to suspect that the Marchioness could so suddenly throw herself at the head of a young man whom she did not know. But let me mention to you a circumstance that I have recollected since, and which I shall take great care never to inform Madame de B*** of. My countenance produced upon the young person its ordinary effect: the lively damsel had just permitted me to pay her a visit in the night. I entered my wife's apartment; and in the dark, gently ran my hand over the bosom of the young girl—why by Jove, a male's bosom is of another make! You laugh!"

"Yes, I do laugh, because, because I think that Madame at that moment might have felt your hand, for she was in bed."

"Oh she was fast asleep; and most unluckily I made a noise, which awoke her too soon."

"Ah! Ah! So that quite on the contrary, it was close to the child, who, perhaps, still continued asleep."

"She did sleep."

"It was close to her that you kissed your wife."

"Exactly so, my little queen. It was not to be presumed that I had come there for nothing; besides, it would have been offering a kind of insult to the Marchioness if I had gone away without fulfilling my conjugal duty."

"I am very much astonished at Madame permitting such a thing on that moment! You must confess that decency—"

"The Marchioness that night was in a humour for it, because—"

"My dear love, I can bear witness that he tells a fib. Faublas! Pity me." [Said Madame B***]

"The jealous Marchioness," M. de B*** was saying when I listened to him again: "She is jealous, indeed, enough to frighten one!"

"Those are two substantial proofs, M. le Marquis, that it was Mademoiselle de Faublas!"

"But have you not some others besides?"

"Most assuredly: there was one which I had forgotten; it was Madame de B*** who recalled it to my memory: on the day following, we saw the supposed Mademoiselle du Portail home. She was obliged to take us to her pretended father; but there we found her real father, who used her as a young lady whose conduct is not very regular deserves to be treated. So that now I know that Baron de Faublas, I have had twice an opportunity of examining his disposition and his physiognomy; he is a hot-headed, passionate, and sometimes a brutal man, a man who is incapable of

paying any regard. If it had been the young man whom he had brought home so disguised, he would have cried out as at the commissary's: 'He is my son!'"

"So then it was Mademoiselle du Portail who came at night in the male attire, and the next day—"

"The next day? No, it was her brother"

"Her brother, I know. But have you been told why?"

"Because M. de Rosambert insisted upon his playing that foul trick. M. de Rosambert had his reasons, he was in love with my wife, and enraged at meeting with repeated rebuffs, wished to be revenged. He accordingly disepatched to the Marchioness the Chevalier, dressed in his sister's clothes; and availing himself of the circumstance, came in the evening, abused my wife in a most shocking manner, using such language as might create strange suspicions against her! I do not remember the particular details of that scene; my memory is rather shallow, except when physiognomies—but the Marchioness has assisted me, and I recollect that, in toto, the scene was dreadful. This behaviour of Rosambert, I think, was infamous; never will I keep company with the Count again so long as I live, or if ever I meet him, if he were to speak a word to me, believe me, Justine, I would challenge him."

"Do not attempt it! your lover would be frightened to death!"

"My lover! Whom do you mean?"

"Me."

"Well! Very well spoken!"

"Pray inform me, likewise, M. le Marquis—I beg your pardon for asking you so many questions—you must be sensible that I am delighted at finding that you no longer suspect either your lady or me, for you imagined that I had been telling you a pack of idle tales. What became of Mademoiselle de Faublas?"

"Mademoiselle Faublas! She began by forming an intimate connection with M. de Rosambert, and, after that, with others. She had appointments with this one, and that one, I am very positive, I found a letter which she had left in a certain place; and I have met the young person herself in a tête-a-tête in the vicinity of the Bois de Boulogne. The result of all these intrigues was, what might be expected, a child."

"A child, say you?"

"Yes, a child, I am sure of that too; I saw her in the family-way, round, getting plump, with the physiognomy of a woman who—am I not a true connoisseur? She then would hide herself under the name of Ducange, in the Hôtel of the Faubourg Saint Honoré. Notwithstanding these precautions, the father could not continue any longer ignorant of his daughter's loose conduct; and called a family meeting, the relatives, in order to secure the family from disgrace, came to a decision: the brother was appointed to show himself, from time to time, in public, in female attire, which would enable them to have it rumoured that it was the Chevalier de Faublas, and not his sister, who had frequented the ballrooms in divers disguises. M. du Portail was so condescending as to agree to that arrangement. So that slanderers have been imposed upon and silenced, with the exception however of Rosambert and two or three other bucks, who will never be made to believe that the damsel was a male. But what is truly abominable in this affair, he added in a mysterious tone, is, that they have procured abortion; if not, it must have been in consequence of some accident that the

young person was brought to bed before her time. I am certain, at least, that they have hastened to exhibit her in the public walks. The day on which I met her in the Tuileries, she looked pale, thin, and emaciated. Consider, however, how many accidents combined on that day to bias my physiognomical knowledge. I find the young lady much altered; in a low voice, I congratulated her on her recovery; the father, who stood behind, heard me; exasperated at my being in the secret, he flew in a rage; the young man joined the group; and as it was the first time that I saw the brother by the side of the sister, was struck at their amazing likeness. The Chevalier called the Baron his father; the father cried out that M. du Portail had no children; M. du Portail told me the lie he had engaged to tell, and affirmed that it was the Chevalier who had always sported the cursed disguise. I then, bewildered by so many mistakes, and being very ticklish when my honour is at stake, flew into a passion, gave credit to their sayings in preference to my own eyes, accused my wife, and, what is still carrying matters further, I accused the physiognomical science and her of having deceived me. Madman-like, I challenged the Chevalier, who has not been connected with the Marchioness, since he scarcely knew her; who was not, nor ever will be connected with her; neither he, nor any other. Nevertheless, the young man, interested in maintaining the contest, which had become a family business, entered into no kind of explanation. He accepted my challenge, and on the next day—"

The Marquis went on speaking; but as I had heard all I wished to know, I ceased listening to him. A more pressing interest commanded a sweeter occupation. Madame de B***, in a posture unfavourable for an attack, and by no means convenient for the defence; apprehensive, besides, of being overheard, dared hardly stir, and to my rapidly multiplied efforts could oppose but a very short resistance. So that, indeed, when after a few minutes had expired, her delighted husband repeated: "The Chevalier never has, never will; neither he nor others!"

I was very near carrying my point. The Marchioness herself seemed conscious of my approaching victory, since she addressed me in the supplicating tone of a woman who only wished to retard her defeat: "A moment! My dear friend," she said; "I only beg of you to grant me one single moment! Faublas! I had imagined you were susceptible of showing me more generosity!

"Heroism, my beauteous mamma, you should have said, would be wanted!"

"Cruel man! Will you refuse me one moment? Faublas, my beloved, let me have time to ascertain whether I am not in extreme danger; you would not wish to expose me! Let me know whether, upon hearing the least noise, they cannot come and surprise us? Where are they?"

"At supper."

"Make sure of it!"

"How can I?"

"Look."

"Where through?"

"The keyhole."

"That is no easy matter; there is not room to stoop."

"Try. They are at table."

"How do they sit?"

"Justine sits facing—"

"The cupboard?"

"Yes."

"And the Marquis?"

"Why he turns his back to us."

I had hardly done speaking, when the Marchioness, quick as lightning, disengaged herself from my arms, pushed our door open with violence, hurried out of the cupboard, rushed towards the table, which she overturned, and I could see no more. The door of the cupboard had been closed again, the lights were extinguished; but, stupefied as I was, I could hear the report of half-dozen slaps of the face given by the Marchioness, who, in a firm tone of voice, spoke as follows: "It becomes you well, indeed, insignificant little creature, whom I have raised from the dust and poverty, who, had it not been for me, would still be tending the pigs in your native village, and whom I might, with a single word, send back again to your dunghill; it becomes you well to forget the respect you owe to your benefactress, and to make her private conduct the topic of your secret conversation. I especially find you very bold to presume to seduce my husband to your libertine association.

"And you, sir; is it thus you repay my unbounded attachment? I had suspected that some projects of conquests brought you to Longchamps! I have had you followed, you have been seen! I have seen you myself go, without being put to the blush, to swell the shameful number of the followers of a courtesan, and in the crowd of her lovers, sue for the honour of obtaining the preference; you have been seen also conversing for a long time with a young man, to whom, if you had paid the least regard to me, you never should have spoken in public, nor even in private! You have been seen to return to console this nymph for the little accident which her impudence had been the occasion of, and fially preparing to bring her back in triumph to her home."

"Mademoiselle, whoever makes a trade of selling her person to the first comer, must expect to have no other servants but such as may be bribed by any newcomer; I have had yours generously paid; they have not refused to let me know your direction, and one of them has concealed me in this room, where I trembled, sir, from fear of seeing you enter the place soon with your mistress. However, I was determined this once at any price to obtain a certain proof of your daily infidelities; I had even made up my mind to leave my place of confinement only to surprise in bed my unworthy rival and my perfidious husband.

"I have not had patience enough to wait so long; besides you have spared me the trouble; neither do I wonder at it. This pretty lady is so deserving of your eager embraces! However, make yourself easy; I will be angry no more with either her or you; I already repent having been so violent against this girl. In future I shall know, upon similar occasions, how to retain more tranquillity; or, rather, this scene I promise you will be the last which the jealous Marchioness will ever indulge in; nay, to continue using your own very obliging expressions, my adorations will no longer fatigue you. At any rate, since at present I am informed that it was the mere desire of not insulting me that induced you to honour me sometimes with what you are pleased to call the conjugal duty, I need not repeat, through complaisance, what I have already

told you with great moderation, that it was to me the most indifferent thing in the world. It is proper I should declare to you that I have truly immolated myself every time I have been compelled to discharge that duty, and that from this moment I think myself entirely dispensed from ever fulfilling it again. Little do I care for the weaker sex being interdicted, through a tyrannical custom, the sad and last resource against the offences of the strongest. I acknowledge no laws except those that are just; and no just laws but those which admit equality. It is too abominable to see the numerous acts of a husband's perfidiousness applauded, when the wife is disgraced for committing one single act of weakness. It is too shocking to think that I should have been condemned to perish broken-hearted in ignominious confinement, for idolising a lover the most deserving of my affections, and that I am bound to receive the embraces of an unworthy husband, on his leaving the arms of a prostitute! I swear it shall never take place. Remember, Marquis, the day on which false rumours and your odious suspicions accused me! Had I not justified myself, right or wrong, right or wrong," repeated she, with great firmness, "had I not justified myself, had I not convinced you of my innocence, you were going to exercise your right—the right of the strongest party. You already apprised me that our bonds were broken, that I was to be confined for life in a dreary prison. Well, sir, you pronounced on that day against yourself, for the offence you have been guilty of this day, not the sentence of your captivity, there are no convents for the reception of men in cases of this sort, but the sentence of our separation. You have just been signing that verdict, there on Justine's sofa. Madame de B*** protests it will be so, and you must know that Madame de B***'s resolutions never vary. I shall live in celibacy, but I shall live free; I shall no longer be the property, the slave, the tool of anyone; I shall belong to myself alone. You, Monsieur le Marquis, more happy still than before, will have, without any constraint, a hundred mistresses at a time, if you choose; all the women who will love you, and all the girls that may please you: this one excepted, however. I do not wish this one to be a gainer from your generosity: that is the only vengeance I will exercise. I shall only warn her that if she happens, were it but once, to receive you in her house, I will have her immured without mercy in a dungeon.

"You think Mademoiselle, I am doing you irreparable injury, don't you?

"Be comforted," she added, in a tone that must have given Justine to comprehend the true meaning of those equivocal words; "continue charming, clever, and faithful. Other people, richer and more liberal, will indemnify you with regard to wealth, for the loss of M. le Marquis. Others, believe me, will amply reward you for this indispensable sacrifice. I flatter myself, sir, that you will condescend to hand me downstairs, and return home with me."

XXVI.

"Yes, I comprehend you, Madame la Marquise," cried out Justine, on her return from conducting as far as her antechamber, the Marquis and his lady, and thinking herself alone: "I understand you! You will indemnify me for this sacrifice; well and good I shall be better of on that account, because then I may retain M. de Valbrun."

Whilst Madame de Montdesir was going on with her soliloquy, I continued in the cupboard; there I stood, wondering at all that had taken place, at all that I had just heard. Justine, meanwhile, burst out laughing: "They are gone," she said, "now let me enjoy it at liberty in full. What a good scene! When shall I see the Chevalier, to recount to him this? Ah what a remarkable good scene! How the deuce could I have guessed that woman was here in this cupboard?" She opened it, and found me there.

"What! This other too! Great God! Oh! My stars! I shall burst! I thought it was a good scene! This will make it much pleasanter still! So then, M. le Chevalier, you were in the secret! You had matched us! The Marquis, however, only loved me through reprisals! In fact, since you were shut up in that cupboard for an hour, side by side, face to face! M. le Chevalier, you have!—you have not suffered to escape so propitious an opportunity of claiming your rights?"

"Justine, don't mention it: you see me still amazed at her presence of mind, at her successful boldness! It was by a diabolical trick, a womanly cunning, that she deprived me, robbed me of a victory which I thought was certain!"

"I am sorry for it, it would have been more droll still. It is comical enough, however, as it is. I invited the husband to chat, just as if his wife had been at a thousand miles distance, as if I had guessed that you, M. de Faublas, were quite near. Do you know that I heard him tell some very excellent things! Neither is what I have made him do, so much amiss—there—almost under the eyes of his wife—a revenge from heaven! For it was also under the eyes of her husband, that the virtuous lady once idolised you, as she just now, most pleasantly, gave the Marquis to understand. Ah! She is a masterly woman! She has been making him dreadful declarations! He has been forced to hear harsh truths. Poor man! She did not allow him time to recover his proper senses. I wished you had witnessed as I did, what a figure he looked, with his eye-brows sticking up, his mouth gaping, and his eyes stupidly staring; I dare say he will not be able to utter a single word before he reaches his home. What occasions me a lively pleasure," added Madame de Montdesir, "weighing in each hand a purse full of gold, is that I shall get rich if this should continue; the husband pays to caress, and the wife to beat me."

"How so?"

"Yes, that one I earned on my sofa, this the Marchioness just now, while the lights were out, very dexterously gave me with one hand, while with the other, she gave me a few little slaps on the face, which occasioned me more fright than they did me hurt. M. le Chevalier, if your Countess would at least pay for the blows she strikes—"

"Justine, never speak to me of the Countess, and rather try, if you wish we should continue friends."

"I will do everything in my power to gain that end," she interrupted, jumping to embrace me. "Come! Do you want proofs of my sincerity? Stop here; in fact I was

not intended to sleep alone to-night, and without pretending to pay you any compliment, I shall think myself a great gainer by the change."

"Justine, I believe they are now far enough, and that I may go down without danger. Good night."

"What! Are you in earnest! What has become of your love for me?"

"That love, my pretty, has been gone several days since!"

"Ah! Then try to call it back one of these mornings," she said, negligently looking at herself in a glass over the chimney-piece, and if it should return, you may return with it, and will always be welcome. But before you go, at least eat a morsel."

"A morsel? True, indeed, I am half starved! But no, it is getting late; my father must be uneasy: adieu, Madame de Montdesir."

As soon as I appeared at the door of the hôtel, the Swiss called out: "Here he comes! Here he is," hallooed Jasmin on the stair-case.

"Is he not wounded?" asked the Baron, who ran to meet me."

"No, father; so then you saw me in the crowd with the Marquis de B***?"

"Yes, I did see you; in vain did I attempt to force my passage through the throng to join you; I have been returned home these three hours, and nothing could equal my inquietude. What has happened to you? How has your antagonist detained you so long?"

"I shall tell you: when we were able to withdraw from the brouhahas of the multitude, we were both very warm—"

"Have you killed him?"

"No, father, but he has forced me—"

"Another dreadful affair! Another duel!"

"Not at all, father, you won't let me finish: he forced me to follow him as far as Saint Cloud, to a friend's be has there, and who gave us refreshments"

"Refreshments!"

"Yes, father; M. de B*** is sorry he has quarrelled with me; he cannot be comforted for having done so without a cause; he has begged my pardon twenty times; he loves me, he honours you, and has desired me to assure you of his sincere esteem."

Upon hearing those last words, my father endeavoured to retain his gravity; but unable to succeed, he turned his back to me. Madame de Fonrose, who had not the same reasons to use constraint, laughed most heartily. She winked at me, to give me to comprehend where I had taken refreshments. The Baroness took her leave of us when her laughing fit was over. "I leave you before it gets late," she said, "because I must get up very early tomorrow, to go to the castle of the little Countess."

I can't tell whether Madame de Fonrose was more early than Madame de B***, but I was called up before seven to receive a note from Justine.

> Monsieur le Chevalier
> M. the Vicomte de Florville is now with me; and dictates what I am writing. He is very sorry he was prevented, by more pressing business, telling me yesterday, in your

presence, what he thinks of my behaviour towards the Countess. A girl, situated as I am, must have lost the use of her senses, to have been so audacious as to insult in public a lady of her rank. My nonsensical imprudence might also have exposed M. de Florville, for, had you not known him so well, you, M. le Chevalier, might have suspected him of having had his share in my odious proceeding. Nevertheless, M. le Vicomte has forgiven me; but he questions your being disposed to show me the like indulgence; and he apprises me, that if you refuse pardoning me, neither the patronage of M. de Valbrun, nor other more powerful considerations, will prevent my going tonight to sleep at ——. M. de Florville kindly condescends to spare me the humiliation of writing the word omitted.
I remain, with repentance, fear, and respect, etc.
MONTDESIR."

I replied as follows:

Present my respectful homage to M. le Vicomte, assure him, my poor child, of all my gratitude; but tell him that he is uneasy in his mind without a cause; that I never could have taken it into my head that he were capable of using such means as those that were adopted yesterday, and by a woman of your description, to chagrin Madame la Comtesse. Do not fail adding, that I forgive you on account of the threefold consideration of the cut from a whip, of your fall, and of the slaps you received yesterday. So much said, fare thee well, my dear!"

Meanwhile, in the midst of the most extraordinary events which seemed to follow each other so close, purposely to be conducive to my speedy convalescence, by not allowing me to think of my actual situation, I enjoyed a moment of repose, which I consecrated entirely to my Sophia. Oh, my Sophia! Oh, my wife! No less cherished, and evermore regretted, when wilt thou come, by thy presence, to diminish and to annul the lively impressions which the tenderness and charms of thy rivals produce on the mind and heart of your still young husband, too weak to resist so many trials? But what have I been saying?—of thy rivals? Sophia, in truth, thou hast one only! That one, I cannot do otherwise: I must adore—and at least—at least, I will most certainly love alone!"

But what can mortal man oppose to destiny? My persecuting genius, at the very moment when I was forming the wisest resolutions, was preparing to impose upon me, as a law, several new infidelities, for the perpetration of which it will be seen I am not, without the greatest degree of injustice, to be found guilty of.

Madame de Fonrose, whom I thought was already at a great distance, came at twelve o'clock, to inform us that a slight indisposition having kept her in town, she was come to dine with us; and it was immediately agreed, that as soon as our dinner was over, we should go to the Tuileries. I declined joining the party.

Before we sat down to table, Madame de Fonrose, whom my father left alone with me for a few moments, said to me: You were right to refuse going with us; leap for joy, you will see Madame de Lignolle this evening."

"Is it possible?"

"Listen to me, and thank your friend. As I was sitting at my dressing-table this morning, a humorous idea occurred to my mind: I ran to impart it to the Countess; but ever too hasty, she was already gone. I then applied to the old aunt! I told Madame d'Armincour, that Mademoiselle de Brumont having but a moment obtained the unexpected leave of going to Gatinois, had dispatched me to request of Madame la

Marquise to postpone her departure for a few hours, and to give her a seat in her carriage."

"In hers! And why not in yours?"

"A fine question! Because I sacrifice myself, in order that you may go, I must not. When the concert is over, I shall take the Baron home with me; and, that I may keep him there, I shall use means which I leave you to guess, young man! The Baron will oppose so much the less resistance, as knowing that Madame de Lignolle is absent, he cannot plead the danger of leaving you master of your own actions. M. de Belcourt will stop, I promise you; I even engage to keep him with me tomorrow, the whole of the day. I shall manage matters so, that he will not go home before midnight; try you to return by nine, that you can. Immediately after dinner, which I have had got ready at an early hour, your father and I will be off. Agatha then will come and dress you. That done, pop into a hackney-coach, and drive in great haste to Madame d'Armincour's. Don't lose her direction, and fear nothing.

"It will be six, perhaps, when you set off; but you will be time enough yet to spend a good night with the Countess. In the morning, you will assist at the festival, seated by the side of Madame de Lignolle, who most likely will be rather inclined to take a nap than to receive company. But there is no pleasure to be procured without some drawback: methinks I see her little face turned pale and fatigued, which will appear to you more interesting in consequence. However, have a little patience! You also will have your punishment to endure, for a lover like Faublas has always a good appetite. Notwithstanding, sir, you must quit the grand dinner! I am very sorry for it. At two o'clock precisely step into your post-chaise—do not fail, Chevalier! Do not yield to the solicitations of your giddy mistress, to expose her, disoblige me, and deprive yourself forever of the resources which such a friend as I am has in reserve for you—a friend—"

My father returning, the Baroness was compelled to change her conversation. At first, everything passed as smoothly as Madame de Fonrose had foretold. Before five o'clock, Faublas was disguised: at five precisely, Mademoiselle de Brumont scarcely applied the tip of her lips to the pointed chin of the old Marchioness, who returned the pretended kiss with a truly chagrining tardiness, and casting upon her a look which a tender curiosity seemed to animate. To make amends, Mademoiselle de Brumont gave a free embrace to a certain tall, slender, well-made girl, who exhibited on her youthful countenance the brilliant hue of nature and pudicity.

"Madame la Marquise, this is a very pretty young lady!"

"She is Mademoiselle de Mésanges, a cousin to your friend. I have just fetched her from her convent to take her to the festival. *Apropos* of festival, you were not at Longchamps yesterday then with the Countess?"

"No, Madame. I am really delighted at Miss joining our party!"

"I saw somebody there that looked very much like you, resumed the tiresome gossip."

"Where, Madame?"

"At Longchamps."

"That may be."

"She is truly a sweet creature. It is high time that she should get married!"

"We are thinking of getting a husband for her," replied the dowager.

"And you, mademoiselle?" I asked.

"I," returned the innocent girl, and casting down her eyes, and crossing, with an embarrassed air, her hands, lower than her bosom: "Me! Why! That is no business of mine; I have been told, however, that I should be informed; and I have begged to hear of it when it was time."

"Yes, yes," exclaimed the Marchioness, we will let you know. Mademoiselle de Brumont here will speak to you. My old girl, you will speak to her, won't you? I do not wish she should meet with such a misfortune as has befallen my poor niece; it might so happen; indeed, she is totally ignorant," she added quite low, "she knows of nothing! I entrust you with the care of instructing her."

"With a deal of pleasure."

"Not yet, however, but when the time is come, I beseech you to employ your whole abilities."

"Madame la Marquise, you may rely upon me."

"Yes, I doubt not but I shall always find you disposed to render me services of the kind. I assuredly do not know of a girl more obliging than you are."

We departed, and as we were stepping into the carriage, I could not help making this observation, namely, that Mademoiselle de Mésanges had a pretty leg, and a very small foot.

As we were on the road, I had many an opportunity also of discovering, through a thin gauze, something very pretty. Neither could I abstain thinking, within myself, that he must be a fortunate mortal who was intended first to see that rising breast to palpitate with pleasure. It was with a deep mortification, however, that I soon made another discovery. I could read on the countenance of the young person, I know not what, less attractive than natural pleasing modesty, more senseless than plain ingenuity, a certain, I know not what, which seemed to apprise me, that love, so quick in general in enlightening the mind of a young girl, would be at great pains to innoculate a little wit into this one's.

However, whether through instinct or sympathy, Mademoiselle de Mésanges seemed already to be very partial to me, when we arrived at the castle. Everybody was asleep, one waiting woman alone sat up to wait for the Marchioness. The Countess had taken care to keep her own apartment for her dearest relatives: her aunt was to occupy her bed; she had ordered another to be put up for her young cousin, in the adjacent closet; that closet with a glass door, whither the reader will recollect that I have promised to bring him back more than once. With regard to Mademoiselle de Brumont, as she was not expected, there was no room kept for her in the whole castle, not one bed but what was occupied. Every year, at the period of this festival, generally brilliant, the Marchioness was in the habit of receiving her whole family; and this once, as will often happen in the country, some friends with them. The first word I spoke was to have the Countess called up. The old Marchioness was nearly falling in a passion; it was not becoming, she said, to have the rest of her child disturbed, young folks might sleep together, and not die in consequence of a bad night! The young damsel looked at me with a frown: I was a naughty girl to wish to have her cousin called up: would it not be more amusing to chatter together all night, than to go and sleep separately in a bed?

Oh, my Eleanor! I give you my word of honour that notwithstanding the bad night with which the aunt threatened me, notwithstanding the interesting conversation that your cousin promised to treat me with, I insisted upon going to you; but the Marchioness then, quite in an ill humour, absolutely forbade the waiting-woman showing me your apartment, and immediately gave her the tremendous order to undress us all three. Could I, tell me, go through the numerous galleries of the immense castle in search, from door to door, of the mistress, and awaken the whole company at two in the morning? Observe, besides, that the very expeditious maid already stripped your old aunt of all her wearing apparel, and could not be long in coming to me. Under what pretence, however, could I refuse her very dangerous services? Confess, my Eleanor, confess with a good grace, that I was obliged immediately to yield consent.

I hastened to undress myself, ran to the closet; and had already placed my foot in the very little bed in which the Demoiselles de Mésanges and de Brumont would certainly have found it difficult to procure room enough for them both for a whole night.

But, oh, heavens! What a thunderbolt comes to crush me? The cursed old woman has altered her mind! Most likely recollecting the talent I am possessed of in explaining everything, she has apprehended lest I should make a premature use of it with her Agnes. "No, though," she cried to me, in a hoarse voice, "upon second thoughts, it is with me you will come to bed."

Everyone may guess how I objected to the proposal; but it is proper I should conceal from no one that the young miss was no less hurt at this proposition than myself! "What, my kind cousin, for fear we should be a little incommoded, would you expose yourself to spend a bad night?"

"Do not be afraid of that, Mésanges; you know that I sleep very sound; nothing prevents my enjoying a good night's rest."

"How! Madame la Marchioness, would you show me such excessive kindness as to allow me to incommode you?"

"Not in the least, my angel, you will not incommode me at all; I observe that this bed is very large; you will see, we shall be very comfortable!"

That is exactly what I did not wish to ascertain. I attempted to repeat my caressing solicitations; but a positive "I insist upon it," closed my mouth.

Now, quicker still and more cruelly than before, I was forced to immolate myself: I was in my shift! If, however, you do not perceive at first sight, what I found very troublesome; if I am obliged to describe in its whole extent the state of extreme embarrassment in which I stood, how shall I manage not to violate in some degree austere modesty. You, readers, who are in want of penetration, show me at least some indulgence. Who among you, standing in my place, could have acted better than I did? I was obliged, as I had so many eyes upon me, to make the best of it; I was at a loss in what way to screen myself, but that presence of mind which had been called into action on so many occasions, now enabled me to cover with my hands all that was necessary to be concealed, without being confused. Mademoiselle de Brumont, in order to screen Faublas from all eyes, was therefore reduced to make the best of a bad bargain, to obey promptly; she was compelled, without any further deliberation, to leave the narrow couch of a novice maiden, to hurry into the wide bed, in which soon

after a dame of about sixty years of age came to stretch herself down by the side of her.

Ah! Pity Faublas, pity him I never was he placed in a more chagrining situation. Yes, in this same bed, a fortnight back, I suffered less, when, undeserving of the affection of two lovers, I felt, under the eyes of the Countess and of the Marchioness, near dying from extreme weakness; whereas on the present day it is my recruited health that causes my apprehensions, and makes me miserable! How then! Can a sexagenarian, by the only reason that she is a female, kindle within my breast those devouring fires?"

But is it not rather because through a too thin partition, the nubile attractions of that child cause me still to feel their burning influence?

"Draw nearer, my darling, draw close to me," would my bed fellow say tenderly.

"No, Madame la Marchioness, no, it would disturb your sleep."

"You will never disturb me, my dear soul, I never feel too warm in bed."

"Well! Heat incommodes me."

"Why, that I believe is very possible! At your time of life I was the same."

"I don't doubt it. I have the honour to wish you a good night, Madame la Marchioness."

"I was like you, and when M. d'Armincour was pleased to sleep by himself, he did me service."

"Very well! Madame la Marchioness, I wish you good night."

"He rendered me a service truly when he would leave me "after having fulfilled his duty, that is understood—and I must do him justice, while be was young he complied easily to perform it. Oh! He was no M. de Lignolle! I wish you joy upon the occasion."

"I believe, Madame la Marchioness, it is getting late."

"Not too late. Come nearer, my pretty"

"I can't hear what you say,"

"What! Do you turn your back to me?"

"I do, because, because I can only sleep on my left side."

"The side of the heart! That is singular! It must check the circulation."

"To be sure it does, but habit—"

"Habit, my sweet, you are right! Now me for instance, since I was married; that is a long time ago."

"I don't doubt it."

"I have got into the habit of always laying so as I do now, and never could break myself of it."

"Perhaps that is so much the better for you, for the posture is not a bad one. Madame la Marquise, I have the honour to wish you a good night."

"You are very sleepy then?"

"I warrant you I am."

"Well then, my little heart, please yourself, there is plenty of room—but where is she gone? Quite on the edge of the bed"

She made a great motion: if my hand had not stopped hers, my stars! What would have been the consequence!

"Ah! Madame, pray don't touch me, you would make me jump to the skies."

"But, my chicken, don't get out of bed; I only wanted to feel where you were. Come in again."

"Take care"

"You must be very ticklish, my little dear?"

"Prodigiously so! Good night, Madame."

"So am I too. I don't know whether that is another habit. What do you think of it?"

"I don't believe it is."

"But, my dear, take care, you will fall."

"No."

"Whence proceeds this obstinacy? Wherefore not come near me? There is more room than is wanted."

"'Tis because I—I can't touch anything! If I were only to feel accidentally the tip of your finger, I should faint away."

"Zooks! that is a bad disorder. What will you do, then, when you get married?"

"I will not marry. I have the honour to wish you a good night, Madame la Marchioness."

"How could you have laid in that horse bedstead, by the side of young Mésanges?"

"You are right; I could not have laid quiet, Madame la Marquise; I wish you a good night."

"What o'clock may it be?"

"I don't know, Madame; but I wish you a good night."

At length the gossip became willing to let me hear, in my turn, that "good night "so pressingly solicited; but rejoice, Faublas, rejoice, thou wert not the only one who sighed for it.

As soon as the Marchioness had begun to snore, for there was that agreeable additional charm in the company of my charming bed companion, that she was heard to snore like a man, methought, that in a low voice I was addressed in the following words: "My dear friend!" I fancied it was a sport of my imagination; yet I lifted up my head, and watched for the least noise: a moment after "My dear friend" saluted my ears a second time.

"My dear friend, tell me yourself, what is the matter? Can you sleep?"

"No, indeed, I cannot."

"Nor I, neither, my dear; whence comes that? Whence?"

"Because, my dear, as you were saying not long since, it would be more amusing to have a little chat together."

"If you think so, come then."

"With all my heart, but the Marchioness?"

"My cousin? Ah! When she snores it is a sign that she is asleep."

"I believe you."

"And she sleeps in good earnest when she is asleep. Come my dear; come, then, you have nothing to fear."

"Ah! As I have told you, with all my heart, my dear, but your door is locked!"

"Certainly! My door is always locked, without that precaution I should be afraid."

"How, then, would you have me get in?"

"Why! It was not me who locked the door."

"I do not say it was you."

"It was not me, because I have not perceived at all that I was frightened at you, my dear."

"You are very kind, my dearest; but here I am, standing at your door, and rather thinly clad to hold a conversation."

"Ah! but it is the Marchioness who has locked me in."

"That does not prevent my beginning to feel cold."

"Ah! but the Marchioness has put the key in her pocket."

"Why, but I have not got her pocket"

"My dear, you can find it in the dark."

"In the dark, dear; well, I will feel for it."

"Do, my beloved; nearly at the foot of the bed, on the second armchair, on the left hand side; I have seen her place her pockets there."

"Why, my dear, did you not tell me so before?"

Without making the least noise, I found the armchair, the pocket, the key, and the keyhole. I found my dear friend, who received me into her bed to chat; my good friend who, to warm me, threw herself into my arms, and pressed me to her bosom. What a sweet child!

You, Goddess of my history I and of all the histories in the world, you who have condescended to take up my pen when I was necessitated to relate, in a decent style, the ticklish debates between the aunt and niece, the delicate multiplied questions the amorous instructions lavished upon the latter, O Clio! Worthy Clio, come! Come this day to describe the astonishment of the cousin, her first inquietudes, and her sweet errors! Come to recount something else! Come! The recital which I have further

to make is, perhaps, more surprising, and more difficult than any of those I could not hitherto dispense gratifying public curiosity with.

For some minutes past we had been conversing most amicably, and I began to get warm again; a short time only elapsed when our conversation was interrupted by Mademoiselle de Mésanges, who made a start backward."

"What are you frightened at, my beloved?"

"Why, but both your hands are here on my neck, and yet I have felt—I felt something that seemed very strange to me!"

"Do you wonder at that? It is because—"

"I am fit to be married."

"My dearest dear, what shall I say to you? You have not hitherto been informed, because you are still too young."

"Ah! Since it must be so," replied my novice, "the Marchioness will have no occasion to inform me; so great a change will not take place without my being sensible of it."

"Yes, I laugh, I think they are playing their tricks upon my good friend Des Rieux."

"A good friend of your convent!"

"Yes."

"With whom you go and chat in the night?"

"When they forget locking me up."

"They are playing tricks with that young lady?"

"Certainly. They tell her every day that she is properly formed; I plainly see that is not true, and that it is because they expect something that they unceasingly postpone her marriage under divers pretences."

"Probably. How old is she?"

"Sixteen."

"Oh! too young still"

"But I am almost eighteen."

"And it is a long time since you have been fit to be married!"

"A twelve month, or nearly so."

"I suppose you do not tell anyone that you converse at night with that young miss?"

"I am not such a simpleton; they would soon deprive me of the means of doing so again."

"You, therefore, will beware of telling them that I came to have a little chat with you this night?"

"Don't be afraid. *Apropos*, there is a something that puzzles both Des Rieux and me vastly; you, certainly, my dear, will tell us what a man is!"

"A man! I would give anything in the world, my dearest, to know."

"Would you? Well enter the same agreement as Des Rieux and I have."

"What is it?"

"The first of us two who gets married, is to come the next day to tell the other all about it."

"Trust me, I join in the convention!"

"My good friend, you embrace me much in a like manner to what Des Rieux does, and I don't know, but it seems to me as if it occasioned me more pleasure still."

"That proceeds, most likely, from my loving you better than she does."

"My dearest dear!"

"What is the matter?"

What did she wish to do with my hand, which she seized on a sudden, saying: "Embrace me then, my dear beloved, as Des Rieux does!"

"Not quite in the same manner, my dear I but in a little better one, perhaps!"

Although I did not cease protesting that all would soon be over, that the most difficult part of the business was already gone through, the young person, subsequent to her uttering some gentle screams, which she endeavoured to stifle, could not finally suppress a piercing shriek. I shall not tell what occasioned her pain; but I think I have mentioned above, that Mademoiselle de Mésanges had a very little foot.

Was it not a very cruel thing for me to be obliged to leave the field of battle precisely at the moment when victory was declaring in my favour? I however, was forced so to do. The Marchioness, roused on a sudden from her first sleep, was muttering these words. "Mercy upon me! Oh, my God! It is a dream! Ah, it is only a dream!"

I immediately submitted to necessity, quitted the bed of the ex-maiden, and escaped, on my knees and hands, to that of the dowager.

Now this latter, who was quite awake, was anxious to know the cause of the noise she had just heard.

"Alas! It is me, Madame."

"You! Miss? Where are you then?"

"On the ground by the bedside; I have just fallen down."

"Why will you obstinately lay on the very brim?"

"Quite on the contrary, Madame."

"How so, on the contrary?"

"I approached too near."

"And what then?"

"What then! When Madame sleeps, she cannot help jogging about; Madame has stretched out her leg; her leg has touched me."

"I did not do it on purpose, my dear child; get into bed again; keep at some distance, if you like."

"Oh, yes, I do!"

"You awoke me on a sudden."

"Pray, Madame, do not scold me, I am extremely sorry if I have—"

"I do not scold; there is no great harm done: we shall have a little chat for a moment."

"I beg you will excuse me, I feel quite ill already for having had so little sleep."

"Listen at least to what I was dreaming."

"Good night, Madame."

"Ah, I wish to recount my dream."

"But then, Madame, you will not be able to go to sleep again."

"Oh, but I will though; I can sleep whenever I please. Where, in the name of patience, do we collect matter for all our dreams! This was the place of action. I dreamt that an impertinent man was espousing me by main force."

"Ah ah! Madame la Marquise! what man would be so audacious?"

"Guess."

"It was not me, at any rate."

"No, it could not be you; but most likely it was your brother."

"I have no brother."

"I do not say you have, my darling; people will dream every day of what does not exist. In my dream, he was your brother, for he bore a striking likeness to you."

"Pardon this new wrong of mine."

"You joke, my angel. It was not your fault; besides, there is no harm in it; but that is not all."

"What! The impudent fellow! Perhaps he had courage to begin over again?"

"Not so; he soon left me to go into that closet"

"That closet?"

"Without my leave—do you hear?"

"Without your leave?"

"To marry young de Mésanges."

"Young de Mésanges!"

"Who did not oppose him"

"Who did not oppose him!"

"Wait a little; what is most singular, the child, not being so well drilled as myself to that exercise."

"What then?"

"Pain!"

"Pain?"

"Caused her to send forth a shriek."

"A shriek!"

"That awoke me."

Figure to yourself, reader, if you can, the mortal fright that agitated me. Had the Marchioness really dreamt that dream, which accorded so well with the circumstances? Was it a tardy warning, that Hymen, a sworn enemy to all amorous successes, had just sent to the too careless duenna, in order to prevent my triumph being completed? Or, what would have been worse still, had the cursed old woman, at that very instant, with a wonderful presence of mind, invented that supposed dream, on purpose to give me clearly to understand that my crime had been discovered, that an entire devotedness alone could expiate it, that I must instantly meet the punishment which awaited me in her arms?

At this last idea, all my senses at once revolted. I, notwithstanding, summoned all my fortitude, in order to ascertain, by means of some indirect questions, the true disposition of Madame d'Armincour.

"Are you serious, Madame?"

"Quite serious, my beauty."

"What! You heard, Madame"

"To be sure, I did hear."

"You have been telling me also that you had seen! How could you see, being in the dark?"

"Ah! In my dream it was broad daylight."

This answer, made in a tone of great candour, restored me to perfect tranquillity.

"Good night! Madame la Marquise."

"Well, child, since you will absolutely have it so, good night!"

My companion now went to sleep again; and her loud snoring, which before was so disagreeable, now caressed my ears as sweetly as might have done the most enchanting voice, the voice of Baletti. Do not wonder at it; it was the joyful trumpet which announced the time was come for me to go and resume a charming piece of work, already in a state of great forwardness, but unfortunately interrupted as nearly completed. Eager to finish it, I lifted up the clothes with the utmost precaution, and I was ready to step out of the bed, when, on a sudden, the propitious snoring ceased. A wrinkled, heavy hand, which appeared to me to be that of Proserpina, caught hold of me by the neck, and stopped me for awhile: "Wait a moment,"said the infernal old woman, at last; "I am going with you."

She was going, indeed, to shut the door; and she locked it; after calling out to young de Mésanges: "Sleep, mademoiselle, sleep! and have a little patience, we will marry you ere long!"

"Ah! But, Madame la Marquise," replied my dear friend, in a languishing tone of voice, "I am not fit to be married yet!"

"Very well," resumed the other, counterfeiting her accent; "very well, Miss Prudely! You seem to know nothing about the matter, but that will not prevent our doing your business for you, as soon as possible, too. Come along, miss, you who have contracted habits," she added, "conducting me by the hand to her bed; I shall see whether you can keep awake to chat with young girls only."

At these dreadful words, which forebode tortures awaiting me, I could feel a deadly shivering to freeze my blood, my whole blood, which, from all the extremities, flowed with prodigious swiftness towards my heart. Trembling through every limb, I suffered myself to be dragged towards the place of execution. I fell on the bed, where a fury was already waiting to press me within her avenging arms. There I fell, exhausted, motionless, and almost lifeless.

The impatient Marchioness, subsequent to a short silence, asked me, in a hoarse, broken voice, which she strove to soften, whether I had forgotten her dream, and if I thought of realising one point of it only?

Alas! I was thinking of her dream! I thought it appeared indispensable I should prevent greater misfortunes by a generous devotedness. Was I, by offering to Madame d'Armincour an insult that no female will ever forgive, to expose to her easy vengeance Mademoiselle de Mésanges, who had nearly been caught in the fact, and my dear Madame de Lignolle also? Was I to risk exposing myself to the rancour of three families, that would unite against me? A magnanimous effort, therefore, was the only means I had left of saving my two mistresses and myself.

Never more than upon this occasion did I ever experience that a resolute young man, whose great courage besides is called forth by pressing necessity, may at all times rely upon himself. After some short hesitation, after a few moments of dejection and terror, inseparable from the dreadful undertaking I was summoned to, I felt less incapable of attempting, and perhaps of accomplishing it. Unfortunate youth! Your last hour is near at hand! Come, Faublas, come, show a good heart! Immolate thyself! Thus did I encourage my still wavering virtue, but, to consolidate it, I wanted to make some new efforts. The victim, at last, however, wishing for nothing more but to avoid, at least, cruel preludes, and to accomplish the dolorous sacrifice in an instant, if possible, the resigned victim on a sudden flew to meet his fate.

"How prompt!" exclaimed the malignant old woman, laughing. "Gently, sir, gently, if you please! It was said in my dream that you married me by force. By force! Do you hear! Let me ask you then, are you disposed to use violence; are you fully determined to ravish the dowager d'Armincour?"

"No, Madame, I have too much honour to commit so heinous an offence."

"Well, then, be quiet by my side. I may have played you a trick; at any time of life one likes a joke, for my part I always do, when my Eleanor is not concerned; but it would be carrying the joke too far, if I were to accept of your generous offer. Keep yourself for young women; if the aunt was to take you at your word, the niece might not be satisfied."

"The niece! You think that Madame de Lignolle—"

"Most assuredly I do; but let me have nothing to say about the Countess for the present; we have a more pressing object to speak of. You were speaking just now, sir, of a heinous action! Are you not sensible that the one you have indulged during my sleep was horrible?"

"Madame, could anyone, had he been in my place—"

"Wherefore were you in that place, in which you never should have been? Why go in search of temptations that no one could resist? Wherefore surprise the confidence of relations by a perfidious disguise? I see nothing, sir, that you can plead as an excuse, but I hope, at least, you have some means of repairing the injury that Mademoiselle de Mésanges and her family have suffered."

"Madame—"

"You will undoubtedly marry the young person."

"Madame—"

"Speak plain: will you, or not?"

"With all my heart, as I have said before; but—"

"Let me hear the meaning of your but."

"I cannot."

"You are already married, are you not?"

"I am, Madame"

"That's it! That becomes certain!"

"What is become certain, Madame?"

"Make yourself easy, sir, I was speaking to myself. You may see now it is a dreadful thing to seduce young persons that you have it not in your power to marry; for she has been seduced, has not she? You have done her a great injury?"

"Madame—"

"Speak, sir. What is done, is done; there is no remedy; but you will have the goodness to inform me, in what situation exactly you have left the young person; in all probability I awoke too late for her safety; but, to speak the truth, since I entertained suspicions, I ought not to have gone to sleep at all. Yet how could I have fancied that, though inclined to commit a rash act, they would have the audacity and time requisite, when I, who must be very easy on my own account, held the rake in my bed, the young girl locked in, and the key in my pocket? He must be a true devil! A mad devil, too, I say. Well, sir, confess it—the young girl has—the young girl—the young person is—the young person has undergone an entire metamorphose?"

"To conceal nothing from you, Madame, I believe that my triumph has been complete."

"A fine triumph! Very difflcult to obtain, indeed! Very difficult for the sweet child. What now! In his enthusiasm, he wants to enter into particular details."

"Ah! Pardon me, Madame, whether difficult or not, I have known your cousin so little, that I cannot imagine any serious consequences will ensue."

"What do you mean explain."

"I mean that it is hardly to be presumed that she is pregnant."

"Why, indeed," she cried, in a passion, "what a high favour you are bestowing upon us! But at any rate, sir, her fame is gone to the devil! Do you reckon that a mere

nothing? Would you have been pleased if you had been given in marriage a young person already learned?"

"Learned! She is not so."

"What is he now telling me?"

"She is so little informed that she believes I am a girl."

"But do you believe that I was born yesterday, to come up to me with such an idle story?"

"Madame la Marchioness, don't be angry. I'll tell you the whole story."

The good aunt, who did not hear me without interrupting me by frequent exclamations, cried out, as soon as I had nothing more to say: "That is very extraordinary, and there is not quite so much harm done, not quite so much. Sir, I expect you will keep it a profound secret, and I rely enough upon your honour."

"You may, Madame."

"You are sensible that now I cannot get that child married too soon; it will be no difficult thing neither; she is a good figure, and has a large fortune. She is deficient in nothing, except what you have just been robbing her of. That, however, is not depicted in the face of a girl, and most fortunately it is so; for, be it said between ourselves, if it were, many a fine damsel could never enter the matrimonial state. This one, therefore, will be provided for as soon as possible; and, as chance might have it that you were to hear in the world of the fool who would be on the point of marrying her, be very particular then in not—"

"Make yourself perfectly easy; I am sensible this adventure must be known to ourselves only!"

"Very well, sir, I shall say nothing to the young person, for what could I say? She is a little simpleton, who without knowing what she was about, took it into her head to act a part; that is all. Let her continue in her ridiculous but useful error; but that she may neither impart it to anyone, nor perceive it herself, I shall take care to recommend her to her convent, and likewise the good friend with whom she exchanges embraces. If, however, you should deem it proper, we may entrust her cousin with the secret."

"Her cousin?"

"Yes."

"Madame de Lignolle? Oh! No, no."

"You don't wish she should know of it? To be sure, she is too giddy to keep a secret."

"She is."

"Besides, your conduct, perhaps, interests her enough."

"Not in the least."

"Not at all? Ah, sir, now I know that the young person who has explained everything to Mademoiselle de Mésanges is a charming chevalier, and you want me to be still made a dupe of?"

"Madame."

"Let us drop so delicate a subject. We shall resume it in due time. In my turn, sir, I wish you a very good night. Go to rest, if you think proper; but rest assured that I shall not go to sleep again."

I availed myself of the permission; for after the various agitations of that happy and fatal night, it was quite necessary I should enjoy some sleep. Nevertheless, I was not allowed to enjoy it long: the first rays of the rising sun brought into our room Madame de Lignolle, who had a key that opened every door. She awoke me with her kisses: Here you are, my dear Brumont! How happy I am! I did not expect you. I was only told accidentally just now."

She ran to the closet with apparent inquietude; and looking through one of the panes: Aunt, she said, you have placed our young cousin there by herself! You have done right."

"Not too much so."

"Why not?"

"Because I have had but a very indifferent night myself."

"You have locked her in! Ah! That was better still."

"Better on what account?"

"Did I say better, aunt?"

"You did, niece."

"I speak inconsiderately;—for—what danger? Certainly none. In an apartment where none but women slept."

"None but women, as you say, aunt; and gentlemen in the adjacent apartments, to protect them in case of—"

"That's it, exactly!"

"Wherefore, aunt, did you only come at two in the morning?"

"Because, niece, I wished to bring this dear child with me."

"How kind you are!"

"Very kind, am I not?"

"Brumont, why did not you send me word?"

"Don't scold her; it was I who would not suffer you to be called."

"You were very wrong, aunt."

"You don't speak a syllable, my dear Brumont! You look sad! believe me, I am very sorry too!"

"For what, niece?"

"Why, because you have both been laying very uncomfortable."

"Had you a spare bed then for this child?."

"She would have shared in mine."

"That is precisely what I was desirous of preventing, niece."

"You, however, would have spent a better night."

"Yes, but you?"

"Pshaw! We arrange matters very well together."

"She is a troublesome bed-fellow, though."

"Do you find so, aunt?"

"She keeps in perpetual motion all night long. She was continually laying upon me."

"Upon you?"

"Nearly so."

"Nearly! That alters the case!"

"I unceasingly was pushing her back. She kept me so warm she smothered me!"

"Dear me! But—"

"What makes you uneasy, niece?"

"Why, you must have been prodigiously incommoded!"

"Truly! If that was to happen to me every night! At my time of life! But for one single time!

The tone of candour in which the sly aunt spoke those last words, entirely quieted Madame de Lignolle. The thoughtless niece only viewed the pleasant side of the matter. "Ah! but you, Dumont," she exclaimed, embracing me, "You must have had a pretty good night's rest! My aunt has not interrupted your slumbers! Hear me. You are grieved, and so am I, you may be assured. I am extremely sorry you were not shown where my room was. Yet, let me tell you, don't you think it quite droll to see you here thus close—excuse me, but I can't hold any longer."

In fact, the bursts of laughter withheld for a long time at length broke out. The explosion was so strong, and lasted so long, that the Countess finally fell on the bed and fainted away. "This giddy creature laughs so heartily, that she would induce one to laugh also," said the aunt! And she imitated her niece: I even thought she would soon have surpassed her. How could I not have shared in their joyfulness? Our jovial trio made so much noise, that we awoke Mademoiselle de Mésanges.

The prisoner knocked at the window. "Madame de Lignolle," said the Marchioness, "open the door to that child: take the key out of my pocket." The Countess, to have done the sooner, used her own key: bade good morning to her cousin, without entering the closet, and returned on my side, to sit on the bed. Young de Mésanges followed her close, and kissing me, said: "Good morning, my dear."

"What is the meaning of this?" exclaimed the Countess, surprised and angry: "what do you mean by such familiarities, and calling her as you have done? Let me tell you, I don't like Mademoiselle de Brumont to be kissed by anyone; she is not to be called my dear, neither."

"You are right, niece," cried the Marchioness, "give it her well, she makes too free."

"Not be called my dear!" Resumed our Agnes, now become more bold: "Ah! That's a good one! As if I did not know that she is my dearest dear?"

"But, miss," continued Madame de Lignolle, "go and put on a handkerchief, if you please, you are stark naked. What does that signify?" replied the other; "There are no men here."

The Marchioness, counterfeiting her, said: "No, there are no men here;" but she added in a more blunt tone: "mind, there are married women, married women, do you hear? You little simpleton. Go—but stop! Stop a moment! How dejected and fatigued you look! What have you been about in the night?"

"What have I been about? Nothing, since I have not even slept."

"And wherefore have you not slept?"

"Wherefore? Ah why? Because I was listening all the while, in expectation that I might bear you snore."

"Snore! That expression! You are very fond then of hearing people snore?"

"That is not it: but when one is in bed by one's self, something must be done by way of amusement."

While speaking, she played with a lock of hair. The impatient Countess, on a sudden, saluted her with a good slap on her hand; and taking her by the shoulders, brought her back to the closet, with repeated injunctions to put a handkerchief round her neck.

The Marchioness applauded: "You have acted very wisely," she said; "give her a good lecture, she must hear from you some lessons on common decency."

"Do me the service, Madame de Lignolle, to help her to dress, that she may have done sooner, and that we may send her home, for I want to speak to you."

The Countess, vexed at being taken away from me for a moment, soon had done with her cousin; and I can assure you, that to dress her from head to foot, she wanted less time than she used to spend in tying one of my petticoats. They both returned within a short time into the bed-room. The Marchioness praised the one for being so expeditious, and desired the other to go and take a walk in the park.

"Ah! But it is very early to go and take a walk!"

"So much the better, the morning air will cool you."

"Ah! But to take a walk, one must walk"

"Well, what then?"

"I can only walk with great difficulty."

"Indeed! Miss delicate! Her shoes pinch her!"

"No, it is not my shoes. It is not my feet that are sore."

"You have said enough, go, away with you."

"It is most likely somewhere else that I feel pain, because—"

"Marry upon me," interrupted the Countess, "this very slow manner of speaking kills me. Is it your stays that hurt you?"

"Oh, no! Oh no it is not my stays neither."

"For God's sake, what is it then?"

"Why, most likely, I begin—probably I am also becoming fit to be married."

"I have no patience with her!" cried the Marchioness: "what nonsense is she come with! Pray, Madame de Lignolle, send away the impertinent girl. You don't see that she is at a loss what to say, and only wants to kill time."

"Oh, but I do know what I am saying—notwithstanding, it is not very necessary, remember that you have promised to give me notice."

We did not hear the rest, because the Countess seeing her cousin in the gallery, shut the door in her face.

"Very well, niece, bolt the door, that no one should come to interrupt us. Come and sit here, on my bed, but look at me sometimes: you seem to have eyes but for Mademoiselle de Brumont alone."

"Ah! it is to comfort her; you may see her grieve."

"I have noticed her not speaking a word; she does not appear in her usual good spirits."

"Neither is she," said Madame de Lignolle, kissing me; "she laments her not having been brought to my apartment. She certainly bears you great friendship, aunt; but as she knows me better, she would have preferred spending the night by my side, I dare to say."

"Gently, Madame, gently! Don't flatter yourself so much. If I had allowed it—
"

"Allowed what, aunt?"

Why, you imagine because one is not quite so young and so handsome as you are—"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that if I had consented—"

"What you are saying, aunt, is—"

"Truth."

"Incomprehensible either way."

"I shall explain then, niece."

"Do make haste, I beg; you keep me on the rack."

"Madame de Lignolle, it would appear to me very surprising, in fact, but yet very desirable, that you were not so well acquainted with the supposed miss, now in bed by the side of me."

"The supposed miss!"

"I declare, and I wish I may tell you something that will surprise you, I declare, that this pretty girl is a man."

"A man, are you? Are you sure, aunt?"

"Sure! And he is there himself to contradict me, if I do not speak the exact truth; he himself offered, less than two hours since, to prove it to me"

"Offered to prove? no, that cannot be."

"Don't wonder too much at it, niece, he thought himself bound—"

"Bound! Wherefore?"

"Ah! ask him."

"Say wherefore," she cried, addressing me with extreme warmth. "Speak, speak at last, why don't you speak?"

I replied; "You see me so stupefied at all that happens to me, that I have not sufficient power to speak a word."

"He wishes to reduce me to the hard necessity of making the painful avowal," continued the Marchioness, "he thought himself obliged, niece, because I exacted it"

"You exacted it, aunt!"

"Make yourself easy, I only shammed."

"Only shammed!"

"As I tell you, but I showed mercy to the generous young man, when I saw that he was ready to sacrifice himself."

"Yet he could!" cried out the Countess, no less surprised than chagrined.

"He could I?" repeated the aunt. "It is, I confess, a compliment to be paid to him."

"He could!" said Madame de Lignolle again, in a tone expressive no less of astonishment, than of the deepest afiliction.

"Those two last exclamations," observed the Marchioness, "are not very polite."

"He could!"

"So, then, niece, you wish to make me angry, you would wish, Madame, he never were able, but for you?"

"For me!"

Madame d'Armincour interrupted her in a most serious tone, "Eleanor, I have ever known you to be extremely candid, and with me especially. Before you struggle hard to act contrary to your natural disposition, before you determine to maintain too improbable a falsity, listen to me.

"This miss is a man; I have more than one reason, unfortunately, to remove all doubts. In addition to that, I am now acquainted with his name; and everything tells me, niece, that for a long time since you have not been ignorant of it yourself. Yesterday, about five o'clock, I went to Longchamps, where I was surprised to see you, especially at that early hour, you, who in the morning had refused under the pretence of some business to accompany me there in the afternoon. You did not even perceive me, Madame, because you had eyes only to look at a cavalier, who on his side was continually looking at you. This was what occasioned me to notice it. It was Mademoiselle de Brumont in man's clothes; or, at least a brother of hers, a brother, absolutely like her in the face, which excited your attention the same as mine. I naturally stopped at that idea, and in my perfect security, I did not even think of carrying conjectures farther. Immediately next to your carriage followed, in a much richer one, a kind of a strumpet very elegantly dressed, who likewise eyed the young

man, by whom she was sometimes eyed in her turn. To all appearances that creature does not love you much, and you don't love her more, for she behaved impertinently to you, for which you punished her in style, and I laughed heartily upon the occasion; when on a sudden a great rumour arose. Everybody came running and approached de Brumont, male or female, whom I did not lose sight of, with the intention of calling her to me, and to have some conversation for a moment with him or her.

"I, like a poor country woman, amazed at seeing such a concourse of people, enquired whether it was customary with the Parisian ladies to run thus, as if they were crazy, pell-mell with the men, after the first handsome fellow they met with. All who surrounded me vociferated: 'Not so! By no means!' But this one is deserving of general attention: he is a charming cavalier, already famous on account of an extraordinary adventure; he is Mademoiselle du Portail, the lover of the Marchioness de B***." You can judge of my surprise: I instantly had my eyes opened, recollected a thousand distressing circumstances; and without too much malignity, was obliged to say to myself, that it became very probable that the lover of the Marchioness was also the paramour of the Countess. However, I must not judge too hastily of the conduct of a niece, for whom I have a regard. I will see and observe, I will put questions to her tomorrow, since I am going to join her in Gatinois. By no means! On the wished-for-day, the obliging Madame de Fonrose comes to my house, and proposes to me in a genteel way, the honourable charge of conducting to you your bosom friend. Delighted at a happy chance which favoured my secret designs, I agreed to the proposal, and fully determined to examine closely the young miss, and to prevent the possibility of your reducing me to perform under your roof the part of a coadjutant. I arrived with the happy mortal; he fancied perhaps, seeing that you were gone to bed, that he would at least be allowed to share that of young de Mésanges: quite the reverse, I secured him to myself. In the beginning of the night I plagued him; an hour after, I—I, nearly as I may say, caught him in the fact. He did not confess his name, which I did not ask him; but he could not deny his sex. At last, it was morn, and that I might entertain no further doubt, I entirely discovered the Chevalier de Faublas."

As she spoke these words, she in fact did uncover me; and with a rapid hand, lifted up the blanket, which she threw almost to my feet, and in the twinkling of an eye brought it back over my shoulders. The moment was short but decisive. Chance that declared against me would have it so, that at the time I lay in such a posture that the most essential evidence could not escape the eye of the accused party, his accomplice, and their judge. "Now, my niece," exclaimed the Marchioness, "I hope all your doubts are removed; in case, mind me, it were possible to believe that you could entertain any before. But confess," she added, giving me a vigorous slap on the face, with the same hand that had just exposed me in a state of nearly complete nakedness, to the confused looks of Madame de Lignolle, "confess that this M. de Faublas must be a bold little rogue, to have come on this day to sleep with the aunt, for the sole reason that he should go to bed with the niece.

"Aunt," exclaimed the Countess, with a little ill humour, "why did you strike so hard? You will hurt him."

"Hurt him, indeed! He is too well off: it was a favour. Madame de Lignolle, now that you can no longer, under a pretext of ignorance, deny it and refuse, you must immediately desire this gentleman to get up, turn him out of your house without making any fuss, and never let him be admitted again."

"Turn him out of my house, aunt! Well, I must tell you, he is my lover; the lover whom I adore."

"And your husband, Madame?"

"My husband? He is also my husband; I have no other."

"How so, niece? Has not M. de Lignolle espoused you nearly five months back?"

"Espoused me? Never! It is he, aunt—"

"How so? He it is who the first time—"

"Yes, aunt, it is.

Ah! What a happy little rogue! What an espouser that gentleman is! But, niece, you are pregnant."

"So I am, and it is he again."

"But—"

All buts are done away with now, aunt! It has always been, and ever shall be him; never shall any other—"

"Never any other! How will you be able to manage it?"

"As I have hitherto done with him, aunt."

"What a flow of words! See a little—"

"I see him alone!"

"But, at least, hear."

"I only hear him!"

"But, at least, listen."

"I listen to him only!"

"Well, niece, will you let me speak to you a moment."

"I speak to him alone!"

"Eleanor, you love me no more, then?—

I only love—ah I but I do love you too!"

"Since you do, let me explain; tell me, unhappy creature, how will you manage to conceal your being pregnant?"

"I do not intend to conceal it"

"But your husband will ask you who is the father of that child."

"I shall answer that it is him."

"But if he has never gone to bed with you, how will you make him believe?"

"It is for that very reason that he will believe me."

"How, for that very reason?"

"Exactly so."

"Come, niece, we must be blundering some way or other."

"You are so quick that you do not give one time to explain."

"I am very quick! You are not so, perhaps, yourself."

"How can it be otherwise when I have to deal with such a hot-headed woman as you are? But do me the favour to explain what is to be done to persuade a man, who has never espoused his wife, that he is really the father of the child ti"

"See, how provoking! I request, aunt, you will have the goodness to explain to me how you can imagine that I will hold out to M. de Lignolle so stupid and nonsensical an argument?"

"It was you who told me so."

"Quite on the contrary, I have repeatedly declared to you that it was him by whom I was pregnant"

"Ah! I understand you at last; *him* is this gentleman!"

"To be sure. When I say him, I mean him."

"Why, faith, I could not have guessed that. What, you intend going yourself to tell your husband you have made him a—"

"What he deserves to be."

"In one sense, I do not say he has not."

"In every possible sense he does."

"Ah! This is quite another thing! I cannot, Madame, approve of your irregular conduct"

"My irregular conduct!"

"Let us return to the important article. If your husband gets angry—"

"I shall laugh at him."

"If he wishes to have you confined in a convent?"

"He will not be able."

"Who can prevent him?"

"You and all my friends."

"Your friends will turn against you. I cherish you too much ever to do you the least harm; but in so unfortunate an occurrence I shall be forced, at least, to remain neuter. You then will have left only this gentleman."

"If I have him left, I shall not want for more."

"I admit he will be ready to protect you, but will he have it in his power? And if you are locked up?"

"No, no; let me tell you, aunt, I was thinking of it in the night; I have a project in my head."

"A fine project, I dare to say. Let me hear what it is; tell me."

"I cannot now; it is not time yet."

"That being the case, I am going now to inform you of the only measure that can be adopted."

"I am all attention, my dearest aunt."

"You must, as soon as possible, Madame, get M. de Lignolle to espouse you, and—"

"That, friend, cannot be."

"For what reason?"

"The reason is that it cannot be. But, although it were possible, I would not consent. Now, aunt, I know what is what, never will your niece go into the arms of a man."

"Never into the arms of a man! yet he—"

"He, aunt, is no man; he is my lover."

"Your lover! Why, truly, that is a substantial reason to advance to your husband!"

"Admitting that the reason is a bad one, it is certain at least that it is preferable to a bad action. Is it not a shameful one, is it not a dreadful act of treachery to go in cold blood and make two men sharers in one's good graces, with a view of betraying the one with greater ease, and keeping the other by reducing him to despair? For I am certain," she exclaimed, as she loaded me with embraces, "that he would be exasperated."

"If, however, Madame, you were disposed to hear me to the end, you would find that your aunt advises neither libertinism nor perfidiousness. You interrupted me, as I was going to tell you, that upon getting M. de Lignolle to espouse you, you must immediately adopt another mode of conduct, and break off this intrigue."

"An intrigue! Fie, for shame, aunt. Say a passion, which the destiny of my life will depend upon."

"Which will make your life miserable, if you don't take care."

"No misery with him."

"Misery ever attends crime. Listen to me, my dear; I am a good-natured soul, I like to crack a joke; but this is serious business. Consider how many dangers threaten you."

"I know of no dangers when he is concerned."

"Your conscience! Eleanor?"

"My conscience is quiet."

"Quiet! That cannot be. You, who never used to speak an untruth, do now. Eleanor, hear me, I cherish you as I would my own child, I have always idolised you, too much, perhaps. I have spoiled you too much, perhaps, but try to remember how I have always made it my study to teach you the best principles with regard to essential matters. To-day, for instance, you are going to crown the Rosière."

"Oh!" she cried, rushing into the arms of her aunt, whose hands she also seized to cover her own face, "pray don't mention it."

I then, penetrated with the tone in which those words had been pronounced, said: "Madame la Marquise, to me, to me alone, are your reproaches to be addressed; pardon and pity her, but do not oppress her."

"O my children," she replied, "if you wish to excite only my sensibility, you will not find it a difficult task: I can be made to weep as easily as to laugh. I have no objection; let us all three shed tears. Hear me, however, niece, do you remember last year at this same period, on the same day I said to you: 'Eleanor, I am highly pleased with you; but, ere long, my child, new times will bring on other obligations; all the duties we have to fulfil in this world are not so pleasing as that of assisting the indigent; the time is near at hand when, perhaps, you will impose upon yourself others, which at first will seduce you, but that subsequently will become painful to you.'"

The Countess, at these words, hastily relinquished her humble attitude, and, in the most animated tone, repeated: "Which at first will seduce you! Alas! How could they have seduced me? I was not taught to know him; an innocent victim, who promised what she did not comprehend, was gaily led to the sacrifice. You, Madame, who now speak to me of duty, did you discharge yours at the time? Dare you affirm you did? When my father and mother, intoxicated with the supposed advantages of this fatal marriage, introduced to you M. de Lignolle, you defended me, I know, by your representations; your consent, I know, was partly extorted by force; but of what avail was your too weak resistance? Were you not to have strengthened it with mine? Were you not bound to take me aside, and to say to me: 'My poor child, I inform you that they are going to sacrifice you; they impose upon your inexperience by dazzling promises; will you, for the frivolous advantage of being presented at Court a few months sooner, of going from tomorrow to assemblies, to balls, to the theatres, sacrifice forever your most precious liberty, the only true liberty, that of disposing of your person and of your heart? Do you find yourself so bad with me? Are you in so great a hurry to leave me? It is no longer time to found your virtue on your ignorance; and since they want to deceive you, I must put you on your guard, and enlighten you. When a girl, naturally vivacious, shows herself in the spring moved at the sight of nature, is surprised in frequent reveries, confesses secret inquietudes, complains of a pain she cannot define, it is commonly said that she wants a husband; but I, who know thee, I who have always seen thee caressed by all around thee repay their affection by a similar attachment, repay my cares with gratitude, and cherish me as much as I have loved thee; lament the distress of a vassal, and even pity the sorrows of an entire stranger; I believe that nature has given thee, in addition to burning vivacity, tender feelings; I believe it is not alone a husband, but a lover that you want. Nevertheless they are determined to have you marry M. de Lignolle. You are not quite sixteen, he is upwards of fifty: your adolescence will hardly commence, when his autumn will be at an end; like all other libertines he will become a valetudinarian, infirm, harsh, morose, and jealous; and, what will complete the fullness of your misery, six times a year, perhaps, you will be obliged, compelled to bear the disgust of his embraces!' For my aunt could not have guessed, that in my unhappy situation I should have one consolation left, namely, that my pretended husband would never become capable to become so."

"Never capable!" she exclaimed, weeping.

"Never, aunt."

"Fie! What a nasty man!"

"You could not have guessed that; so you ought to have said to me; six times a year perhaps you will be obliged to bear the disgust of his embraces; and yet if you were to meet with a young man, handsome, witty, sensible, captivated with your

charms, and deserving of you, again you will be obliged to reject his homage that will give offence, and his image that will haunt you. In order to remain virtuous you must continually oppose the sweetest inclination of your heart, and the most sacred law of nature; if not, your ears will be saluted without relaxation with these dreadful words, Oaths! Duty! Crimes! Misfortunes! Thus you may languish for thirty years and more, reduced to the cruel privations of a forced celibacy, and condemned to the still more cruel duties of a tyrannical hymen; and if you should yield to the seductions of an invincible love, you may get interred in your prime, in the solitude of a convent, there to perish soon, loaded with public contempt and the hatred of your relatives. If you had spoken thus to me, Madame la Marchioness, I would have exclaimed; 'I won't have your M. de Lignolle! I will not have him. I had rather die a maid! And they would not have had me married in spite of myself perhaps they might have killed me, but they would not have taken me to church!"

"Never capable!" repeated the Marchioness weeping; "Ah! The nasty man! My poor little dear, how will you manage it? Poor love? There is no remedy then! Never capable! That alters the case much! But no, it occasions no change. My dear child, you are only to be pitied the more in consequence. Eleanor, nevertheless, you are equally bound directly and forever to renounce the Chevalier."

"Renounce him! I had rather die!"

"Why, but I cannot knock louder," cried out young de Mésanges, whom we had not heard.

"Go and take a walk," replied the impatient Countess.

"Ah! I am but just returned from taking one."

"Go again."

"Ah! But I am tired."

"Sit down on the turf."

"Why, but I am tired of being by myself."

"Are we here intended only for your amusement?" asked the Marchioness.

"Not you, my cousin, if you don't like, but my dear friend."

"Your dear friend?"

"Leave us."

"Why but it appears to me it is a long time since we have had some chat together."

"Go, miss, go and wait for me in the drawing-room."

"Ah! So I will, for I hear a number of people who are getting up."

"Go."

"Number of people who are getting up," repeated Madame d'Armincour. "It is time we should get up too, and that this lady should dress and begone."

"Begone! Aunt—"

"Yes, niece, do you think it is possible she should make her appearance at this festival?"

"Who can prevent her?"

"Why I are there not fifty people here, who were yesterday at Longchamps, and will know her again quite as well as I know you."

"No such a thing!"

"Don't say no! It is impossible otherwise, and you would be ruined."

"What signifies it, provided he does not go."

"When I hear her reason so, it will make my hair stand on end."

"How so! Am I not the mistress?"

"Besides, Madame, you are bound to send him away, it is your duty."

"My duty! There is the word returned again."

"Well then," interrupted the marchioness, throwing the bed clothes over my face, "I must come to a decision and comply, for with her there is no end to disputes."

Madame d'Armincour, as she hastened to put on a bed-gown and petticoat, exclaimed: "Great God! Now I think of it: everyone would be asking where has this young lady been sleeping! Everybody would know that it is there! Would it not be thought that I have my dealings also with the boy. For the whole day I would become the heroine of the adventure, of a gallant adventure, at upwards of sixty! It is being rather late. Come, Madame, you must be sensible it is less to spare me being made an object of ridicule, than to preserve your character, and save yourself from ruin, that I appeal to you. He must go. No, my niece, I will not suffer you in my presence to act the part of his waiting-maid; I shall dress him as expeditiously, and as decently as you could. Be not in the least afraid: I shall only be *le chien du jardinier*."<69>

XXVII.

During the time that my toilette lasted, there was a warm contest between the aunt, who insisted upon my going, and the niece who opposed it.

Madame de Lignolle meanwhile was informed it was time she should go downstairs to give her commands respecting the last arrangements relative to the festival. "I shall be with you presently," she said to me. A moment after the aunt also left me, and returned before the niece, who nevertheless did not tarry long. Nearly a good quarter of an hour elapsed, and I need not tell that the renewed dispute was getting very warm, when the Countess was called out again. Obliged to leave me once more, she assured me it was only for a moment. But she was scarcely gone downstairs, when her aunt said to me; "Sir, I believe you are not quite so destitute of reason as she is; you must be conscious that your presence here may expose her, yield to necessity, yield to my solicitations, and if requisite, to my entreaties." She dragged me away, and conducted me through windings entirely unknown to me, into a yard, where her carriage was waiting for me. As I was stepping into it, chance brought near me Mademoiselle de Mésanges. "Are you going, my dear?", she asked.

"Alas! I am."

"Pray make my compliments to Mademoiselle des Rieux."

"I will not."

"You assure me that it will not be long before she gets fit to be mar—"

"Hold your tongue, miss," interrupted bluntly the Marchioness, "and if ever you repeat the like—"

I heard no more, because the coachman, who had received orders, drove off as quick as lightning. He brought me back as far as Fontainebleau, from whence I travelled post. It was near four o'clock when I reached Paris. Madame de Fonrose was as good as her word. My father had not been seen; and availing myself of some moments of liberty, I took off my female attire, and went to Rosambert's.

I found him much better; he already could, without any assistance, walk about his apartment, and even several times round his garden. The Count began by loading me with reproaches. I represented to him, that I had sent regularly every morning to enquire how he was.

"But you had promised to come yourself."

"My father has not let me."

"That has not prevented you from going somewhere else. I confess, however, that the little Countess deserves the preference."

"The little Countess!"

"Yes, Madame de Lignolle. Did not I tell you before, that henceforth every woman who should be connected with you, would be publicly known? However, I am truly glad that the Marchioness has a rival deserving of being so, for I am told the Countess is an adorable woman. Unfortunately, she is still a child, void of manners, of art, of malice. The Marchioness will crush her to atoms, as soon as she— *Apropos*, I wish you joy: you are in high favour with M. de B***. The whole of Paris have seen him smiling by the side of you on the day of your apotheosis next to that, the excellent husband tells everybody that you are a charming fellow, and for fear the thing should

not appear comical enough, he will say to everyone willing to give him a hearing, that I am an infamous character. He is angry with me! Extremely angry, I am assured! Perhaps I shall have another duel to fight. But you know something about it, Chevalier. The Marquis has had a long conversation with you."

"Oh! The Marquis has told me of all sorts."

"But, in good friendship, come, Faublas, tell me all about it, I want to be made to laugh, and you ought to try to amuse a friend in a state of convalescence."

"No, faith, I confess, that I am very far from wishing to amuse you at the expense of the Marchioness; I shall even repeat it to you, Rosambert, it always grieves me when you speak to me about her."

"You are wrong; I am, in the present moment especially, her most enthusiastic adorer. Truly, was I saying to myself just now; to all her other qualifications, so numerous already, that woman now adds prudence. Don't you wonder at the profundity of the calculation she had made, namely, that if I escaped her, I should not have it in my power to escape her husband? Chevalier, you will be my second."

"Second! Yes, very soon."

"Very soon! You had told me that you would not return to Compiègne?"

"Second in my fighting the Marquis. Chevalier! Make yourself easy! we have made an agreement that I should not fight the Marchioness again. How can you suspect me of being mad enough to enccourage the extravagant whims of that woman, who has taken it into her head to attack courageous young men with their own weapons! The more I think of it, do you see, the more I become sensible, that public safety requires the evil to be stopped in its beginning; that would be setting a bad example: only think, if they all wished to adopt the new fashion! All amours would terminate in pistol-shots! What a noise would be heard every day, in every part of this metropolis!"

Rosambert, who saw me smile, cracked a thousand jokes, and asked me as many questions respecting such as he styled my mistresses. I at last condescended, with a good grace, to join him in the sport; but his curiosity was not altogether productive of great satisfaction to him.

My father returned to the hôtel only two hours after me. He gave me to understand, he was concerned I had been left alone all day. I respectfully observed, it would be carrying kindness too far to incommode himself for his son. He asked me how I had spent the night. Not to tell an untruth, I answered: Partly well, and partly bad, father."

"You have not enjoyed sound sleep?" he replied.

"Sound, begging your pardon, though frequently interrupted."

"You have been greatly agitated?"

"I have, father, suffered violent agitations."

"You have had dreadful dreams?"

"Oh! Very dreadful! One especially, towards the middle of the night, has plagued me most uncommonly."

"But in the morning, at least you have slept quiet?"

"In the morning, no. I was uneasy in the morning."

"Fatigue, most likely?"

"A little fatigue, perhaps, and the recollection of that dream."

"I long to hear that dream."

"It was, father—there was a woman"

"Women forever! Oh! My son, think of your wife."

"Ah! ever since seven in the morning (the time at which I had set out), I can assure you, that ever since seven, I have almost continually been thinking of her. Father, when shall I hear from her?"

"You know how many people I have despatched to find her out, and within a fortnight, I propose going with you."

"Why not sooner?"

"Why," he replied with an embarrassed air, "I am not ready; besides, we must wait till you get better, till the weather is more settled."

"The fine weather! Will it ever return so long as Sophia is absent?"

Whilst I was speaking at this rate, I nevertheless expected to enjoy some happiness on the day following. The next day was that Monday so ardently wished for, on which my Eleanor and I were to be reunited for some moments. Alas! We were disappointed in our expectation. Madame de Fonrose, who came in the evening to pay my father a short visit, found means to tell me there was not the least possibility; the aunt arrived this morning at her house, where she is still.

On the Tuesday it was the same, but on the Wednesday I had the consolation at least, of receiving a note from Justine. It informed me that with a key that was sent me, I should be able to open the street door and every other, of a small new house, situated at the entrance of the Rue du Bac, on the side of the Pont Royal. M. le Marquise requested of me to be there at about seven in the afternoon.

Good news! Madame de B*** of course is not angry with me, I had not heard of her since the Friday: that long silence, subsequent to our above-mentioned adventure, began to occasion me some inquietude. Faublas, she is not out of humour! She is not angry! Faublas, happy young man! Rejoice! Congratulate yourself! I kissed Justine's note, and jumped for joy.

"What propitious news?" asked my father, as he was coming in again.

"Ah 'tis that—'tis that—I see it is fine weather; I think I may venture to go and take a walk in the afternoon."

"Yes, with me."

"With you again, father? Sir! I beg your pardon; but do not wish entirely to make a slave of me, to prevent me from going to see a friend."

"It is not a friend you would go to visit"

"The Vicomte, father."

"M. de Valbrun? Very well; but after that?"

"I promise not to go to the Countess's house."

"Do you give me your word?"

"My word of honour."

"Be it so; I rely upon your word."

I immediately kissed my father's hand, and cut another joyous caper.

I was so impatient to know what the Marchioness had to say to me, that I was at the place of meeting before the appointed hour. I had plenty of time to run over the house, which I found elegant, convenient, and well furnished. I observed, especially, two small bederooms, adjacent to each other; two bedrooms, which I think I can see on this present day, and which, in a hundred years hence, if I am still alive, alas! I shall see as plain as I do now.

M. de Florville arrived about dusk: he came to join me in one of the little rooms. I immediately embraced his knees: "Right," said the Marchioness, "beg pardon of your friend, whom you have offended, whom you have reduced to the absolute necessity of venturing an act of temerity, which might have ruined her, and exposed you."

"True, beauteous mamma, but wherefore—wherefore have you—"

"I believe," she interrupted, "I verily believe he is going to ask me why I resisted! Be quiet, sir, stand still; think that instead of renewing your, offences, you ought to sue for forgiveness. Chevalier, I need not tell you for what purpose we have met here. You conceive that, after the cruel scene of last Friday, I could not, without acting most imprudently, return to Justine's house."

"Undoubtedly, that scene—"

"Chevalier, you speak to me no more of Sophia!"

"Since my last misadventure, I have so seldom obtained the happiness of seeing you! I have enjoyed it for so short a time! We have had so many"

"That is very true, but tell me, candidly, don't you love your wife less than you did?"

"Less!"

"Speak out; do not conceal from me your real sentiments; you had promised to apprise me."

"Less? More! Madame la Marchioness, each day more! I adore her it seems as if absence—"

"Yet, Madame de Lignolle."

"Ah yes! She is so dear to me and is she not deserving of it? I shall ask you, you have seen her, and know her better."

"To be sure, the child is pretty enough, and very good natured. I had been misinformed with regard to her disposition. However, I am no longer prejudiced against her. Nevertheless, Chevalier, I think it very extraordinary that you should bear affection so as to even be in love with two women at a time."

"Say three, dear mamma."

"No she cried, that is impossible!"

"I assure you."

"Do not; it will happen every day that a man prefers his charming wife; that, when she is absent, he regrets her; then even it may happen that he feels a very great inclination, a decided attachment for an amiable woman; but, for two, is what will always appear to me incomprehensible; no, I will never comprehend that the Countess's lover may at the same time be mine; never shall I understand that! Never!"

I looked at her attentively; she observed me; probably the embarrassed air which she must have noticed in my whole frame, made her augur unfavourably of my answer; I saw her turn pale; there was a sudden alteration in her voice: "This conversation seems to be irksome," she resumed, "let us speak of something else. How does the country look now?"

"The country?"

"Yes, you went into the country on Saturday evening, and returned on Sunday; a very short excursion! Tell me, pray, who is one Mademoiselle de Mésanges?"

"De Mésanges!"

"Is not that child become infinitely dear to you also?"

"Infinitely? On what account?"

"In the first place, she is a female; and, to Faublas, that is the best of all titles; and, next, would it not be too astonishing if, having it occasionally in your power to spend the night with the Dowager d'Armincour and Mademoiselle de Mésanges, you had not given the preference to the latter? Supposing even that you were not allowed to take your choice, I know you to be quite capable, if you slept in the same apartment, of leaving the large room of the old woman, to go and creep into the closet<70> of the young one. You blush! You do not speak a word!"

"Madame, if these particular details were true, who could have informed you?"

"If those particular details were true! I like the supposition mightily! Faublas, do not attempt to tell an untruth: your looks, your countenance, your silence, and your discourse, everything in you speaks you to be guilty. Faublas, I have been indebted to a singular fortuitous event for the discovery of part of these details; but you must well know that whenever I am allowed to have a peep at one corner of a box, I can easily tell what the contents are. I don't know exactly whether you have had it in your power to consecrate the whole of your night to the young person, or only to grant her one single hour; be it as it may, I rely upon your having made a good use of your time. I no longer wonder at her friends already speaking of marrying the girl; I conceive that at present, for more than one reason, it is become a pressing case. However," she pursued, in a most serious tone, "I am far from reproaching you for having kept the adventure secret; indiscretion in this case would be infamous, and I do not think you ever could be guilty of such an offence; I am certain that you will be silent on the subject; I am sure you have not mentioned it to M. de Rosambert?"

"To M. de Rosambert?"

"Do you not know him?"

"Too well!"

"I believe so, you saw him again on Sunday?"

"Sunday!"

"What have I mistaken the day? Was it not—"

I threw myself at the knees of the Marchioness: "Oh, my generous friend! Forgive me!"

"At any rate," she added, beckoning me to rise, "remember that you are bound in honour to come and see me fight my enemy again."

"Your enemy will not—"

"Be as good as his word! I shall know how to compel him. Could it be possible, Faublas, that his punishment should appear less just and less desirable to-day? Ah, speak! Your wishes will decide the event of the fight. Do not question it; I prefer dying by the hand of the cruel man, if from you he is to obtain a regret. Don't you know how much I hate the barbarian? He has been the author of all the troubles which to me are insupportable: insupportable!" repeated she, weeping. "Prior to his vile attempt in the village of Holrisse, I was not quite so miserable; I had lost only my fortune and character. But has not the perfidious wretch occasioned you too some irreparable loss, some inconsolable sorrow? Ungrateful Faublas!" she continued, with extreme vehemence, "ought not you to detest him as much as I love you?"

Madame de B*** ran away, frightened at what she had been saying. I flew after her; I was near reaching her; I was going to—

She turned round to me: "Sir," she said, "if you dare to detain me, you shall never see me again as long as I live." I could read in her face so violent a fright, and a something so determined in her attitude that I dared not disobey her. She made her escape.

On my return home, I found there Madame de Fonrose, who asked me, maliciously, how the Vicomte was; in other respects she was bearer only of sad tidings. Madame de Lignolle, who for some days past had been assailed by the numberless little illnesses, which all announced her being pregnant, now felt seriously indisposed; she could not leave her apartment, neither could I go and see her, because Madame d'Armincour, probably determined to neglect nothing that might cure her niece of a dangerous passion, had let her know that she would not return into Franche-Comté before Midsummer; she had also begged of Madame de Lignolle for an apartment in her hôtel, which the niece could not refuse.

A whole fortnight elapsed, during which my Eleanor and I had no other consolation than to send, repeatedly, Jasmin to La Fleur's, and La Fleur to Jasmin's.

During that fatal fortnight, I did not hear at all of Madame de B***. I received from the country no intelligence that could create a hope of Sophia's place of new confinement being soon discovered. Thus deprived of hearing what I held as most interesting to my existence, tedious did I find the days, and long and tedious the nights.

Madame de Fonrose, however, invited both the father and the son to come and dine with her. At seven precisely, under some pretence, I quitted the Baroness's drawing-room, and through secret passages, well known to me, reached her boudoir, of which the Countess opened the door to me. Alas! After long debates, it had been decided on the preceding day that I should stop with my beloved twenty minutes only. I continued a quarter of an hour above the time, so that I had scarce leisure enough to admire, embrace, and speak a few words to her; to tell her that she daily became dearer to me; that she appeared prettier to me every day. She had hardly time

sufficient to protest that my absence killed her by inches; that her tenderness was still increased, and that her love would likewise increase to the latest day of her life.

When I re-entered the drawing-room, there was a dispute; the conversation, however, ceased as soon as I made my appearance.

Most likely, the Baroness, wishing to find out some means of preventing M. de Belcourt noticing my long absence, had thought she could do no better than to pick up a quarrel with him. Oh! Divine friendship! Thou wert given to the weakest sex, to enable them to cheat the strongest, and thou would forever secure the happiness of women, if thou couldst but continue long between them.

The happy tête-a-tête which I had obtained, only inspired me with a more eager desire to procure one less short, in spite of Eleanor's aunt and my father, who jointly conspired against us.

In the middle of the following night, as I was thinking of it, I conceived a bold project, which, on the next morning, the Baroness approved of, and which was completely executed before that same day was over. When I awoke in the morning I took great care to be provided with the sick headache; I complained much of it at dinner-time; and in the evening it occasioned me such violent pain that M. de Belcourt himself advised my going to bed.

As soon as my father saw I was asleep, he went out; and no sooner was he gone than I had done sleeping. A skilful hairdresser was mysteriously brought into my room by my trusty servant.

Thanks to my own abilities, and Jasmin, my waiting-maid, I soon dressed from head to foot, Mademoiselle de Brumont, whom a very inattentive or absent Swiss did not see go out, and whom a rascal of a hackney-coachman immediately carried to Madame de Fonrose's.

It was very near midnight. We had thought proper not to go earlier to the Countess, for fear of the Marchioness not having yet retired to her apartment. Madame de Fonrose, when we arrived at M. de Lignolle's hôtel, would not allow her carriage to enter the yard, that we might not disturb the rest of anyone. There was nobody up at the Countess's except her husband and her maids, for her aunt was gone to bed, as was expected.

"How! Why so late?" said the Count.

"We wanted," answered the Baroness, "to come and ask you for a bit of supper, but have been detained elsewhere. This young lady, unable on account of the late hour to be let in at her convent, has not accepted of the bed I offered her, but has preferred coming to beg of you for this night the little room which she occupied in more happy times."

"She has done right," he replied.

"Very right," exclaimed my Eleanor, "and let her come as often as possible, to occasion me such an agreeable surprise. Your father has sent you to a convent then?" resumed M. de Lignolle.

"Yes, sir, he has."

"Where?"

"I must beg your pardon, but I am not allowed to receive anyone."

"I understand, he pursued," quite low, and in a mysterious tone, "it is on account of the Vicomte."

"There is no possibility of concealing anything from you."

"Oh, I was sure of it, because the affections of the soul are familiar to me. What is most surprising, I have enquired in vain after that young man at Versailles, there is no one there who knows him."

"I have already told you," interrupted Madame de Fonrose, who was listening, "that he was in high favour with the secretary of state, but that he seldom made his appearance at court."

"And I," exclaimed the Countess, "have begged he should never be mentioned to me."

"*Apropos*," resumed the Count, I am angry with you."

"What for?"

"A fortnight ago, you went into Gatinois to that festival, and early in the morning you departed without—"

"You certainly must have been told that pressing orders had compelled me to return to Paris."

"And how do you go on with the riddles?"

"Rather indifferently for some weeks past; yesterday, however, I began again; but so few! So few!"

"So much the worse. Come, miss, you must make up for the loss of time."

"So I will, ere long, sir."

"Let me tell you, here is your pupil, whom you neglect; mind what you are about, she will be in an ill humour, dismiss you, and I shall be chosen to replace you."

"No, sir," answered Madame de Lignolle, hastily, "don't expect it: I have been proposed such a thing not long since, but I have plainly declared that can never be."

"How now! Is it mademoiselle who has made that strange proposal?"

"No, thank God!"

"Wait a bit, Madame! Wait a bit! She will, perhaps, some day."

"You will see, he added, patting my shoulder, you will find out at last that it is a tiresome business."

"To you it may be," replied his wife, "but I am very sure Mademoiselle de Brumont is never tired."

"Most assuredly, Madame la Comtesse, and for several days past I have been very sorry I had it not in my power to come and give you lessons."

"Well!" interrupted Madame de Fonrose, "give her a lesson, I must be off."

"I shall not detain you," replied her friend, "for I feel sleepy."

"That being the case," said M. de Lignolle, "I shall see the Baroness to her carriage, and then retire into my apartment. Ladies, I wish you a very good night."

The Countess immediately sent away her women; and the moment we were left by ourselves, she flew into my arms, and rewarded my happy stratagem with a hundred caresses.

O ye! To whom it has been granted leave occasionally to enter the bed of an adored mistress, and to watch there a whole night for her sake, if you were truly deserving of such a favour, you must have relished more than one kind of exquisite pleasure! Vulgar lovers know only the hour of enjoyment; more favoured lovers are no strangers to the hour that follows it: this is the time for a sweeter intimacy, better felt eulogiums, more persuasive protestations, enchanting avowals, tender overtures, delicious tears, and of all the voluptuousness that can fill the heart. It is then, that with an equal interest, the fortunate couple remember their first interview, their first desires; then it is, that bringing their thoughts back to the time present, with which they are delighted, they congratulate each other, upon having obtained so much felicity, notwithstanding so many obstacles; it is then, that viewing only in future times a long series of happy days, they indulge with full confidence, the reveries of hope.

"Yes," she said, "I have formed the best, the most charming of all projects; we shall then live and die together. I shall fill one trunk only with my most necessary clothes, and take away with me my diamonds only: I don't wish M. de Lignolle should have to complain of being wronged by us: we shall leave France, and settle where you like; every country will appear beautiful to me, since you will be with me. My diamonds are well worth ninety thousand francs: we shall sell them, and purchase in a fine country, not a castle, nor even a house, but a cottage, Faublas! A small handsome cottage; provided there be room enough for one person, for you and I shall be but one."

"As you say, my charming friend, we shall be but one."

"We don't want two rooms to sleep in. Shall we have two beds, Faublas?"

"Oh, no! Not two beds."

"The garden will be large, and we shall have a gardener. We shall marry a pretty country girl to a poor peasant, who will love her: we shall give them our garden, they will cultivate it for their own use, and will allow us to take what we shall want for our support; we shall not want much, you and I only eat to support life. *Apropos*, I don't think of keeping a waiting woman; there would be someone present when I would wish to tell you that I love you; that would annoy me. With regard to my dress, do I want anybody's assistance? Shan't I find out in what manner I must deck myself to please you."

"Ah you will please me in all manner of dress."

"Well, now that is settled, I shall have no waiting woman, but a cook; shall we have a cook?"

"How can we do without!"

"How do you think I would not know how to cook our dinner! Our four meals? Some butter, milk, eggs, fruit, a fowl. I have learnt to make pastry, I will make you pies, cakes, biscuits, and every now and then some nice creams. Oh! I shall treat you well, you will see! Will not all those appear to you better, sir, when it is I—"

"Better! A thousand times better!"

"So then," she said, embracing me, "we shall be only one in this cottage! Let me see, you will place our money, and it will fetch us upwards of a hundred louis d'ors per annum, so you must see that we will be immensely rich! Our food will not cost much, and our clothing will not require much! A light taffeta in summer time, and in the winter season a neat cotton gown is all I shall wish for. You will not want more yourself, my good friend; you need not wear fine clothes to look charming. By this means, we shall scarcely spend one half of our income; and with the remainder, will have it in our power to assist some poor people. One half for us will be a great deal! Fifty louis for the unfortunate poor, that is very little! We shall try: first we shall suppress all superfluities, we shall next curtail necessaries."

"Adorable child!"

"I am no more of a child than you are; so then, Faublas, you like my project?"

"I am delighted with it."

"How happy I am to be possessed of a genius for invention! You never would have found that out—but I have not told you all; you have not heard the most important article."

"What is it?"

"I shall be brought to bed, and will suckle my child."

"You will suckle it, dear Eleanor?

"I will, and will teach it first to love you with all its heart! Make yourself easy. I will teach it embroidery, to play on the piano—

"And to make little creams, my Eleanor: it cannot be possessed of too many talents. Why, what is the matter with you, my beloved? You weep!"

"Certainly, I do weep! You laugh when I am speaking seriously! You are jocose when I speak feelingly."

"It is because I am glad at heart, I assure you. Eleanor, I too wish to educate our child: I will teach him to read"

"In our eyes, all the love we shall feel for it," she interrupted.

"—To write"

"Every day! He will write every morning that his mother loves you better than she did on the preceding day."

"—To dance"

"To dance upon my knees," she exclaimed, laughing in her turn.

"—To fence."

"Ah! Wherefore in that country, where we shall be surrounded but by well-wishers of ours, what occasion will he have to know how to kill people?"

"You are right, my Eleanor. When his mother will have taught him how to render himself dear to everyone, he will, like his mother, be defended by the love of everyone."

"Such are my projects, Faublas," she resumed. "I was certain they would meet with your approbation. We are going to spend the remainder of our days together! We

are going, unopposed, to adore each other to the last day of our lives; Madame d'Armincour will no longer come to plague me with her useless representations; your father will not have it in his power again to tear you away from me."

"Would I forsake my father?"

"Ah! Why not? Don't I forsake my aunt?"

"My father, who idolises me!"

"My aunt does not cherish me less. But if they really feel for us all the affection they manifest, nothing will prevent their coming to join us. I have thought, that from the place of our retirement, we might write to apprise them of our invariable determination; if they come, it will be for us an increase of happiness, we will have a cottage built for them adjacent to our own; if they resisted our repeated entreaties, we shall consider them as having forsaken us; our reciprocal love will make us forget our ungrateful relatives."

"Could I forsake my father, and my sister?"

O Sophia! I did not name you; but you were avenged by my tears.

Your sister may come too; we will marry her to some worthy husbandman, to an honest man who will not marry her fortune, but her person, and will make her happy."

"Wherefore are you silent, Faublas? Why do you shed tears?"

"You see me penetrated with gratitude, my beloved. So many proofs of your so tender love would increase mine, if it were susceptible of an increase; but after mature deliberation, I am obliged to confess to myself, and to inform you I deem it impossible to execute that project."

"Impossible! For what reason?"

"Unfortunately there are several."

"I know of one, ungrateful man! Your love for Sophia?"

"I am not speaking of my wife. You don't give a thought to the many necessitous whom your beneficence supports; your wealth is their patrimony."

"Will they enjoy that wealth after my despair has killed me?"

"You don't reflect on the bustle your flight would occasion. All would call it treachery, all would call your sacrifices an act of folly, and your love for me a disorderly passion. Would you wish to have your memory detested by your relations, and disgraced in your country?

"What do I care! Since I am not quite inexcusable! What do I care for the opinion of the world that does not know me, and the unjust hatred of relatives who have sacrificed me!"

"Can you hope that Madame d'Armincour will ever consent to follow into foreign parts a niece, condemned by the voice of the public?"

"Ah! what do I care for my aunt, when my lover is concerned! Cruel man! Do you wish to make me regret the time when I loved my aunt alone?"

"In short, since I cannot dispense telling you so, consider that both of us, as members of a famous family, subjects, and married, can, neither of us escape the

threefold authority of our families, of the sovereign, and of the law. Against those combined forces, my Eleanor, there is not in the whole universe one single asylum for two lovers."

"Not one single asylum! I shall find one. At any rate let us go, let us disguise ourselves well, change our names, and be concealed in some obscure village, where they will not come to look after us; and if they were to come, we shall have against our persecutors one last resource; we shall kill ourselves."

"Kill ourselves!"

"Yes, live together, or die! I will have you carry me away! And you shall!"

"We shall kill ourselves! And our child?"

"Our child? Our child! He is right," she cried, with deep despair, "he is right! What determination am I to fix upon?"

"Upon one, equally cruel and indispensable, my dear, my most unhappy dear. Do you recollect what your aunt was proposing to you the other day?"

"And you too, Faublas, would give me that horrid advice? It is my lover who invites me to throw myself into the arms of another man."

"Eleanor, that sacrifice does not appear to me less painful than it does to you! It is dreadful"

"Dreadful indeed! More dreadful than death!"

"Eleanor? and our child?"

Suffocated by her sobs, she could not answer me. It appeared to me that the propitious moment was come to detail with force the many reasons that were to convince and persuade her.

"All that may be," she said at length, "but how can you arrange matters so as to re-capacitate M. de Lignolle?"

"My dear, you have allowed him one minute only for the experiment; perhaps by granting him a whole night."

"A whole night! An age of tortures! And, the same as at the first time, I shall be obliged to go and tell him that I will have it done?"

"Let us beware. Your frequent sick headaches, your being often sick, and many other circumstances must already have caused inquietude to M. de Lignolle. If after six months' silence you were to give him peremptory orders, your husband might conceive strange and dreadful suspicions. We have no other means left than to apply to a skilful, discreet and complaisant physician, who will come and examine your supposed illness, and prescribe marriage."

"Where is such a man as you describe to be found?"

"Everywhere. Our doctors are men of honour, accustomed to keep family secrets, to maintain peace between married couples, and—"

"So I must trust a stranger!"

"Why indeed, I don't find that to be necessary. A friend can—I'll tell you what, I will provide the physician. Your tears begin to run again, my Eleanor! Ah! The same as yours, my heart is torn."

"I am going to immolate myself," she said sobbing, "and shall become less dear to him. I shall no longer be his wife, I shall only be his mistress."

I succeeded in calming her inquietude; but I made vain efforts to comfort her, for the misfortune with which she was threatened. She wept in my arms till four in the morning; as I was obliged to leave her then, we agreed that two days after I would bring the physician, and that the painful sacrifice was to be accomplished on the following night.

Totally preoccupied on the preceding day with the desire of seeing her, I had, while thinking of the means of gaining admittance to her apartment, entirely forgotten those of getting out of it. "My dear, I think of it rather late, how shall I manage to return home."

"Alas you are going away, my dear?"

"Yes, but I have only woman's clothes by me. A young girl in full dress, running about the streets at four o'clock in the morning by herself, will create suspicion; the guard will arrest me, and I don't at all wish to be carried again to Saint Martin."

"Is that all?" she replied. "Wait a bit. I shall get up too, we shall call up La Fleur; without making a noise he will put the horse to the gig, and attended by my servant I shall see you to your own door, and by this means we shall continue longer in each other's company. I shall tell M. de Lignolle it was indispensable for you to return to your convent by daybreak."

What she proposed was executed. La Fleur, who appeared entirely devoted to us, served us most zealously. Madame de Lignolle left me only at the moment when my faithful Jasmin, hearing the signal previously agreed upon, came running to open the gate of the hôtel. I went to lay down, and it was striking ten when M. de Belcourt awoke me. He asked me if I had had a good night."

"Very good, father."

"And the sick headache?"

"The sick headache! Ah! still feel some secret pain from it! But it does not signify! May I, at the price of several days' sufferings, obtain occasionally similar nights to that I have just spent."

I had scarcely ended those words, when good fortune brought in M. de Rosambert. My father, who had not seen the Count since his unfortunate duel at La Porte Maillot, overwhelmed him with civilities. The Baron at last went down into his apartment. As soon as we were left alone, Rosambert began reproaching me again. "You have given me your word of honour, "he said, and yet a fortnight has elapsed."

"You see, my father never leaves me. I might have gone to your house, but with him."

"That would have procured me at least the pleasure of seeing you."

"Come, Rosambert, a truce to compliments, and confess candidly that the Baron's visit would not prove very agreeable to you. M. de Belcourt is very amiable, but he is my father. It is the company of young people that you like."

"It is that which I prefer. Chevalier, have you heard a great piece of news? You will remember perhaps a certain obliging Countess, who, the first time that I

conducted you to a ball-room, carried me away that you might be left with Madame de B***."

"Undoubtedly! I do remember her; she is pretty enough."

"You need not tell me so; nobody knows it better than I do. This Countess had for a long time since been intimate with the Marchioness; it is assured that those two ladies were equally interested in sparing each other; yet they are no longer upon very good terms. Their rupture makes a great noise in the world, and is spoken of diversely. One day, as I was going to pay my first visit to the Marchioness of Rosambert,<71> I found the lovely Countess at her house, and she manifested a great friendship for me; it was not very difficult for me to find out that she wished for my alliance."

"Ah! No more on the subject. Let me tell you, Rosambert, that you are come very *apropos*; I was going to write to beg of you to render me a service of importance."

Of my adventures with Madame de Lignolle, I only concealed those parts in which Madame de B*** was connected; I spoke much about the aunt and the niece, but took great care not to say a word about the cousin. My recitals, though curtailed, supplied him with an inexhaustible subject of pleasantry; and when his merriment had been sufficiently exercised, "I already feel strong enough," he said, "to attend upon some pretty female patients; besides, it is impossible to refuse so ludicrous an errand as that which Madame de Brumont honours me with; tomorrow she will see me at the Countess's, ready to answer her confidence in me; tomorrow she will do me the justice to own that the most scientific doctor could not have taken better measures than myself to secure to the impotent M. de Lignolle the honours of paternity.

A moment after the departure of Rosambert, the Baroness came to see us. I was surprised at first to hear her speak as follows to M. de Belcourt: "M. de Lignolle has never espoused his wife; it is a fact which every person is acquainted with, and still his wife is with child! You know of it, Baron; for that avowal, with which she has suddenly astonished you, she would, immediately after, and with the same candour, have regaled her husband, if Madame d'Armincour had not opposed it. The question now is to save the thoughtless girl, who deserves to be pitied; there is but one single mode, however, namely, to contrive to induce the unworthy husband to consummate his marriage, which is no trifling matter; but something more difficult still, perhaps, is to prevail upon Madame de Lignolle to suffer the attempt to be made. I can see no one in the whole world but the father of the child who will be able to persuade the mother to a determination, for which, whoever knows the lover and the husband, will be sensible that no small share of fortitude is requisite. A doctor is to be let into the secret, who will prescribe the conjugal union; the husband will hear the sentence, and the aunt will press the execution of it. All is ready for tomorrow; but the whole will fail if Mademoiselle de Brumont is not present. Allow me, then, M. le Baron, to call soon and take your son in his disguise, and conduct him to Madame de Lignolle; Mademoiselle de Brumont will spend the day there, and I promise to bring her back again in a moment; the little lady overewhelmed with sorrow will want to be comforted by a look from her friend. Your son on that day, I give you my word of honour, will return to dine with you."

M. de Belcourt, plunged in serious thought, kept silence for a while: "Madame," he said, at length, "will you promise not to part from this young man for

one single moment?" She promised. He then addressed me: "Twice more put on Mademoiselle de Brumont's clothes; but, remember, that after that you are to take them off, and never to wear them again."

Madame de Fonrose had not taken leave of us for a quarter of an hour, when M. de Belcourt received a note. The Baron, upon reading it, assumed a gloomy air, some signs of impatience also frequently escaped him, and he exclaimed several times: "In fact, that appears probable!"

"Some bad news, father?"

"Yes, bad, my son."

"Nothing about Sophia?"

"Sophia not a word."

"Nor my sister?"

"Nor your sister, neither."

"Farewell, sir; may you sleep well this night, although the last was a good one; tomorrow put on the perfidious disguise, and after tomorrow, in the forenoon, you have my leave, but it be for the last time; for the last time, understand me well!"

XXVIII.

On the next day, before twelve, the Baroness and I were at Madame de Lignolle's; we had not long to wait for the doctor. No one could have recognised in his new costume, the friend of the Chevalier de Faublas. He was no longer that elegant young man, thoughtless, jovial, replete with grace and amiableness; he was, however, a handsome doctor, gallant, courteous, lively and charming, like the rest of them. He advanced straight to my Eleanor.

"This is the patient; there is no occasion to point her out to me! What is her illness? Where does it settle? With such a figure, and such eyes! It must be the consequence of derangement somewhere? It requires a great knowledge of the case to find it out here! But, a little patience! It will decamp ere long."

"Monsieur le Comte knows the new piece? Good for nothing."

"I have not seen it myself, I have not one hour's respite! Crowds of patients assail me! It is natural enough though; they are tired of getting killed by others."

"My fair lady, let me feel the pulse. Ah! What a sweet hand! A charming hand!" He kissed it.

"What are you doing?" said the Countess, "with a laugh."

"I know well others will feel it, I listen to it; through this so fine skin, I could even see it."

The MARCHIONESS D'ARMINCOUR. The doctor is jocose! (In a low voice, to Faublas): Receive my best thanks; it is you no doubt who have persuaded my niece to adopt the only measure that could save her; and to this service, add that of never being connected with her again; and I shall say, notwithstanding your former wrongs, that you are certainly a man of honour.

ROSAMBERT. There is a rumour of an approaching war. The emperor has projects of conquest; if I were in the place of the Grand Signior,<72> I would collect five-hundred thousand men, cross the Danube—it is agitated, my fair lady—"

The COUNTESS (laughing.) Who? The Grand Signior on the Danube?

ROSAMBERT. Well! Very well! We will cure you; you like a joke. Your pulse, my fair lady; there is a *je ne sais qoi*, which causes it to beat too quick—and I would go and lay siege to Vienna—Madame complains of being sick, I believe?

The COUNTESS. You commit a mistake, doctor, for though I feel sick, I don't complain of it.

ROSAMBERT. However, you must take great care, Madame! Your sickness proceeds from an affection of the heart! And the heart is not to be sported with! It is the noble part, and you are sensible that if I were to lay siege to it, it would be with the intention of taking it—and immediately after its surrender, I would march straight up to Saint Petersburg, to go and pay a visit to that ambitious empress. Does she sleep well?

MADEMOISELLE DE BRUMONT. Doctor, the ambitious sleep but little.

ROSAMBEBT. Oh! It is Madame I am speaking of.

The COUNTESS (still laughing.) Me, that is quite another thing; for some time past I have not slept well. (She then assumed a serious and tender air, and casting

at me a sudden but significant look, added): I nevertheless never entertained any other ambitious desire, but of being able to do without doctor's prescriptions.

ROSAMBERT. Truly, my fair lady, I confess it would be better to do without; but, necessity, when pressing, must be attended to—At the end of the campaign, I would return to recruit myself in my seraglio; but I would have French women in my seraglio! And you, Monsieur le Comte?

M. de LIGNOLLE. I likewise.

ROSAMBERT. Ah! It is not to be disputed; none are so amiable as the French women! I behold some here who are charming; you, for instance, sir, possess one who is worth a thousand others; but only imagine how delightful, if you had two or three hundred more like her, without reckoning many more that you might send for, and have brought from Italy, Spain, England, Golconda, Cachemira,<73> Africa, America, and, in short, from all the different parts of the world.

The BARONESS (laughing.) Gently, doctor. What a sultan you would be!

The COUNTESS (to her husband.) I believe that so many people would only occasion you some uneasiness.

ROSAMBERT (to the Countess.) Yes! It might create a little jealousy! But don't be angry with me. It was not in earnest that I advised M. le Comte. (To M. de Lignolle): Do you give her much exercise?

M. de LIGNOLLE. Exercise? She takes too much, she kills herself.

ROSAMBERT. Young women like that, and they are right: they seldom feel the worse for it. Do you enjoy a good appetite, Madame?

The COUNTESS. I did formerly, but I have lost it.

ROSAMBEET. You have lost it; you don't sleep; my fair lady, your soul is affected with some secret trouble.

M. de LIGNOLLE. Are you acquainted, doctor, with the affections of the soul?

ROSAMBERT. Better than any man in the world.

M. De LIGNOLLE. Better! That is soon said. But we shall see; allow me to put your deep knowledge to the test: is mine own soul in its complete equilibrium!

ROSAMBERT. Your soul? Do you think I can't see, that at this present moment there is a something that perplexes it!

M. de LIGNOLLE. What is that?

ROSAMBERT (in an ill humour.) You insist upon it! I will speak it all out: what perplexes your soul, is in the first place, the situation of your lady, because, if her illness became serious, and that your wife should die, you would be obliged to return her marriage portion.

M. de LIGNOLLE (haughtily.) M. le Docteur, you offend me!

ROSAMBERT (in high spirits.) It is your own fault, M. le Comte. Wherefore do you not treat learned men with that consideration and respect that are due to them! What, moreover, tortures your soul, is the composition of some work of genius, that does not go on as quick as you could wish; for I do not look at your dress, which

informs me, that you are a military character, it is your soul that I examine: it is depicted in your countenance in your looks: I can read there that you cultivate letters with success.

M. de LIGNOLLE (with a satisfied air.) You see very right; you are a skilful man. To tell you the truth, I am now already tormented about a riddle.

ROSAMBERT. What! Am I so fortunate as to have met the Monsieur de Lignolle, who fills our public papers with his poetry, who supplies the Mercuré with his masterpieces!

M. de LIGNOLLE (in a transport of joy.) Masterpieces? You are too kind. However, I am the M. de Lignolle whom you are speaking of.

ROSAMBERT. Oh! Sir, excuse the little report—

M. de LIGNOLLE. I beg you will not mention it! I must beg your pardon; for I confess that it were difficult to carry further the knowledge of the soul

ROSAMBERT. I have heard that the Countess would also meddle with riddles.

The COUNTESS. Yes, I have composed one.

ROSAMBERT. Very well, my fair lady; go on, it will amuse you. Be not uneasy on account of your actual indisposition; your illness will be a mere nothing; it is only a case of plenitude. To be sure there is a plenitude; but whence does it originate?

He then held his head between his two hands, and for a long time appeared absorbed in deep reflection; he next looked most attentively at the Countess. "Upon my honour!" he exclaimed, afterwards, this is beyond my comprehension; for after all it is the case of a maiden, and this handsome person is Madame la Comtesse." (To M. de Lignolle, low, but distinctly, so that we did not lose a syllable): "Tell me, you must neglect your charming wife very much?" We could not hear the husband's answer; but Rosambert resumed: "It must be so, though, for there is plenitude, redundance, a complete plethora; and if you do not remedy it, the jaundice will infallibly come next; and after the jaundice—why, faith, you would have the marriage portion to return; take care of yourself."

M. de LIGNOLLE. (in a faltering voice.) I can assure you it is not in the marriage portion—

ROSAMBERT (to the Countess.) How long have you been married!

The COUNTESS. Very near eight months, doctor.

ROSAMBERT. Eight months! She must be very near her accouchement. M. le Comte, do your duty to Madame: this very night! Or I could not answer for the consequence.

M. de LIGNOLLE. Doctor, observe—

The MARCHIONESS D'ARMINCOUR (harshly.) No observations. A child!

The BARONSS (in a caressing tone.) A child to this little one; what would that cost you?

M. de LIGNOLLE. But—

ROSAMBERT (in a friendly tone.) Ah! No buts. A child!

The MARCHIONESS D'ARMINCOUR (weeping.) Alas! Doctor, perhaps you prescribe to him what is impossible.

ROSAMBERT (pointing to the Countess.) How so? Impossible! Does the lady refuse her consent!

The COUNTESS (with tears in her eyes) I—I—.

MADEMOISELLE de BRUMONT (throwing herself at the knees of the Countess, low.) Eleanor, think of me, think of our child (aloud) Madame la Countess, if you pay the least return to the tender attachment of your aunt, to that of your friends and to mine, say that you consent.

The Countess lifted up her eyes to heaven, then turned them towards me, and, dropping her hand into mine, heaved a deep sigh and was heard to pronounce the fatal: "I consent."

ROSAMBERT (To M. de Lignolle.) Well! She consents; what have you to say now?

The MARCHIONESS D'ARMINCOUR (sobbing.) That he cannot achieve it, the traitor!

ROSAMBERT. That he cannot! That is what I shall never be made to comprehend. The repugnance is not probable; the wife is a charming woman! Neither is it owing to the want of physical powers? You are quite in your prime yet. What is your age? About sixty?

M. de LIGNOLLE (rather angrily.) Very little more than fifty, sir.

ROSAMBERT. You see! But though you were double, these charms are capable of reviving a centenarian.

The BARONESS. Be it so, doctor; but give me leave to introduce a quotation:

On dit qu'on n'a jamais tous les dons à-la-fois,
Et que les gens d'esprits, d'ailleurs très estimable,
Ont fort peu de talent pour former leurs semblables,
DESTOUCHES, *Le Philosophe Marié*.<74>

ROSAMBERT. With regard to men of wit, be it so; but a man of genius! A man like M. le Comte, is in every respect superior to other men. Wait a moment, though it is very possible that we were all right, as I can demonstrate. Authors who compose, by dint of perpetual meditation, force the blood and the humours continually to flow towards the head; it is to the brains therefore that all the spirits are carried; unfortunately the brains being incessantly exercised, acquire strength only at the expense of the other parts that languish. The left arm, for instance, which you use much less than the right, is much the weakest. Well it is the same in this case. The head of a man of letters, is his right arm: all the rest of him is the left; which is so much the better for glory, but so much the worse for love.

The MARCHIONESS D'ARMINCOUR. What do I care for glory! Have I married my niece, that she might be regarded with glory alone?

ROSAMBERT. Rightly spoken! All ladies are of the same opinion on that point; but be comforted, a remedy is near at hand: I who am now speaking to you, have, in a similar case performed a miraculous cure, upon every member of a provincial academy.

All the members of that literary society were labouring under the same disease as M. le Comte appears to be afflicted; all the married women in that small town looked emaciated, and exhibited sallow complexions. Provincial wives, who are very particular respecting the article of matrimonial duty, were unwilling to die without complaining; they cried out against literature; they hallooed! And made an infernal roaring! Their good fortune would have it so, that I was travelling that road, was recognised, and called upon to attend them. I found out at once, that by re-establishing the equilibrium of the humours, and the ordinary circulation of the blood, everything would return of itself to its natural state. For those literati, who were very willing to be made men again, I composed an excellent potion, a wonderful potion—a potion in short! The success was prodigious. From the very next day, the complexion of every complainant looked to be brighter; but what happened to be most remarkable in the adventure was, that at nine months from the period, on the same day, and nearly at the same hour, all my academical females were delivered of a stout boy, well constituted; of a boy, do you hear! Because the fathers had gone to work with incredible ardour!

What occasions my laughing, is a pleasant circumstance I just recollect. Only think, this day of general delivery, which the ladies seemed to have appointed, happened to be a day of meeting, each husband lost his counter. This, which proved a subject of great mortification for the first literary characters, was a source of amusement for the whole town.

M. le Comte, I am returning home, in order to compose a like potion for you only, as I imagine that you are possessed of more genius than those gentlemen, you must have suffered more in your constitution than they had, and, of course, I shall double the doses. I shall send you the paternal draught this evening; swallow it up at one draught, and I warrant that in the night Madame will hear of it. Mademoiselle de Brumont and I shall call tomorrow morning to admire the effect of the remedy.

He added, in a lower tone of voice: "Don't fail, for it is a pressing case. It would be a great pity to bury that young woman, and to have her portion to return. I must leave you; the whole town are waiting for me. Good morning to you, sir; ladies, your servant."

His departure released me from a heavy burden; for I could see the doctor continually getting into better spirits, and I was afraid that he had already carried the joke too far. However, M. de Lignolle's satisfied look, and tone of confidence quieted me. Without being discomposed at the bitter reproaches of Madame d'Armincour, he proudly replied: "Is it my fault if glory and love do not agree? Have you not heard the doctor? He is a very clever man: I certify he is, and since he takes it upon himself to re-establish the equilibrium, you will see to-night you will see!" He went away much pleased with himself.

As soon as he was gone, the Baroness, who could hold no longer, burst out laughing. "Where in the name of patience, she asked, have you found out that truly amiable physician?"

"In fact," interrupted the Countess, who laughed and wept at the same time, "your friend is very entertaining! Quite so! He has found means to enliven one of the most distressing moments of my life."

"And what he says is sound reasoning," exclaimed Madame d'Armincour: "full of sense! What is the name of that charming man?"

"Rosambert."

"The Count de Rosambert!" said the Baroness: "The unfortunate lover of Madame de B***! I have heard him spoken of with high encomiums, which he appears to be deserving of."

"The Count de Rosambert!" repeated the Marchioness; "that is the name! He is the same young man who was recommended to me to—he is your intimate friend?"

"He is, Madame."

"I am very glad of it; that young man carries his recommendation on his countenance, he does not in the least bear the appearance of being another M. de Lignolle!"

Madame d'Armincour not long after asked me politely whether I was not going. The Countess immediately declared she insisted upon my remaining with her the whole day long; she even protested I should not leave her before the fatal hour, and that if she were compelled to send me away sooner, she would not allow M. de Lignolle to enter the apartment.

"Another act of imprudence!" exclaimed the Marchioness. "It is high time there should be an end to all this. Madame, I tell you over again; people begin to talk about the world; there must have been some shocking bad rumours circulated against you, for several times within a few days, some folks, even in my presence, have indulged scandalous jokes respecting our Mademoiselle de Brumont, with whom you are said to be intimately connected; how is it possible that your secret, a secret, of this nature, which for a long time since has been entrusted to so many individuals, should be well kept? I beg of you, niece, henceforth let your conduct be regulated by my advice; if it is not for my sake, let it be for your own. Do not ruin yourself, do not obstinately insist upon detaining—"

"I insist, aunt, upon her stopping till night, and her coming tomorrow at an early hour to comfort me."

"Since you will have her stay, I must yield consent; but you must allow me at least not to leave you."

"Alas! You might leave us without any risk, you may stay today, as well as tomorrow—the same day, I assure you, shall not witness an odious shame."

Notwithstanding, the Marchioness did not leave us, my Eleanor found means to say to me: "My aunt does not know that you lately have spent a night here; I have requested M. de Lignolle not to tell her of it. I observed to him, that Madame d'Armincour, naturally talkative, might, perhaps, mention it to someone, who might accidentally repeat it to your father, and thus bring you into trouble. So you see, my dear, that we may still expect more than one happy night"

"But it will neither be tomorrow, nor even—"

"Oh, no! I could not pass on a sudden from the arms of such a man, into the arms of my lover."

Tedious as the day was, yet to us it appeared too short. The fatal potion was brought very punctually. The Count at first seized it with avidity; but as soon as he had tasted it, we saw him make horrid grimaces, and finally place the phial on the mantel-piece; most luckily it was nearly empty; Madame d'Armincour never could persuade him to drink the small quantity of the liquor he had left.

Illustration: But as soon as he had tasted it, we saw him make a horrid grimace, and finally place the phial on the mantelpiece.

The cruel moment arrived. The Countess went to bed when the clock had struck twelve. I saw her bathe her pillow with her tears, I saw her secretly kiss the place where my head had rested two nights before. My dear Eleanor! What a farewell I did hear her pronounce, with what a look was it accompanied! My soul was lacerated. Her plaintive accent and dolorous glance, seemed both equally to upbraid me for the horrid sacrifice which was soon to be accomplished. My dearest Eleanor! She was as pale and trembling as a felon under sentence of death. Was that the woman, who half a year before, would say to her husband in a decided tone: "I insist upon it?" Love! O Almighty Love, what an empire do you exercise over our minds and our hearts!

On my return home, I was overwhelmed with grief. M. de Belcourt tried useless efforts to disguise how deeply concerned he felt for my sorrows. What a sad night I did pass? Pardon me, however, my Sophia! Pardon me; it was not you entirely who this time occasioned my restless night; but at least, you still know, as well as your unfortunate rival, how to excite my lively regret, and tender commiseration; you were at least, upon my rising, the first object of my solicitude.

"You told me, father, that in a fortnight, we were to go and fetch my wife; upwards of a fortnight is elapsed."

He answered with an embarrassed air, "I have some indispensable business to attend to first. I don't think now it will be long. Have patience for a few days."

"I wish you good morning, father."

"Whither are you going so early?"

"To dress, and go to the Baroness, and from thence to the Countess. You have given me leave. I most assuredly will return to dine with you, father."

We did not call for Rosambert; he had appointed his hour, and we were both punctual, that upon our arrival at M. de Lignolle's, we saw the doctor's carriage in the yard. This was a job coach, well chosen for the present occasion, with outside steps, French fashion, the body straight and long, a kind of a gothic vis-a-vis, the demi-fortune of a physician. We met Rosambert, who was gravely ascending the stairs. Madame d'Armincour advanced with tears in her eyes, to open the door of her niece's bed-room. The niece, on the contrary, rushed into my arms, with all the signs of extreme satisfaction. Surprised, I asked her very earnestly, what could occasion her such joyous transports? "Congratulate me," she exclaimed, "congratulate yourself, that M. de Lignolle is not changed in the least. He is not as yet M. de Lignolle, neither am I his wife. Your Eleanor is yours only."

At the same moment, M. de Lignolle, who undoubtedly had heard the doctor coming, entered the room, and without showing the least confusion, addressed Rosambert as follows: "Doctor, the equilibrium is not re-established; what say you to that?"

"What say I? That it is not the fault of my remedy; that you are a man of genius, as few are to be met with."

"Moat fortunately, exclaimed the aunt."

"A man of genius incurable!" pursued Rosambert; "a man of genius, whose head will ever be wonderful, but who, for all the rest, will remain impotent all his life-time."

"I should have acted right, perhaps," resumed the Count, "showing the phial, if I had not left that."

"Certainly you would have acted better; but it does not signify: the quantity that you have drank, sir, would have sufficed for four ordinary literati. I am not a man to impose upon, or to trifle with my patients, since that has produced no effect, you will not recover, you never will get better, never."

"What! Do you think that the course—"

The Count was interrupted by the sudden arrival of his brother, the Vicomte de Lignolle, a captain in the Royal Navy. The impatient sea-faring man rushed into his

sister-in-law's apartment without waiting till he had been announced. He was a man five feet ten inches high, bulky, and strong in proportion, a kind of Hercules, with black hair, large mustachios, a long sword by his side, a savage look, and the whole countenance of a bravo.

The CAPTAIN. Good morning to you, brother: good morning everybody.

M. de LIGNOLLE (apparently pre-occupied.) Good morning, my dear. (To Rosambert.) You are of opinion, that the course of the blood and of the humours is invincibly determined?

The CAPTAIN. Who is ill here?

ROSAMBERT. Your sister-in-law.

The CAPTAIN. She is indisposed, that woman? Perhaps it is so much the better. Zounds, we shall see.

The BARONESS (in a low voice, to Mademoiselle de Brumont, who had just cast a threatening look at the Vicomte.) I believe I have spoken to you sometimes of this enormous personage; his coming here appears to bode us nothing good. Above all things, be patient and moderate.

ROSAMBERT. Your brother is not quite as he should be.

The CAPTAIN. What ails you?

M. de LIGNOLLE. Why, am deficient in equilibrium.

The CAPTAIN. Thunder and lightning! I believe you want to crack your jokes! I see you standing firm upon both your legs, and as erect as I am.

ROSAMBERT. That is not the equilibrium in question; that is the universal equilibrium. The one which the gentleman is in want of, is the right proportion of the affections of the body.

M. de LIGNOLLE. And of the affections of the soul; that is—

The CAPTAIN. Oh! The affections of the soul! I wondered at your not having bothered me with them before. (To Rosambert.) Hear me, good sir, all that may be very fine what you are speaking about; but may five hundred devils seize me, if I understand a word of it!

ROSAMBERT. That, however, is very plain; but I will explain it to you over again. The body of the wife is ill, because the mind of the husband is too well. I have prescribed for the restoration of the lady's health that she should procreate.

The CAPTAIN. Procreate! *Apropos*, brother, do you know it is reported that your wife does not want you for that achievement

MADEMOISELLE DE BRUMONT. That *apropos* is very impertinent! Do you know, captain, that if all naval officers were like you, they would be very disagreeable gentlemen?

The CAPTAIN. Pray, my young miss, perchance you have a brother?

MADEMOISELLE DE BRUMONT. What then I if I had one?

The CAPTAIN. Though you had thirty, I would beg of them, one after another, to meet me behind the convent of the Carthusian friars.

MADEMOISELLE DE BRUMONT. I believe, captain, notwithstanding your menacing airs, that the first who would go, might spare the rest the trouble of taking the walk.

The CAPTAIN (with contempt.) You are very lucky you are only a female.

The tone in which he pronounced these words fully quieted me respecting the equivocal sense of his previous questions. I was going to reply angrily, when the Baroness, who continually watched over me, said in a whisper: "For God's sake! Be composed! Think that your Eleanor's safety is at stake." Madame de Lignolle, meanwhile, with her well-known vivacity, just then signified to her rude brother-in-law that, if he continued thus to treat her with disrespect, she would have him turned out of doors. "Don't mind what he says," exclaimed the Count; "he is a hot-headed fellow."

ROSAMBERT (to the Captain.) Sir, whoever has told you the impertinent story you have just repeated, has told you a lie; it is my business to understand those matters, and this very minute, if required, I am ready to sign that Madame la Comtesse, on the contrary, stands in great need of her husband for the said purpose. Unfortunately, M. le Comte does not in the least want his wife! Not at all. He is so constituted that in his whole person the intellectual part preponderates over the material.

The CAPTAIN. True I my brother is far from being stupefied; he composes—

ROSAMBERT. Very well so far; but it is not with his wit that a husband can cause his wife to be pregnant. I therefore wished, in the present case, to force the mind to suspend its operations a little, that it might not impede the body sometimes performing its functions also; I wished to re-establish the equilibrium.

M. de LIGNOLLE (laughing, to the Captain.) He has not succeeded. Look here! You who understand chemistry, look at this, I have drunk all that is wanted in the phial.

The CAPTAIN (after shaking the bottle, and applying a drop of the liquid to his tongue.) Hell and fire! Who is the cursed ass who has composed for you this horse medicine?

M. de LIGNOLLE. It was not an ass. It was the doctor.

ROSAMBERT (bowing to the Captain.) It was the doctor, Mr. Censor! A proof of my potion not being too strong, is that it has produced no effect.

The CAPTAIN. What the deuce! A decoction of cantharides! The most powerful aphrosidiac! And in such a dose! If I were to take the twenty-fifth part I should be like a madman for five-and-twenty nights! That would have sufficed to infuriate the whole of my crew.

The MARCHIONESS D'ARMINCOUR (weeping.) And yet it has produced no effect.

The CAPTAIN. No effect! Why zooks! My poor brother, there must be ice in your heart, in your entrails, all over you. In the name of patience what stuff has our dear mother made you of? It is not the same blood, at least, that runs through our veins! No, it cannot be the same blood. True, indeed, I am a younger brother, your junior by upwards of a twelvemonth, without any compliment, but at all times, it must be confessed—

M. de LIGNOLLE (rubbing his hands.) It is my genius, in fact, that occasions that.

The CAPTAIN. What a deuce of a genius! I am very glad, however, that you have entirely monopolised it; for, according to your own account, you have had genius from an early period of your life. At all times, that is what I wanted to say, my dear elder brother at all times has cut but a very poor figure among the fair sex.

The MARCHIONESS d'ARMINCOUR. Since you knew of that, why did you suffer him to take a wife?

The CAPTAIN. Ah! Why should I have prevented him from concluding an advantageous marriage?

The MARCHIONESS D'ARMINCOUR (in a rage.) Shocking calculation! (To M. de Lignolle): Cursed wit! I wish now your wife would cuckold you as many times as she has hairs upon her head.

The CAPTAIN. Why, indeed, it is she said has fancied to do as much; but I shall cure her of that whim; I am returned to this country on purpose.

The MARCHIONESS (to the Captain.) And as for you, Mr. Bully, I wish that somebody (casting a look upon Mademoiselle de Brumont) of my acquaintance would run you through as many times as my niece is worth thousands per annum!

The CAPTAIN (in a menacing tone, and with a sneer.) Tell me, my good woman, tell me the name of that acquaintance of yours!

The MARCHIONESS. Good woman! His name! His name! Go, go, perhaps you will know his name but too soon.

The CAPTAIN. By G—d I we shall see. At any rate, brother, be on your guard. Read that article of a letter that I found on my return to Brest: You told me that your brother never could consummate his marriage I do not remember having said so, but it does not signify, let us go on: How then does it happen that your sister-in-law is pregnant?

ROSAMBERT. She is not.

The CAPTAIN. I am glad to hear it. (To his brother): The letter is signed Saint-Leon, a friend of mine, you know. Boiling with rage, I took post-horses, and on my arrival alighted at Saint-Leon's; he told me he had never written. I showed him the paper, and he proved it was not his handwriting, but someone had tried to imitate it.

The BARONESS (low, to Mademoiselle de Brumont.) I apprehend this is a perfidious trick of your Madame de B***. (To the Captain): Show me that letter (as she returns it): If you are a rational man, I shall ask you what credit you can give to the inculpations of a forger?

The CAPTAIN. Very well! Very well! I condescend to believe it is not the exact truth; but there is no smoke without a fire. I intend to stop here for a few days; and let me see a coxcomb come near her! May a hundred thousand bombs crush me, if I don't cut off the puppy's ears.

MADEMOISELLE DE BRUMONT. Captain, your name has reached me; unfortunately, you have made it too famous. Thirsty tiger, when you cannot quench upon the English the thirst that devours you, you drink the blood of your brethren. France, it is well known, has not a more renowned duellist than you are; think,

however, that there still remain in the kingdom some brave young men, who, although they don't make it a trade unceasingly to massacre, are not the less capable of fighting, and, perhaps, of punishing you. If I were in the place of the Countess, I would try, at least; determined by your menaces, I would this very evening take a lover, declare him to be so, and would choose in preference the weakest, perhaps.

ROSAMBERT (with enthusiasm.) No! The youngest, but the most formidable; a handsome young man, of a prodigious strength, extreme dexterity, and uncommon intrepidity; and I, who am speaking to you, Madame, would forfeit my life, if, on the contrary, this champion did not bring you the Captain's ears, if you asked him for them.

The BARONESS. But you would not ask for them, would you, Countess? You would seek no other revenge for the threats of a Hector than the contempt which they deserve.

The CAPTAIN. What is the opinion of insignificant women to me! However, I shall take up my quarters here.

The COUNTESS. In this hôtel? No, by no means.

The CAPTAIN. How so! Am I refused an apartment in your house, brother?

The COUNTESS. Most undoubtedly, I never will have you as an inmate.

The CAPTAIN (to the Count.) You don't answer me! Why don't you bid her hold her tongue? Ah! You suffer yourself to be led by a woman! Blood and flesh! I wish I were in your place only for four-and-twenty-hours, the husband of a scold, I would teach her manners. (To the Countess): Be easy! Be easy! Don't be angry! I shall not stop here in spite of you, but I will take lodgings in the same street, and rely upon it, I will watch you, princess. Rest assured, it will be no fault of mine if you succeed in becoming a little strumpet.

At this last outrage of the captain, the Countess fell in a rage, and returned no other answer, than by throwing at his head a candlestick that happened to be within her reach. I saw the moment when the brute would have returned the compliment. With my left hand I stopped his uplifted arm, and with my right seizing the giant by the collar, I pushed him back so violently, that he tumbled at the further extremity of the room against the window sash, which he broke. Had it not been for the balcony, down he would have gone into the yard.

"Well done my dear Brumont," cried out the Marchioness: "You must kill him! Let us murder the villain who frightens me to death, who insults my child, and offers to beat her!"

I needed not being encouraged by the Marchioness; I was so transported with anger, that having perceived on an armchair M. de Lignolle's sword, which he had left there on the preceding night when he undressed, I ran to seize it. Rosambert, who alone preserved some sang-froid in the midst of so scandalous a scene, ran up to me: "Rash youth," he said, "if you draw it, you will be detected!"

Meanwhile the captain, seated on the fragments of the window sash, was looking at me with astonishment, gazed upon himself with surprise, and with a coarse laugh, said: "It is this young wench; however, who, at one blow has brought me here! What an iron arm, or am I no longer but a man of straw! Odds bodikins! What it is to be taken unawares! A child could beat you! But that sword which she offered to draw

against me! What must I have taken for my defence, miss? A black pin? (he then thought he must get up.) Adieu, fair ladies; adieu, my poor brother, adieu, my lovely little sister; I shall remember the kind reception I have met from you. I am not going far, and will keep a watchful eye over your conduct. Let me alone for that!"

He went away.

"Sir," said Madame de Lignolle to her husband, "it is you that I admire; your tranquillity gives me pleasure! You would have suffered me to be murdered, without even rising from your chair!"

He answered, with a pre-occupied air: "Yes, yes! What do you please to say? I beg your pardon; my body was here, and my mind elsewhere. I meditate the plan of a new poem; this will be composed of eight lines; nay, perhaps I shall write a dozen; and, since the doctor affirms that the equilibrium will not be re-established, I wish to justify the encomiums which he bestows upon my genius, as he says! I will have this work be a little masterpiece, as he declares the others are and I leave you, to forward the poem without relaxation."

When he was gone, we lost a few minutes in looking at one another in silence; each of us surprised, perhaps, at the present, and uneasy about the future events, was mentally engaged in anticipating various circumstances, to be able to act accordingly.

Madame de Fonrose was the first who opened her mouth to recommend great prudence. The Marchioness exclaimed, that it was requisite the Chevalier would never see her niece again. The niece protested she would rather die than give me up: and I, by a look replete with love, assured my Eleanor of my unalterable constancy: I besides swore that her rude brother-in-law should soon give me satisfaction for the gross language he had addressed her in, and the inquietude he had dared to create.

"That," said Rosambert, who spoke last, "is a very irrational determination: for the sake of common interest, my friend, you must dissemble your resentment against the Vicomte; only wait for the events. When Madame will be able no longer to conceal her situation, she then will reveal it to her husband; who, like so many more, will be obliged to put up with the case, and to claim the child as his own. The captain, I know, will make a rare noise; then, Faublas, you will come forward, you will go and whisper a word or two in the ear of the ill-bred navigator; and then I know there will be an end of the business."

Everyone having acknowledged that Rosambert's advice was a very prudent one, Madame d'Armincour, who sobbed aloud, thanked me for having protected her niece, begged of me to protect her at all times, and bade me to be gone, and never to return. "Poor children! she added, seeing that we also were shedding tears, "your grief breaks my heart; but it must be so; it must, indispensably."

"Ah! M. de Rosambert! Wherefore was not this one her husband?"

"Come to-night!" murmured my Eleanor in a low tone of voice, "Come at twelve, we have a thousand things to say to each other. Come!"

"Yes, my sweet dear, I will."

"At an early hour, because the Marchioness, who is going to the wedding of a relation, will not return to supper."

Notwithstanding the presence of her aunt, she rushed into my arms, pressed me to her bosom, loaded me with caresses, and even kissed with transport my

feathers, handkerchief, sash, and gown, as if she were taking leave of my dress, as if she had guessed that she never was to see Mademoiselle de Brumont any more.

It was with great difficulty that we were parted. "Ah, Madame la Baronne, stop with her at least for some time, and try to comfort her."

"With all my heart!" she answered: "M. de Rosambert has his carriage, let him see you home; I shall meet you at the Baron's in an hour."

"Here is one who deserves being pitied," said the Count to me, "for she seems to feel for you a real attachment."

"Do you suppose, Rosambert, that I do not love her?"

"That is a good question! I know you love them all."

"Oh! That one! It is with all my heart; I prefer her—"

"To Sophia!"

"To Sophia! No, not to Sophia!"

"To Madame de B***?"

"Yes, my friend!"

"So much the better!" he exclaimed, "so much the better for me; that avenges me: but so much the worse for the sweet child; for hence proceeds certainly the hatred which the Marchioness bears her."

"The hatred?"

"Assuredly! Do you think it can be any other than Madame de B*** who wrote that pseudonymous letter to the Vicomte?"

"Ah, Rosambert I can you suspect her of a—"

"My friend, you repose too much confidence in that woman."

"And you, my friend, mistrust her too much; be it as it may, I beg of you let us speak of something else."

"Most willingly, for I wish to impart a piece of news that will surprise you; and excite your laughter: I am to be married tomorrow."

"And you want me to wonder at that! Now that your convalescence is indubitable, it is clear that you will get married every day."

"Don't you think that I am joking, it is in good earnest that I am to be married."

"In good earnest?"

"Yes, before the altar."

"Impossible! It has not been heard of!"

"Yet it has been spoken of this fortnight. My word of honour has been exacted that I would mention it to no one, indiscriminately; the grand-parents, who dread the opposition of the rest of the family, have insisted upon the most profound secrecy being kept, and have even procured a dispensation of banns. My mother also recommended me to be silent on the subject, through fear that this advantageous marriage should fail on account of some indiscretion."

"I cannot recover from my surprise. What! Rosambert, at the age of twenty-three, has been able to determine—"

"It could not be otherwise. First of all, it was the Countess de ——, you know, the confidant of Madame de B***."

"Yes."

"It is she who has undertaken the business with a zeal, but under whatever pretence she has strove to cover her extreme interest, I did not mistake her real motives; it was not difficult for me to be made sensible that she did it less to oblige me than to vex her former friend: and, in that respect, I confess that she could not feel better inclined than I was myself; besides, the Marchioness has pressed me."

"The Marchioness?"

"Oh! Whenever one speaks of a Marchioness he always thinks it is of his. No, Chevalier, this one is not over head and ears in love with you; she is the Marchioness of Rosambert. The Marchioness has pressed, requested, entreated me; she has even wept. Who can withstand the tears of a mother? Therefore I suffered myself to be persuaded; the marriage contract is to be signed this evening; tomorrow I shall marry sixty thousand livres per annum, and a pretty girl."

"Pretty?"

"Yes, indeed, with the look of a simpleton, however, and innocent! So as to make one's sides ready to split with laughter."

"Her age?"

"Not quite fifteen. Oh, that is a complete education! The direction whereof I shall take the charge myself."

"Her name?"

"You will know after tomorrow: come at an early hour after tomorrow morning, and without any further ceremony, you will breakfast with the new bride. Do you like those faces of the morrow? Do you like to see a new bride rather impeded in her walk, with beaten eyes, and her still astonished looks?"

"You laugh?"

"I do, you put me in mind of somebody."

"He is right; indeed I am a wonderful fellow! Here I am trying hard to describe what he knows more of than I do! Are not those looks and airs of the morrow familiar to him? Has he not seen the charming de Lignolle, and the beauteous Sophia? And so many more, whom, perhaps, he has never mentioned to me But it does not signify, Chevalier, you may perhaps relish a new kind of pleasure, make interesting observations, and account to yourself of what you will feel near an Agnes newly married, whose secret aches, and charming embarrassed looks, Faublas this once will not have occasioned."

"Your ideas, my dear Rosambert, are truly those of an arch-libertine."

"Don't play the child; no vain excuse; I myself shall be a gainer by it; shall I not likewise have my enjoyments? Shall I not be still more intoxicated with the happiness that another will envy me—will envy to no purpose! I am well acquainted with the little inconveniences of hymen; I am not ignorant of the most inevitable of

all, especially when one has the honour of being the intimate friend of the Chevalier de Faublas; but this once, illustrious hero, do not congratulate yourself in advance upon a new conquest. I hope, and I tell you so with confidence, I expect I shall never become an additional member of the universal fraternity."

"Well done! Here is another exception; and it is Rosambert! Rosambert, who, on the day preceding his marriage, already holds out the language of husbands in general. He must not have forgotten, however, how many times the blind obstinacy of those gentlemen has supplied him with matter for his keenest sarcasms. All, in general, own that there is not one among them but who is one, yet each in particular will affirm that he is not one! And you too, Rosambert, you too."

"Faublas, listen to me, and tell me yourself whether I have not some reasons to expect a different destiny! When an aged bachelor, satiated with pleasure, exhausted by former good fortunes, disgusted with the world that he teases, and with the sex that deserts him; when an old bachelor, enlightened by the constant experience of past times, and of the present age, dares, nevertheless, to brave at once the present age and times to come; when marrying a young wife, he impertinently challenges us to make him what so many others have been made by him, that calls aloud for vengeance: in a similar case, the throng of bachelors ought to unite, in order to punish the braggart. But I, who have scarcely entered my spring, who am courted by the world, whom the fair sex caress: I, who will deny my wife no kind of enjoyment—"

"Enough, Rosambert, say no more, I beg of you; you occasion me too great a surprise. Hymen must be most powerfully prepossessing thus to obscure the best judgment. I don't know you again! You are so strangely altered, that if my sorrows were not so great I would laugh at you."

"Indeed? I must take care of myself, you fill me with terror. Well! I am not already resigned; I submit, in advance, like a man of honour; I promise, whatever may happen, always to be found to be myself. Yes, if the young woman's heart is ever engaged, I can assure you, that unless she carries on her intrigue in a shocking awkward manner, I will never notice it. I believe it is not possible better to repair one's wrongs. Chevalier, is not that a good beginning! You are at full liberty—"

"Me, Rosambert? May everyone, as much as Faublas, respect your happy bonds! Those maxims that I have been repeating just now are yours; I never entertained the like; I never have been a seducer; I have always been allured; the Marchioness was my first attachment; Sophia is my only passion; Madame de Lignolle will be my last love."

"May God hear you, and keep you from it!"

Rosambert had some business to attend to; we alighted at his house, had a conversation that lasted about two hours, yet the time appeared to me very short, as the Count allowed me to speak unceasingly of my Eleanor. At length I was taken home. Madame de Fonrose was leaving my father's apartment when I entered it. The Baron looked highly animated; the Baroness was pale and trembling: "Well," she exclaimed, with an ill-disguised spite, "we shall try to overcome the chagrin which that loss must create, though it is enough to turn one's brains. Is it you, fair miss? Hand me to the carriage."

"Chevalier, if you should see your cruel Marchioness soon, tell her, sir, that I will ruin her, though I were to ruin myself."

When I had changed my female accoutrements, M. de Belcourt and I sat down to dinner, although neither of us had an appetite.

"Father, you don't eat?"

"I am unwell, from inquietude and chagrin. But you don't eat a morsel yourself"

"I have got my head-ache."

"Your sick head-ache! I advise you to give it up: it will not succeed this time; my son, read the last paragraph of this letter, which I received the other day by the two-penny post:"

> I believe it is advisable to inform you that Mademoiselle de Brumont has spent the last night at Madame de Lignolle's, and that it is the Baroness de Fonrose who has taken her there again.

"An anonymous letter, father?"

"True, my son; but would you presume to say the account it gives is untrue? My son, I forbid your going out at night in future; and Madame de Fonrose," he added, "in a much altered tone of voice, Madame de Fonrose shall no longer abuse my confidence; the ungrateful Baroness shall never betray me more! I am a man, my dear son, and consequently liable to error. Sometimes I deviate from the right path; but as soon as I discover my mistake, I step back, and take another road. My dear friend, he pursued, taking both my hands between his, do you wish to copy only my foibles? Had not I foretold that you would finally ruin her, that so unfortunate and so charming a child?"

"Who? Sophia?"

"No, Madame de Lignolle."

"Madame de Lignolle?"

"Since she is pregnant; since henceforth her husband cannot believe, what is to be done to save her?"

"Oh, don't mention it! I have been endeavouring all the morning to find out some means of rescuing her from the dangers with which she is threatened. In vain have I tortured my imagination! I am beyond myself!"

"Her brother-in-law is arrived; you have already had a terrible scene together; my son, do you know the captain?"

"I have heard of his fame."

"Do you know that his fame is tremendous?"

"Tremendous! I am told it is."

"Do you know that the Vicomte de Lignolle has often hit Saint-Georges?"

"Often! Be it so."

"Do you know that that man has fought two hundred times, perhaps?"

"So much the worse for him."

"That he has never been wounded?"

"He is not invulnerable, however, in all probability."

"That he has reduced many a father to despair."

"Monsieur le Baron, so far you have not been reduced yourself."

"That his fatal sword has mowed down many and many a promising youth."

"Ah, father! An obscure youth, perhaps, is only wanted to avenge them all."

"My son, the Captain cannot fail being informed soon that Mademoiselle de Brumont is Madame de Lignolle's lover. I confess he will discover with greater difficulty that Mademoiselle de Brumont is the Chevalier Faublas; soon or late, however, we have reason to believe that he will find it out. My son, what will you do then?"

"What will be requisite? But permit me to observe, sir, yours is a strange—"

"God forbid!" he exclaimed; "God forbid I should wish to insult your youthful courage. I confess even," he added, embracing me, "that the proud simplicity of your manners has given me extreme pleasure; I likewise am sometimes proud, but it is of my son; it is upon my son that I have rested all my pride. You cannot imagine what my raptures were when I saw you, scarcely in the prime of adolescence, have no equal in any of your exercises; at one time bringing back, covered with froth, and broken with fatigue, a fiery steed, which the most famous horsemen were afraid of crossing; at another, with your firelock, bow, or pistols, bring down, at the first shot, the very bird which all the other sportsmen had missed; sometimes in a public assault, in the presence of a crowd of wondering young spectators, beat or disarm all the fencing masters in the newly-arrived regiment. Everyone then, adjudging the prime to the young Chevalier, would congratulate me upon having such a son. Yet I thought within myself, with a kind of impatience, and not without some sort of inquietude, that your superiority would not be well consecrated, until an event, always fatal, had compelled you to undergo a last ordeal, too commonly attended with regret; a trial, for the success of which, without courage, skill is of no avail. You have gone through that ordeal too soon; but I am not afraid of saying, that upon the occasion, you behaved more than well. If his anger had less blinded him, M. de B***, who enjoys some reputation as a swordsman, might have admired you at la porte Maillot, when, with marvellous dexterity, uncommon *sang-froid*, mastering your antagonist's weapon, as if the question had been still merely to receive a hit with a foil, you displayed in that fight, become unequal, as much ability as strength, as much true valour as magnanimity. Then, indeed, I conceived the opinion that Faublas, as intrepid as he was skilful, would never be conquered. Astonished then at seeing in a youth of sixteen, the reunion of an uncommon talent, and of a qualification still more rare, your happy father, in the excess of his joy, recollected that he had taken upon himself the charge of superintending your education, and could not contemplate his work without some feeling of pride. Then also, continued M. de Belcourt, embracing me again, I reproached myself for having waited the event to do justice to the most deserving of sons; and you, Faublas, pardon my first apprehensions; if it were a crime not to have credited in advance virtues that had not yet been evinced to me, you see I am punished in consequence; believe me, I was less tormented formerly, lest you should be destitute of them, than I am now by the certainty that you are possessed of them in a superior degree. Yes, my friend, it is the excess of your courage, and your generosity, which at present occasion me the liveliest alarms. Permit me to demand of you several favours."

"Favours?"

"I beg of you not to go to your enemy; I beg of you to wait till he comes to fetch you, and then you will do your duty. Nevertheless, I entreat you to agree to the fight, but upon this express condition, that each of you will be allowed to bring a witness. I wish to see your second affair, more dangerous than the first; I wish, by my presence, to oblige you to return conqueror. Faublas, beware of sparing the Vicomte de Lignolle in the magnanimous manner you did the Marquis de B***; I shall remember it long, your generosity nearly cost me my son. You would not get off with a mere bruise, when opposed to the Vicomte; every wound inflicted by the Captain has proved mortal; and, I repeat it to you, he is a man still more ferocious than he is formidable, a professional duellist. If his valour had not sometimes been useful to government, he long since, for public vengeance, would have lost his head on the block. His existence evinces the unhappy forgetfulness of the wisest of our laws. Think of it, Faublas, when the moment of fighting him is come, then, I conjure you! Think of your father, of your sister, of your Sophia, of Madame de Lignolle, if it must be so. Then, for your own safety, for the good of all, for the tardy satisfaction of a hundred families, immolate the victim, whose blood heaven calls for. He, you know, must receive death who delights in dealing in it; strike without mercy, strike, purge the earth of a monster, and your youth will not have been totally useless to the repose of mankind.

"But," exclaimed M. de Belcourt, "a reflection truly perplexing has just occurred. For a too long time back travels, diseases, and various accidents, have compelled you entirely to neglect your exercises. It is now seven months, upwards of seven months, since you have handled a foil. Gracious God! If you had lost some of that prodigious agility which was admired, and which habit alone can entertain! If your eye was not so quick, your motions so sure! My stars! If you were only a second-rate man! Let us try together, let us try directly. You are not hungry, nor I neither. Where are your foils? Pray give me one! If it were only to quiet me. I beg of you, my good friend, make haste, give me one. I thank you! I sincerely regret I am not able to oppose a resistance equal to the attack; but at least I shall defend myself as well as I can. I am ready, I am on guard, go! That is not it! My son, that is not it! You spare me! Faublas, I order you to display all your powers."

"You insist upon it? Father, now for it then!"

In two minutes time he parried twenty thrusts, and received thirty. "Very well," he exclaimed, "perfectly well! Better than formerly; indeed, I think so. Yes! More pliancy still, more vigour, more rapidity! It is lightning, it is thunder! Never," he continued, passing his hand several times over his breast, "never have you hit me with so much force, never have your hits hurt—no, caused me so much pleasure! Now do me another service; take your pistols, go down into the garden, and shoot at a few birds. I beseech you, do!"

I was going to obey, but he called me back. "I cannot impart too soon a news that will overwhelm you with joy," he said. "On Saturday, without any further delay, we shall set off to try to find out Sophia."

"Sophia? Saturday! That, as you say, is a delightful piece of news!"

"Go into the garden, my friend, go."

I did go down, not to disturb the innocent birds in their amours, but to think of mine. We shall go on Saturday! We shall go in search of and to meet Sophia; what a happiness!

But what am I saying? What will become of Madame de Lignolle? To leave my Eleanor! To desert her now! In five days hence! Unhappy Faublas!

I hurried into my father's apartment: "Do not expect it, sir," I said, "do not expect it! Would you have me, with equal perfidy and cowardice, leave Paris, when the captain is come to fetch me? Shall I forsake the mother of my child at the moment when her enemies muster around her? Do not expect it, sir! I protest it shall not be."

My father was so stupefied, that he could not answer me: and I, without waiting until recovering from his surprise, he would explain his intentions, ran to my room, where I locked myself up to write.

(To Eleanor)
My dear Eleanor, my charming dear, I am grieved beyond expression: we are not to meet this evening. My father is apprised of everything; your aunt must know more about us than you imagine; Madame d'Armincour is the only who could have sent to M. de Belcourt the fatal intelligence which deprives us of a delicious night. Alas! It is true, then, that everybody combines against two lovers! It is true then, that everybody by conjuring your ruin, presumes to attack me in the dearest half of myself! Be easy, however, do not fret, Faublas remains yours, Faublas adores you; whatever may happen, your lover will sooner forfeit his life than forsake you.

(To Madame de B***.)
BEAUTEOUS MAMMA.
"Have I given you offence by some new act of giddiness? It is now eighteen long killing days that I have been deprived of the happiness of seeing you. Ah! pardon me if I am guilty; and if I am not, deign to acknowledge your wrongs, and to repair them: appoint an hour for my meeting you tomorrow. My fair mamma, you have promised me advice, friendship, assistance, protection, that is all I claim. My father wishes to take me with him in the course of five days, to go and fetch Sophia, and at present, I must dread, above all things, that departure, which not long since was the object of my most ardent desire. Could not you, my beautiful mamma, who knew how to remedy every accident, find a remedy for this one? I entreat you, on so difficult a conjuncture, not to leave me to myself, I request you will not refuse me for tomorrow your advice, which I promise you to abide by.
I am with the most lively gratitude, the most tender friendship, and with the most profound respect, etc.

"Here Jasmin! Go quick to La Fleur, and to Madame de Montdesir. Put on a plain coat, use your ordinary precautions and observe on the road, whether you are not followed by anyone!"

"Sir," he said on his return, "Madame de Montdesir—Madame de Montdesir!

"Madame de Montdesir? Let me hear of La Fleur, first?"

"You then wish me to begin at the end? I bring no news from La Fleur, sir. I had just delivered your note to him, when he said to me: 'Jasmin, are you fond of a good caning?' 'Not I, faith,' I replied. 'Well! My friend,' he resumed, 'do you see in the coffee-room facing the hôtel that officer, as high as an Egyptian pyramid?' 'He has a cross look,' I returned. 'Well, my good friend,' he resumed again, 'I believe he has been casting one of his cross looks at you. Run away full speed, if you wish not to

expose my mistress, and your own shoulders.' I then, sir, returned no other answer; but without waiting for further advice, took to my heels, and here I am."

"So that, thanks to your cowardice, I have no news from Madame de Lignolle."

"Sir, I could not have brought you more, although that big devil had broken every bone in my skin."

"Thither you must return though."

"Yes, in the evening, the giant, perhaps, will not be there then."

"And Madame de Montdesir?"

"She recommended me to assure you, that she felt severely for not being honoured with a visit from you: that, however, she was going to forward your letter directly, as it had been expected some days since, and that you would have an answer tomorrow morning."

This answer, in fact, came at an early hour, but it was not written by Madame de Montdesir.

> Yes, I shall prevent that departure; but was not I right to say that Sophia was less dear to you? In the interim, since you manifest the desire, we may meet at seven in the evening, you know where.

I called my servant; "Come, Jasmin, keep up your courage! If it had not failed you yesterday, you might have joined La Fleur; go then this morning to see whether the captain is still at his post."

He was there already. My good Jasmin, who, piqued at my reproaches, had just ventured a little further than on the preceding day, had escaped the cudgelling of the captain only by a prompt retreat. I now became conscious that unless my man was powerfully encouraged, my errand would never be completed. I accordingly had my indefatigable courier to eat a copious dinner, and, when he had got stuffed with fresh courage, he resolutely departed upon new errand, more ill-fated than all the former ones. My poor Jasmin returned, bruised from head to foot.

"This time, sir, I got as far as the yard, but the big devil on a sudden came up to me. He cried out: 'What do you want?' I answered: 'I don't want you, sir.' He hallooed again: 'You shall not come in! What do you want? I then replied, speaking as loud as I possibly could: 'Why would you prevent my coming in? Are you the Swiss?' He then cried out again—no, he did not cry out, he contented himself for the moment by giving me a fisticuff, that made me see thirty thousand burning candles. And it was I who cried out, and well I did so, for if La Fleur and his fellow-servants had not come to rescue me from the grip of the brute, and turn me out of doors, I believe I never could have left the place."

"What a fury! What insolence!"

"Sir," interrupted Jasmin, "I did not hesitate telling him that my master would not in the least feel satisfied for the treatment."

"What did he answer?"

"'Twas me who answered, sir, he only cried out. He then cried out, while striking at me again and again: 'Your Master! What is your master's name? Will you tell me his name?'"

"You have concealed it from him?"

"Yes, sir, and so I would though he were to have killed me on the spot!"

"Well! I shall go myself this minute, and tell him my name."

"Go, exclaimed Jasmin, who saw me take up my sword, and lay that fellow down sprawling as you did that M. de B***, another braggart."

I hastened downstairs, but fortunately met M. de Belcourt half-way, who stopped me.

"Faublas, where are you going with your sword?

"How! He has dared to stop my servant and to strike him."

"So then, my son," he answered with great sang-froid, "you are in greater haste to avenge your servant than you were to avenge your mistress; thus it is that, to obtain redress for a personal outrage, Madame de Lignolle's lover hurries to expose and to ruin her!"

These just representations calmed me directly, I called Jasmin to bid him take away my sword. The Baron, who saw that I was preparing to go out, said to me: "No, go up into your room, I am going there myself, I want to speak to you."

"We are both, my friend, in want of diversion; we cannot procure one sweeter than the company of your sister. I have just sent for Adelaide, and intend to keep her here till Friday evening."

"Why not longer?"

"We are to go on Saturday."

M. de Belcourt observed my countenance whilst returning that answer. As the hour approached, at which I was to go and learn what Madame de B*** proposed doing to prevent my departure, I determined to avoid the explanation the Baron wished for. I was satisfied with replying: "Saturday. Yes—Saturday. Adieu, father."

"Stop; your sister will be here in a quarter of an hour."

"I am obliged to go out, father."

"My son, I will not have you go out"

"I must absolutely go, father."

"I tell you I will not have you leave your home: I am determined you should stop here."

"I can assure you that a most indispensable affair."

"My son, would you wish to disobey me?"

"If I cannot do otherwise, father!"

"I understand you, sir, I therefore shall use force."

At these words, he left my room, and locked me in."You will use force? and I dexterity! I opened the window, it was only one story high; I jumped. The shock was

violent; I nevertheless crossed the yard as quick as lightning, and running all the way, soon reached Madame de Fonrose's.

"Unhappy young man," she said, "what has brought you here? The captain has familiarly paid me his dreadful visit this morning. He asked me, in that polite tone which you know to be his, who a certain Mademoiselle de Brumont was, whose assiduities at Madame de Lignolle's gave rise about the world to many jokes and pleasantries. I have been at no little trouble to make that dreadful brother-in-law comprehend that I had nothing to do with the conduct of his sister; that I was by no means bound to account to him for my doings, and that he would oblige very much if he were pleased never to set his foot again on my premises."

"Have you seen my Eleanor?"

"Quite on the contrary, I have just sent her a note to recommend her being very circumspect, and above all things to beware coming hither. I was just, with much regret, going to have the same precaution recommended to you. Neither do I wish to detain you at present; for I confess that I dread some new assault from that pirate, who is come very unseasonably to annoy us. Chevalier, are you now returning home?"

"No, why do you ask me?"

"I would have desired you to tell—A moment! Stop another moment.″

She rang the bell, a servant answered it, and she gave him secret orders. I paid but very little attention then to that fatal circumstance, which I have often recollected since.

"I wished to beg of you—", she resumed, "but you will be time enough in the evening for that commission, to tell the Baron a thousand obliging things from me; for although our intimacy has ceased—"

"Has it?"

"For life. It is that perfidious Madame de B*** however, who causes all our present troubles."

"Can you imagine that the Marchioness has been capable of writing that letter to my father?"

"I do, and that to the Vicomte de Lignolle too."

"Impossible! I cannot."

"Just as you please, sir," she answered dryly. "For my part, permit me not to question it, and to act in consequence."

"Adieu, Madame la Baronne."

"I don't bid you adieu, Monsieur le Chevalier."

Was it the critical situation in which we all stood, that caused me false terrors? As I was going from the Hôtel de Fonrose to the petite-maison, Rue du Bac, it appeared to me that I was followed by somebody.

XXIX.

I did not wait long for the Vicomte.

"Beauteous Mamma, you wear the same dress you had on at Saint Cloud. I always see it—"

"With some pleasure?" she interrupted.

"With transport. It unceasingly puts me in mind of—"

"Of what we must not remember."

"Ah! Of what I will never forget so long as I live! Tell me, why, for upwards of a fortnight have you so cruelly deprived me—"

"I waited till at last you would write to me; I don't wish to become quite troublesome."

"Troublesome! Can you ever?"

"What do I know? I see you so prepossessed in behalf of the Countess! Madame de Lignolle has so much wit! So many charms."

"It is true that—"

"You must find the company of all other women very insipid?"

"I find a thousand pleasures in the company of the most amiable of them all!"

"Yes, the most amiable! Next to Sophia, next to the Countess! Chevalier, believe me, let us leave compliments aside. Rather tell me of your troubles."

The Marchioness listened to me constantly with the greatest attention, but often apparently sad, and sometimes seemingly embarrassed. Nevertheless, when I concluded the long narrative of my sorrows and inquietudes, I could not help saying to her: "What exasperates me is, that they presume to charge you with having written those two cruel letters."

"They presume! Who are they?"

"M. de Rosambert! Madame de Fonrose!"

"My two most mortal enemies!"

"Though they were your friends, I would not take their word! Dear mamma, how will you prevent my departure?"

She replied in a preoccupied tone, "I cannot be tired of repeating it; Sophia must be less dear to you."

"Less dear! I assure you it is not so; but my stay in Paris is indispensable; both honour and love command it"

"Your love for Madame de Lignolle!"

"Yes. My dearest mamma, how will you prevent my departure?"

"Faublas, you are to receive from Versailles a packet, the contents of which, I hope, will give you pleasure, and probably induce M. de Belcourt to alter his plan. If, however, your father would insist upon taking you with him, let me know of it immediately."

"This packet is?"

"You will receive it tomorrow morning; I shall leave you till that time with your curious impatience."

"Yet you do not assure me that this first mode you have used to assist me must be infallible? Why, but, mamma, you don't hear me, you are thinking of something else."

"Yes," she exclaimed, rousing from her deep reverie, "you must be much enamoured with the Countess!"

"Ah! Much."

"More than you love me. Than you did love me, I meant to say."

"Why, I don't know—I can't—"

"Come, more! Your uncertainty, your embarrassed air evince it. More!" she repeated mournfully.

"It is true that my Eleanor has acquired rights that no other—-but I chagrin you, fair mamma."

"Not in the least, why should I feel chagrined at your preferring your mistress to your friend? But you have not said all; how has she acquired rights that no other—"

"She is pregnant."

"Cruel young man!" she exclaimed with infinite vivacity; "It is my fault, if—"

Madame de B*** did not finish her sentence. She prevented my falling at her knees; and for fear of hearing my reply, stopped my mouth with her hand, which however I kissed. At length the Marchioness, whose looks I could observe to grow tender at the same time that her complexion grew animated, rose to go away.

"Do you wish to leave me already?"

"I am compelled to do so," she answered, stealing away from my caresses. "I am forced to go! My time is not my own! I have many affairs to attend to just at present. Farewell, Chevalier."

"Since you forbid my detaining you, farewell, dear mamma."

When she was at the bottom of the stairs: "See," she said, with tears in her eyes, "the ingrate does not merely enquire on what day he is to come and thank me!"

"Ah! Pardon me! I was thinking—"

"Of anything else, no doubt!"

"Of quite another thing, it is true, but of you, nevertheless. On what day, dear mamma? On what day?"

"This is Tuesday. Well, on Friday, yes, on Friday I shall be able to spare a moment"

"At the same hour?"

"Perhaps a little later. At the close of the evening it will be more prudent."

I only left the house a quarter of an hour after the Vicomte, and yet I thought I could see again, at no great distance from me, the troublesome Argus who had already

caused me some uneasiness. What confirmed my suspicions was to see the spy, either a novice in the profession, or actuated by fear, alter his course when he perceived that I was making towards him. I returned home, fully persuaded that it would not be long before the Captain would pay me a visit.

"Is it possible," said the Baron to me, "you should have run the risk at least of breaking one of your legs?

"Father, I would have ventured my life! Wherefore, Monsieur le Baron, will you bring me to such extremities as may become fatal? You are not ignorant sir, that situated as I am, death to me is preferable to slavery. Prior to my surrendering to your authority, I am come positively to declare that to place any restraint upon my liberty is to attempt my life. What! Numberless dangers threaten an unfortunate defenceless young woman, the woman the most deserving of my tenderest affections! and you, the most cruel of her enemies, pretend to rob her of her only consolation, her only support! You pretend, by reducing me to entire immobility, to deliver her within the hands of her persecutors, and oblige me to witness their preparing her ruin without opposing any obstacle to their heinous designs. If you should further intend, sir, if you have any means left of locking me up in my room, and compel me to live there, I announce to you that then, and I swear by my sister, by you, by Sophia, by all that I hold in this world dearest and most sacred, I swear that no consideration whatever will induce me to defend, against the Vicomte, a life which your tyranny will have rendered useless in future to Madame de Lignolle, and odious to her lover! Now determine my destiny; it is at your option."

"He would do as he says," exclaimed my sister; "whenever the question is a female, he no longer knows us; he, however, could not commit a greater fault than to suffer himself to be killed. Don't lock him up, father; ah, I beg of you, pray, do not lock him up."

Whilst Adelaide was addressing him in this style, the Baron kept his sorrowful eyes upon me alone. Alas! I saw the eyes of my father filled with tears; my sister was already kissing the hands of M. de Belcourt, before whom I hastily kneeled.

"Father! Ah, father! Pity your son; on account of his misfortune, forgive what he has been saying to you, and the tone in which the words were spoken; have mercy upon the most impetuous of all men, the most miserable of lovers; think, sir, above all things, that unless he were driven to despair, Faublas would never resist your so dear authority, your orders ever sacred."

M. de Belcourt hid his face in his hands and meditated long his answer. At last he said: "Promise, my son, to go neither to the Countess's—"

"Impossible! Father."

"Nor to the Baroness's, nor to the Captain's."

"I agree to that. Neither to the Baroness's, nor to the Captain's. I give you my word of honour, and may I never be called by your name if I do not keep my word. Neither to the Baroness's, nor to the Captain's, that is all that I can promise." My father returned me no answer; but from that moment I recovered my full liberty.

Immediately after supper, I went up into my room, and called Jasmin. "Give me my round hat, cloak, and sword."

"So then, sir, I see that notwithstanding the advice of M. le Baron, you are of my opinion. You believe it is proper as soon as possible, to rid me of that big devil, who deals such ponderous fisticuffs, and you are right; and your father would say as much as I do, if, like me, he had received—"

"Hold your tongue, Jasmin, I am not going to the Captain's, my man"

"Without too much curiosity, sir—"

"I wish myself to try to go and speak to La Fleur. Don't go to bed, wait for me."

"How so! Sir, don't you take me with you?"

"That's a good one! You are a coward! Hear me: I may meet the big devil, and you would be frightened."

"No, not in your company, sir. Now that I see you by the side of me, I could challenge a whole taproom. The big devil, perhaps, has a valet. If so, I engage to give a good drubbing to the servant, while you dispatch the master."

"I am delighted with your good spirits, and in consequence will take you with me. What are you about, Jasmin?"

"I was thinking, that if perchance the servant had a sword, I don't know how to use such weapons"

"Either leave your stick behind, or stop here."

"I prefer following you, and will trust to my arms alone."

This determination of my servant proved very serviceable to me, as will be seen presently. We were just gone out, and as I was in a hurry, I walked very fast, and by long strides, without looking around. We had just reached the street Saint-Honoré, when a female stopped Jasmin to ask him the way to the Place Vendôme. Hearing the accents of a cherished voice, I turned round: "Great God! Is it possible? Yes, it is her! It is the Countess!"

"How happy! It is him! I was going to your house, Faublas."

"And I, my Eleanor, was going to yours."

"Lay hold of this, quick, relieve me," she continued, giving me a little box; "my jewels are in here. I was carrying them to you, and was coming to join you, that we might set off directly."

"Set off! Where shall we go?"

"Wherever you like."

"How so! Wherever I like!"

"To be sure! To Spain, England, Italy, China, Japan, to some desert; where you think fit, I tell you—"

"Are you in earnest? I have nothing ready for the execution of so bold a project."

"Nothing ready! What is it you want?"

"My dear love, this is not a proper place to discourse upon a subject of so great an importance; you were going to my house. Well, my Eleanor, come along with me, I shall take you there; let us enjoy some more happy hours."

"However—"

"What! However! Would you be sorry to grant me another happy night?"

"It would give me great pleasure, on the contrary; but I think you had better carry me away without loss of time."

"Jasmin, run to the Swiss, ask him for the key of the back door of the garden, and open it for us. Mind we are not to be seen by anyone. You will give two louis d'ors to the Swiss, for keeping my secret."

"I am do not have the money, sir."

"I promise to give him as much."

"Oh your word is as good as hard cash for him."

"I promise you the same, Jasmin; but run."

The back door was soon opened, and without being seen, we reached my apartment. "How satisfied I am!" exclaimed the Countess, as she entered my room, "how satisfied I am! Now it is that I am really his wife! How well we should be here! But we shall be still better in a cottage. Faublas, we must elope together, we absolutely must. Let me relate to you this day's adventures. The captain came at an early hour in the morning to abuse me. He hastened to apprise M. de Lignolle of my being pregnant, and that Mademoiselle de Brumont could be no other than a man in disguise. He then took his oath that he would very soon know him, and do his business for him, (I repeat his very words) that he would do the business of the insolent fellow, who presumed to love his sister-in-law; (it was not the word love which he spoke) and who had the audacity to lay his hand upon him."

"What did your husband say to that?"

"My husband! Why will you call him my husband; you know he is no husband of mine."

"M. de Lignolle?"

"He did not seem to be much pleased."

"What did you answer?"

"I replied, that if it were possible that Mademoiselle de Brumont should be a man, it was my kind stars that had allowed it to be so; and that, if ever a friend had come to me, and done what my husband should have done, my supposed husband deserved it amply. My aunt exclaimed that I was right; the good old lady sided with me."

"I don't doubt it!"

"When the two brothers were gone, the Marchioness wept bitterly: she wanted to take me back with her to Franche-Comté. Think how dear you are to me! I constantly rejected her proposition. Faublas, I had rather be carried away by you. Meanwhile, the rude captain went to take a seat in a coffee-room."

"I know."

"I thought I had better not send to you, as I don't wish you to fight the captain; I forgive his insults; I forget them; I shall forget the whole world, provided you carry me away. I was going, however, to write to Madame de Fonrose, when she sent me word."

"I know."

"You see, the Baroness is not a good woman! She has served us so long as our amours appeared to her an intrigue more ludicrous than another, and procured her some amusement: now that we are surrounded with danger, she forsakes us. But what do I care, since you remain faithful, and that I am going to elope with you. Night at last came on, I hastened to get my supper, and to have my aunt retire into her apartment. My women put me to bed as usual; but as soon as they had left my room, quick I put on this gown, and going down the little staircase, got into the yard. La Fleur, as if I had sent him on an errand, called to the Swiss to open the street-door, I ran away, met you, and nothing prevents your carrying me away."

"Nothing prevents it! Say you: quite the reverse, everything opposes it! We are in want of a carriage, a disguise, arms, post-horses, and a passport."

"Ah dear me! I shall not be carried away this night! Hear me, Faublas, we shall stop here till daybreak; you then will hide me in some garret of your hôtel; you will have the whole day to make the necessary preparations, and we shall finally take our departure towards the middle of tomorrow night"

"Impossible, my dear."

"Impossible for what reason?"

"You will not consider, that by acting too precipitately in the execution of so difficult an enterprise, we are liable to miscarry."

"Only think! I always find out the means of succeeding, and he sees only the obstacles!"

"You have it still in your power, for three months to come to conceal your pregnancy, and to deny your being in that situation."

"The ungrateful man will not carry me away unless he be obliged so to do."

"The case is not so pressing."

"Wherefore postpone for three months that happiness which we may obtain directly?"

"Would you, my Eleanor, who are so tender hearted, unless necessity made it a law, enjoy a happiness, which would reduce to despair, the most feeling of all sisters, and the best of fathers!"

"Miserable me! He will not carry me away! He is determined I shall not elope with him."

"My beloved, I give you my word that those considerations, though ever so powerful, will not stop me when the day of sacrificing them to you is come. Then I swear, that though I were to perish myself, I will forsake neither my child, nor his mother, whom I adore. But allow me to leave as late as possible those objects, the most deserving of sharing with you my affections: permit me, when I forsake them to follow you, to carry with me the consoling idea, that I have not voluntarily occasioned their greatest sorrows."

The Countess, being obliged to renounce her sweetest hopes, wept bitterly; her grief was so poignant that at first I apprehended not being able to calm it! But what cannot the caresses of a lover perform? The present night, like the last, we spent together in amorous embraces, and it seemed to last but one moment. "It will soon be light," said Madame de Lignolle, "and I shall ask you, in my turn, how I shall return home? The question was rather puzzling. I was obliged to weigh the matter in my mind. before I could give a satisfactory answer: "My Eleanor, let us make haste to dress; notwithstanding the prudent advice of Madame do Fonrose, I shall take you to her door, without going in myself; the Baroness will think that you called upon her at so early an hour only that you might speak to her about me. You will not find it a very hard task to make your lover the topic of conversation; and notwithstanding all that she may say to you, you will keep her company till such time as your gig arrives."

"My gig! Who is to bring it to me?"

"La Fleur, to whom I shall go with proper instructions."

"But if the Captain was already at his post?"

"Let us make haste; he certainly will not be there as early as at the rising of the sun. At any rate, if he should, I have got my sword; it cannot be helped, my sweet dear, we have no other means left!"

"But when and how shall I see you again?"

"Eleanor, I will not have you expose and endanger yourself so late at night alone! On foot! I will not suffer it! Tell me, my beloved, is it not more proper and less dangerous that I should go to you? Can't I sometimes, about midnight, gain admittance to you?"

Madame de Lignolle kissed me! "Yes," she answered, with an exclamation of joy; "I can contrive means. Come—not next night; I might not have adopted proper measures—hear me, not to trust to chance, come on Friday, between eleven and twelve."

It began to be light. We got downstairs without causing any disturbance, and made our exit through the garden door. We succeeded better than I had expected. I saw the Countess enter Madame de Fonrose's house; ran to M. de Lignolle's to call up La Fleur, who was to depart a quarter of an hour after. I then returned safe home, and at eight o'clock received the following letter:

> For a long time, Monsieur le Chevalier, have been seeking an opportunity of repairing my wrongs towards you and Monsieur le Baron. It is with transport I have seized the first which offered. I beg you will tell your father so. I believe, however, that the king could not make for the regiment of —— a better acquisition than that of a young man like you, since it is certain that you are bearer of the most promising physiognomy in the world.
> I have the honour to be, etc.,
> Le Marquis de B***

M. de Belcourt entered my room a moment after; he held several papers in his hand, and I could see the greatest joy depicted in his countenance.

"I received it this very minute from Versailles!" he exclaimed, embracing me; "You have wished it were addressed to me, you have been desirous I should be the first to congratulate you on your good fortune; I feel extremely flattered by so delicate an attention. Yes, that is the very thing," he added, "seeing that I was approaching to

read it; it is your commission of a captain in the regiment of —— dragoons, now quartered at Nancy; and this is the order to join on the first of May—in a fortnight."

"Faublas! I have reproached you more than once for the inexcusable inactivity which rendered your talents useless, and I had determined to take at last the necessary measures to procure the only situation that you were fit for: and I am delighted that upon your having made a prior application, you have been so successful. It has been your good fortune to be granted at first, what my most pressing solicitations would not have obtained immediately, namely, a superior rank, and the expectation of a certain promotion. Unfortunately, I have occasion to apprehend you will find in this favourable event another subject of joy; the project of our journey is done away with; your stay in the metropolis is prolonged a whole week. If it be true, however, that you congratulate yourself upon the occasion, think at least, my son, that nothing will dispense your obeying the minister's orders, and joining your regiment in less than a fortnight. I shall then leave Paris, to proceed alone whither we intended going together."

"How kind you are, sir, and how grateful I am."

"I promise to search for Sophia with as much care and zeal as you could have done yourself."

"And you will find her, father! You will find her!"

"I hope, at least, I shall, on account of this late event. I don't doubt but Faublas will be eager to justify the favour of the prince. I doubt not but he will fill with distinction the honourable post that has been committed to his charge. It is to be imagined that M. du Portail will hear, in his solitary retreat, of this happy change, which is the forerunner of many more, and that he then will no longer conceal his daughter from a husband who is become deserving of her."

"Oh, father! Oh! What an encouragement you hold out to me!"

"Adelaide is already up, Faublas; she is to breakfast in my apartment; I was going to have you called down. I have not been so indiscreet as to show these papers to your sister; it is but fair you should inform her of the happy news: come, my dear, let us go down together."

I was receiving Adelaide's congratulations, when my servant came, with an alarmed countenance, to tell me that I was wanted.

"Who wants me, Jasmin?"

"It is him, sir."

"Who is him?"

"The big devil"

"The big devil!" repeated M. de Belcourt, looking at Jasmin. "What is that expression? Faublas! Whom does he mean?"

"Father, I—I am going to receive him."

"Wherefore all this mystery? Gracious heaven! Perhaps it is the captain? No, Faublas, stop; let him come in here. Jasmin, desire the Vicomte to step into my apartment."

As soon as my servant had left us, the Baron exclaimed: "The fatal moment is now come! O my good friend! Remember the prayers which your father has addressed you, and that he reiterates on his knees." He had really knelt before me. I immediately raised him up; he seized my right hand, kissed it, and placed it upon his heart: "Let it save me!" he exclaimed, "Let it save the half of my existence!" Adelaide came running, and quite terrified: "Faublas," said M. de Belcourt, "Kiss your sister, and do not forget her."

I was embracing her, when the captain entered the room: I see two!" he exclaimed with a dreadful sneer, "Which is Mademoiselle de Brumont?" I replied, pointing to my sister: "Captain, this one, the day before yesterday, could not have seated you on the Countess's balcony."

Meanwhile, Adelaide was stooping to whisper to the Baron: "How ugly that tall gentleman is! I am frightened at him." "Leave us, child," he answered, "go and take a walk in the garden." Prior to her obeying, she came to me, with her eyes bathed in tears: "Brother," she said, "the Baron did not lock you in! Oh I beg of you, remember he has not locked you in!"

When my sister was gone, the Captain, who had not ceased staring at me, I exclaimedn a most violent manner: "Is this the Chevalier de Faublas who is spoken of? How can he have acquired a name in feats of arms? He hardly looks to have any life in him! Though he be something more than a weak female, he is but half a man still for all that!"

"Captain, please to be seated; you will be more at your ease then to look at me."

"Zounds! I believe you wish to be thought jocular. Don't you know me? Are you ignorant that the Vicomte de Lignolle never puts up with the stupid raillery, nor the impertinent airs of your species? That he never has suffered an equivocal look or gesture? That the most haughty have renounced their audacity in his presence? That he has, with great facility, immolated men more famous than you are, and who had a more formidable appearance."

"You have no more to say? Captain, is it customary with brave men of your description to try to intimidate the antagonist whom they apprehend not being able to conquer? I am very glad to inform you that you could derive no great resource with me from that excellent method."

"Hell and fire!" cried out the angry Captain. He, however, checked his wrath; and, taking me by the hand, said: "Hark! since it was possible that there should be found under the canopy of heaven a youthful madman so rash as to disgrace a brother whom I love, and so daring as to lift up his hand against me, and to insult me openly, I had rather it is you than anyone else. Too often, for two or three years back, I have been stunned with your name; let me tell you that for strength and science I acknowledge but one single man in the whole world who can be compared to me; and that one's superiority I don't think anyone will dispute. I will never allow any other man's fame, to rise above, or even to counterbalance mine; and I intended coming to Paris some day to tell you so."

"Return thanks to chance then, which, by making me apparently an offender, spares you the infamy of a duel, the sole motive whereof would have been your ferocious love of false glory."

"I am very impatient to know how you will maintain the boldness of your discourse; the more I look at you the less I can credit your being deserving of your high renown."

"Let us come to the point then, Captain. It is proof you want, is it not?"

"Assuredly! But tell me, would you perchance wish to boast of challenging the Vicomte de Lignolle?"

"Why should I boast? What honour could I derive from it? Besides, have I ever made a trade of challenging anyone?"

"I must let you know that I have taken my solemn oath, upon all occasions, to propose the fight."

"I have taken no other oath than never to refuse it."

"Well, then, choose your weapons."

"I have no preference."

"The sword, then! The sword, I like to see my enemy from a short distance."

"I shall endeavour, Captain, not to stand too far from him."

"That we shall see, my little gentleman. The spot?"

"I don't care which; at la Porte Maillot, if you like."

"La Porte Maillot! Be it so; but this time you will not have the Marquis de B*** to deal with."

"Perhaps."

"On which day, and at what o'clock?"

"Today, and immediately."

"Those are the best words you have spoken," he exclaimed, tapping my shoulder, "let us begone."

"Captain, you have got your carriage, I suppose?"

"No; I always walk."

"This once, however, you must make up your mind to take a seat in the Baron's coach."

"Why so?"

"Because we must go and fetch one of your friends."

"One of my friends!"

"Yes, as I propose taking a witness with me."

"A witness! Where is he?"

"There he is."

"Your father?"

"My father."

"Let him come if he pleases; but he must not rely upon my showing you mercy."

"Monsieur le Vicomte," replied the Baron with great composure, "the more I hear you, the more I am persuaded you are undeserving of mine."

"Captain, have you heard him?"

"Well, what then!"

"What then?" I exclaimed, laying hold of his hand, which I squeezed very hard, "it is the sentence of death that he has been passing on you!"

"Let us go," repeated my father, "and I see that we shall return soon."

We first went for M. de Saint-Léon, a colleague of the captain, another naval officer, as tractable and as polite as his friend was the reverse. This gentleman's testimonies of respect to my father, and civilities to me, sufficiently counteracted the invectives, bravadoes, and swearing, which M. de Lignolle uttered without interruption: several times even he attempted some conciliatory speeches, but it may be easily imagined that all manner of mediation was now superflous between the Vicomte and me. We arrived at the Porte Maillot, each of us determined to die rather than to relent.

We had just got out of the carriage; my antagonist was going to draw his sword; and mine was already drawn; when, on a sudden, several horsemen, who, for a few seconds had followed us full gallop, surrounded the captain, crying out in the king's name. One of them said to him: "M. le Vicomte de Lignolle, the King and the Lord Marshals of France command you to deliver your sword into my hands; and till I receive fresh orders, I am to accompany you where you go."

The captain flew in a rage, yet he did not dare to offer any resistance. As he surrendered his sword, he cried out to me: "They have not appointed a guard over you; they rely on your peaceable disposition. You have very prudent friends; return them thanks for their extreme vigilance, it will allow you to live a few days longer, but only a few days. Understand well what I say to you."

I returned with my father; and as we passed Rosambert's door, I recollected that my happy friend had been married on the preceding day, and that I was to breakfast with the new Countess. I left the Baron, and was introduced to the Count, who received me in his drawing-room.

"Rosambert, I am come to wish you joy, and to attend to your invitation."

"I beg your pardon," he replied, "you will breakfast with me alone; the Countess is fatigued, and wants rest."

"I understand. You are satisfied with your night?"

"I am; yes, satisfied indeed."

"My friend, what do you laugh at? Your gaiety does not appear to be natural! What can disturb?"

"A foul trick, which is played me by your Marchioness, I would lay a bet now!"

"What is it?"

"I have just received an order to join my regiment."

"To join! So have I."

"And you too! How so?"

"I am now a captain of dragoons."

"A captain! I wish you joy! Let us embrace. There will not be a younger, a braver, or a handsomer officer in the regiment. So then, at last, the Marchioness has taken it into her head to do something for you?"

"Did not I tell you, long since, that a man, whatever his merits might be, could never expect preferment but from the recommendation of women?"

"I admire you! Who told you it was Madame de B***? I confess it would be more pleasant still if it were her husband."

I returned him no answer. I had thought proper not to communicate the Marquis's letter to M. de Belcourt; judge then whether I felt inclined to show it to Rosambert.

"Captain in a regiment of dragoons!" continued the Count; "That is no bad beginning! Oh! You may expect high promotion! It is Madame de B*** who patronises you! How is it possible, however, I can't conceive, that the Marchioness could summon courage enough to sacrifice herself that you might get the commission? The courage of confining Faublas in a garrison? Where is your regiment quartered, Chevalier?"

"At Nancy."

"At Nancy! Stop a minute! Am I mistaken? No, no! Ah! I don't wonder."

"At what?"

"At what! That's a good one! You perhaps do not know what I mean?"

"Indeed I have not the least idea!"

"Faublas, those out-of-the-way mysteries are more injurious than beneficial. How would you have me be acquainted with that?"

"With what that?"

"Why, that Madame de B*** possesses, in the vicinity of the capital of Lorraine, a very fine estate, which it is a long time since she has seen."

"Ah! Ah!"

"She undoubtedly expects to go and spend the fine season there; and, whenever you please, you will obtain from your colonel leave of absence for a whole day; so that the Marchioness, at the summit of her wishes, will enjoy your company at her ease, without dreading a rival being in her way. She has fixed upon the best plan to prevent at once your going in search of Sophia or assisting Madame de Lignolle."

"Prevent me from assisting Eleanor?"

"Certainly, for you are ordered to join your regiment within a short time."

"Not before the first day of May."

"Well! That is only a fortnight."

"I am a whole week a gainer, since my father was to take me away on Saturday next."

"A great good done, faith! What change can a single week produce?"

"What do I know? So many things will happen in less time! Faublas, that is what I call adopting a mere probability as a real fact."

"Keep silent, my good friend, say no more to remove an illusion which supports me."

"Will Madame de Lignolle be less miserable for your leaving her a week later!"

"Rosambert! Rosambert! Is it when I am near the bottom of the abyss that you should point it out to me?"

"Will she be less exposed to the vengeance of her enemies?"

"Cruel man!"

"To the brutal anger of the captain?"

"He came to me this morning. We were on the point of fighting, when a *garde de la connétablie* <75> arrived to part us."

"A guard! To him? You have not one attached to you?"

"No"

"I believe so; that would have impeded your going, incognito, to visit the Marchioness."

"The Marchioness! By hearing you, one would suppose that nothing in the world is done but through her interference."

"My friend, it is because the lion, which, during some weeks, seemed to be fast asleep, has just awoke; because I see Madame de B*** now stirring everything round her; a week ago, bad rumours respecting Mademoiselle de Brumont began to circulate."

"Oh, dear!"

"Much about the same time, a fatal letter is addressed to the captain."

"Is it possible!"

"Yesterday I heard from good authority, of the rupture between M. de Belcourt and the Baroness; you receive your commission to-day; and I am obliged to go, without being favoured, like you, with a fortnight's respite! I must be at my regiment on the 21st of this month, of course I must bid you adieu the day after tomorrow; on Friday! But what does she aim at by adopting such measures? For the artificious woman never attempts anything without some secret designs. If I am not allowed to guess at everything, I conceive at least, that ready to strike the decisive blows, but hearing of our reconciliation, and unable to refuse acknowledging that the man in the world who knows her best, must feel disposed to assist you against her with his purse, his advice, and even with his arm, if absolutely requisite: the Marchioness deems it very advisable, as soon as possible, to remove that among her enemies whom she considers the most dangerous, because he is your best friend. Be it as it may, your Madame de B*** is a true woman, to the whole extent of the expression, for after beating her enemies, she still bears them malice; and," he pursued, as he rubbed his hand over his forehead, "recently, quite recently, prior to the order for my exile, I thought I perceived that the pistol shot with which she gratified me, would not prevent her playing me every now and then some little tricks of another sort."

"How so?"

"Yes, I have not left my home since yesterday evening, and I could lay a bet that a sincere reconciliation has taken place between the Marchioness and Madame de ——, the eternally officious Countess! Who has so zealously pressed my happy marriage."

"Upon my honour I don't comprehend your meaning."

"So much the better: When I happen to be indiscreet, I like to be found equally obscure. You wish to go, my good friend. I shall not try to detain you, for I confess I want to be left by myself for a moment"

"You seem to be out of spirits?"

"Rather so."

"The order of your departure?"

"That, and something else."

"Which I am not to be told of?"

"Or that it is not worth being known."

"What is it?"

"A trifle! Nothing! Less than nothing! I have been told so a hundred times, and never would believe it, for it is difficult for the best tempered man not to be ruffled a little. Yet it can't be helped! It is a cloud that will soon pass away."

"Rosambert, you speak like an oracle; I shall call again when you will cease being unintelligible. Farewell!"

"Adieu, Faublas!"

"I hope, at least, that you will present my duty to your new bride, and assure her of my regret"

"Oh, yes! You will see her this evening; I shall introduce her to you."

"What a giddy chap I am! I was going away without asking you what her maiden name was."

"De Mésanges, he answered."

"De Mésanges! I exclaimed."

"Well! What do you wonder at?"

"Nothing."

"You were struck when you heard the name?"

"Struck, because I have known, in the country, a brother of that young lady."

"She has no brother."

"It must have been one of her cousins then. Adieu, my friend!"

"No, Chevalier, no! Hear me! When you knew that HE cousin, did not you perchance know that SHE cousin also?"

"Never, wherefore?"

"Ah! For—for nothing. Faublas, I claim your indulgence, for I am extremely stupid to-day."

I made off in all the haste I could, that Rosambert might not perceive on my countenance too much gaiety succeeding to too much surprise.

My father was waiting for me with great impatience. As I entered his apartment, I heard him say to my dear Adelaide: "Ah! My sweet child! If it were so, would you see me so quiet? Come in," he cried as soon as he saw me, "your sister is miserable; she pretends that you have met with some great misfortune, which I conceal from her." "Oh! Brother," she exclaimed, "I should have died if you had not returned. When, then, will you give up fighting for any other, than Sophia?"

"*Apropos*," interrupted the Baron, "I never thought of asking the question but when you were out of the way. Tell me, pray, what is become of M. du Portail's letter?"

"I had kept it, sir, but have lost it at Montargis, on the evening I was taken ill. It is most likely Madame de Lignolle who has found it; but I have not dared to speak to her about it: what I wonder at is that she never mentioned anything concerning it to me."

On that same evening, Rosambert brought his wife to us. From one end of the apartment to the other, the Countess recognising my sister, although she had never seen her before, stopped quite amazed. "Go on," said her husband, "proceed, what detains you at this door?" "Why," she answered, "still looking at my sister, 'tis because methinks that's her."

"Who?"

"Who? Why a lady that I thought was my dear friend."

"Do you know this young lady?"

During this short dialogue, I was enquiring of myself what I had to do to prevent the young bride from betraying herself openly. To quit the room for a while would be exposing my sister to dangerous questions, to embarrassing reproaches from the Countess, to whom, besides, I should soon procure a new subject of astonishment, since I could not dispense returning into the drawing-room. It was therefore incumbent upon me to hasten obliging Madame de Rosambert to notice me, that she might be put in mind of the necessary explanations and prudent advice, which, on the eve of her nuptials, Madame d'Armincour has probably given to the innocent Mademoiselle de Mésanges. Having fixed upon this as the best plan, I threw myself in her way, and bowed most respectfully to her.

The Countess then screamed out, dropped her arms, lost all countenance, and very near fainting away, was obliged to lean against the door. Meanwhile she ceased not casting her looks sometimes upon my sister, sometimes upon me; I could easily perceive that she was still at a loss to find out which of the two was her dear friend. "This," said Rosambert, "is a true recognisance! Very singular! Quite theatrical! But it appears to me that in this scene, very entertaining in other respects, mine is by no means the best part."

My father, on his side, would mutter to himself: "Here are more *quiproquos*!<76> Another amorous adventure! I could lay a wager." "So you know this young lady!" resumed the Count, showing my sister to his wife. This latter very

unseasonably wishing to act cunningly, answered: "Ah dear me, no; no! I never knew Mademoiselle de Brumont."

"De Brumont!" repeated Rosambert; "cursed be then the infernal genius that made you guess at the name! So then," he continued, beating his forehead, "I can entertain no further doubt, no doubt whatever! I am already what is called a husband, a true husband! I am so I even was so before I were married. How it was achieved, perhaps I shall hear at some future period." My father stooped to whisper in the Count's ear that my sister being present, he should not speak so freely.

"You are right, sir," replied the Count, "I am inexcusable, totally inexcusable to make such a bustle about a mere nonsense. Yes, indeed, though one may be ever so prepared, one cannot receive the blow without feeling a little hurt. I am not void of courage, or fortitude; I only beg of you a moment to recover myself; you will see me presently perfectly tranquil. It is to be confessed, however, that this young man can boast of being born under a most malignant constellation, favourable to himself, but fatal to all who are near him! It seems as if it were written above, that not one of his friends is to escape." He could not help asking other questions of the poor little woman. "Madam, you have seen this young lady nowhere?"

"Nowhere? Oh! Indeed I have not, not even at my cousin de Lignolle's."

"Ah! How mad thus to ask questions when—when one is certain! Very well Madame la Comtesse, very well! That is enough; the Chevalier will tell me the remainder."

At these words, the Count seemed to be reconciled to his case. The conversation now ran upon indifferent subjects. The new bride, who spoke little, looked at me without interruption; and with an air that seemed to announce that if she was still astonished and dissatisfied at the manner in which I had entertained her error by availing myself of her ignorance, she notwithstanding did not feel disposed to keep eternally against me her surprise and resentment. Rosambert, during that time, was struggling very hard to conceal the inquietude which the attention bestowed upon me inspired him with; and as the Countess finally burst out laughing, he asked what she laughed at?

"Why, I laugh because he laughs."

"And wherefore, does he laugh?"

"Why! He laughs, perhaps, at—ah! but that is what I can't tell. Why! I don't know what he laughs at."

In vain did the Count attempt to suppress a sign of impatience; in vain did he try to stifle a deep sigh; and since Rosambert's vanity prompted him to endeavour to conceal the mortification which his misadventure occasioned him, he thought it was time for him to withdraw. "Adieu," he said to me; "I am not angry with you; will you be at home tomorrow in the evening?"

"Yes, my friend."

"You may expect to see me."

"Shall I come with you?" asked his wife.

"What a question you are asking," he replied, in a tone of perfect indifference, "just as you please. I nevertheless shall observe to you that young married women do not visit bachelors so, especially every day."

As the Countess was going downstairs, I presented her my hand; she squeezed mine and said: "I would come most willingly. Do you know though that I am very angry with you! You have played me a sad trick?"

"Hush! hush!" cried out Rosambert; "those things are not to be spoken of in company, especially when the husband is present."

They both went away. On the day following, at six in the evening, Rosambert came to see me, but he did not bring the Countess with him. Upon his entering my room, I was surprised at his loud burst of laughter: "The whole is truly comical! He exclaimed, infinitely pleasant!"

"What!"

"What the Countess has been relating to me."

"Have you seen Madame de Lignolle?"

"No, my wife; she has recounted to me the whole transaction, I tell you; I kept a serious air in her presence, for the sake of decorum; now that I am with you, permit me to laugh. You are born for comical adventures."

"Rosambert, if you wish me to answer you, be explicit."

"Ah! This time I speak plain; but if you force me to it, I shall speak plainer still."

"Just as you please."

"Will you have it so? Well then, hear me: my wife told me that prior to her being my wife, she had been yours."

"That is not true!"

"What! It is you who deny it! It is you!"

I interrupted him bluntly: "Monsieur le Comte, I beg you will hear me before you continue with your insidious confidences. All your questions upon so delicate a subject, in whatever manner you may venture to ask them, would be entirely useless; if the fact is false, I am not such a vain coxcomb as to excuse your wife; and if it were true, I am not so stupidly indiscreet as to confess it to her husband.

"But I ask of you neither to own or disown; but merely to listen. Madame de Rosambert has related to me that you have had the happiness of going to bed with the Dowager d'Armincour; that on the same night you left the bed of the Marchioness to go and have some chat with Mademoiselle de Mésanges, who had soon ceased being a demoiselle, though without knowing it, since after having behaved with her like an honorable man, you nevertheless left her in the full persuasion of your being a female. You must acknowledge, Chevalier, that if the young person has been telling me a story of her own composition, she has made it ludicrous enough, and allow me to laugh at it."

"Rosambert, far from opposing, I wish to join you in the laugh."

"However," he resumed, with a more serious air, "I have a question to ask you, without meaning to give the least offence. Let us suppose—it is a mere supposition,

you understand me well—Let us suppose that the adventure had fallen to your lot, would you have entrusted Madame de B*** with the confidence?"

"Never."

"I thought as much. Who then can have told her of it? For my marriage, it is not to be doubted, is a benefit from the Marchioness; and as I was telling you yesterday morning, because the discoveries I had made on the preceding night had suggested the idea, it was only at Madame de B***'s instigation that the Countess de B***, who appeared to me so devoted and zealous, had been acting all the while. At the very moment when I was granting an ample dowry for the virginity<77> of Mademoiselle de Mésanges, who most assuredly had no claim of the kind, the belligerent powers announced publicly that their rupture had been simulated, and that it was M. de Rosambert who paid the expenses of the war. However, I am forced to acknowledge, that the Marchioness avenges herself in a noble manner; when she nearly maimed me, she stood the chance of receiving a shot herself. Now that she has had bestowed upon me as a maiden, a complete widow, she takes care to gild the pill; she adds to it, to console me, sixty thousand livres *per annum*. Chevalier, when you see my generous enemy, I beg you will return her my best thanks. Tell her that at first I was not quite exempt, from feeling the little misfortune, by means of a foolish hymen, of being ranked with the throng; yet do me justice: add that my weakness lasted only one moment; that I now am entirely reconciled to the event. Do not, above all things omit assuring the Marchioness that, notwithstanding my own accident, I feel more disposed than ever to make game of unlucky husbands. Faublas, are you coming with me?"

"Whither are you going? I see you quite superb! In full dress! Your sword by your side! Are you already paying your marriage visits?"

"No, but since I must be off tomorrow, I am going to take leave of my friends and acquaintances."

"And you wish me to accompany you?"

"I am to sup in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; we shall alight at the Champs-Elysees; take a few turns up and down; and have some conversation."

"I agree; provided we speak only of Madame de Lignolle."

"With all my heart. So then now I am a husband like a hundred thousand others; but it does not signify, I still side with young bachelors against married men."

"Faublas, I just think of it, don't take it into your head that I wish to carry you with me to prevent your going wherever love might summon you."

"What do you mean?"

"If you had made a new conquest, if you had an appointment with a new young bride, already tired with her husband, don't let me prevent you!"

"Rosambert, if you really thought it were possible, you would not speak of it so jocosely."

"Upon my honour, I spoke in earnest. Adversity has just been trying my strength; I feel capable of enduring any calamity.

So then I am of opinion that the unfortunate Countess has no resource than to retire into her province, or demand a separation, in case M. de Lignolle should use her

ill. It was getting dark, and we were in the Champs-Elysées, nearly facing M. de Beaujon's house, as Rosambert had spoken those last words. The Marquis de B*** was just coming out of an adjacent hôtel. As soon as he saw me he made up to me; but turned back upon seeing Rosambert. "He avoids us," said the latter, "let us go to him, and not suffer so good an opportunity of letting an agreeable moment escape us." In vain did I endeavour to dissuade Rosambert: the decrees of fate are irrevocable.

"You run away from us, Monsieur le Marquis?"

"It is true at least, that I do not seek your company," he replied in a very dry tone."

"It is true, at least, that many people have told me, that you complained highly of me; indeed I am equally very curious and very impatient, to hear from your own mouth, the cause of your resentment"

"Do you think I will not tell you candidly my reasons? How do you do, M. le Chevalier", he continued, presenting me his hand; "You must have received yesterday from Versailles—"

"His commission," interrupted Rosambert; "he has received it."

"I have received it, Monsieur le Marquis, and am very thankful for that proof of your—"

Here the Count interrupted me: "Faublas, was it the Marquis who has obtained it for you?"

"Yes, it was. What is there in that to excite your laughter?"

"But pray, sir, has not your lady solicited likewise?"

"Why not? The Marchioness is an excellent woman, inclined to render service to everybody, to everyone, except you!"

"I must persevere in asking the reason why?"

"The reason? Monsieur le Comte, when a man thinks himself amiable to such a degree that no woman can resist him, and that he meets one prudent, virtuous, and who loves her husband tenderly."

"Pardon me, but I know so many of that description, that I am at a loss to know who you are speaking of."

"Of mine, sir."

"Of your own! Of yours!"

"Yes, when he meets with such a one, he miscarries."

"He miscarries! To be sure he must."

"Then he must take patience."

"You speak very much at your ease, you who never miscarry."

"No unreasonable jokes, Monsieur le Comte, I know that you have been more successful than I have with a young lady."

"A young lady? Ah! Yes, with Mademoiselle du Portail."

"Du Portail! Grin as much as you please! To be avenged at least; I used no foul dealings."

"Ah! Spare me. But speak plain. What do you call foul dealings?"

"Your behaviour to my wife, sir."

"Well, sir, what have I done to your wife? Let us hear if you know of it."

"If I know of it! The day next to that on which Mademoiselle de Faublas had slept in the Marchioness's bed."

"Mademoiselle de Faublas! Are you sure?"

I drew nearer to Rosambert, and whispered to him; "Take care, my friend, you carry the joke too far; but I request of you at least not to expose Madame de B***." The Marquis however, went on; "In order to be avenged, on the day following you brought to my wife the brother, dressed in his sister's clothes."

"See what a cunning fellow I am," exclaimed the Comte, with a loud laugh: "what a deal of mischief I have been contriving against the Marchioness! Such are the tricks I will play though! Only see."

M. de B***, who visibly grew animated, interrupted with great vehemence, "I believe, indeed, he presumes to make game of me! Not satisfied with that first act of perfidy."

"Why! When I once begin."

"You have, moreover, been so wicked."

"Zooks! This becomes serious!"

"Very serious! But I question who will have the last laugh, M. de Rosambert; for let me tell you, I don't like to be turned into ridicule."

"Nor I to be threatened, sir; but out with the wickedness, as you call it."

"Yes! You have been so wicked as to avail yourself of the presence of a young man in disguise, to behave to my wife, even in my presence, in the most impertinent, most shocking manner."

Oh! I acknowledge it now, I am a—wretch!—a true demon!—an abominable rake!"

"Crack your jokes, sir; you are welcome! But as you have demanded an explanation, and instead of confessing your errors you will carry them to an extreme, let me tell you what I think of your conduct towards the Marchioness; I deem it unworthy of a man of honour;" and he added, laying his hand on his sword, "I expect you will give me immediate satisfaction."

"Why truly! This is more comical still! And although many people may wonder at it, I confess that I expected as much."

"Gentlemen," I exclaimed, "what are you about? I cannot allow you to fight, Monsieur le Marquis! and you Rosambert, who abominate quarrels, is it possible that in your frolicsome humour—"

"Always!" vociferated M. de B***, "I have always read in his physiognomy that he was a bad hand at cracking a joke."

"Bad? You provoke me!"

"Yet I could not have thought that he was so wicked a man."

"This will do better! The saying is more noble."

"I must give him a good lesson that will tend to correct him."

"He is angry! Quite angry with me! Indeed, M. le Marquis, you are no longer the same man. For my part I had always read in your countenance—except, however, one certain morning when at la Porte Maillot you wanted to kill the Chevalier and the Baron! And the Comte! And everybody! Except on that morning, I had read in your countenance that you were the meekest and most pacific of all mortals."

At these words, pronounced in the most ironical tone, M. de B*** transported with anger, unsheathed his sword. Warned by I know not what fatal presentiment, I could not refrain feeling some emotion at the sight of that hostile weapon, of that avenging sword, which a moment after was to be crimsoned with the blood of Rosambert, and within a very short time subsequently, with a more precious blood still. I grasped Rosambert: "Monsieur le Marquis, I beseech you, be calm! Monsieur le Comte, you shall not fight! I will not suffer you to fight!"

"Have done, Faublas," answered the latter, "I am sorry enough to be obliged to do it, but it was unavoidable. However, it will not be a duel, but a rencounter only, and I shall have learued from the gentleman an infinite number of pleasant anecdotes."

"If you do not immediately draw, exclaimed M. de B***, quite beyond himself, I will publish everywhere that you are a coward; and before I do, I will cross your face."

"Cross my face!" repeated Rosambert. He then laughed again: "It would be a great pity! One could no longer read on my countenance the very wicked tricks that I indulge in playing to a prudent, virtuous woman, who loves her husband tenderly; don't I speak the truth, Monsieur le Marquis?"

Rosambert, still laughing, disengaged himself from my arms, drew back a few paces, and then sword in hand, came up to M. de B***.

They fought vigorously for some minutes. Alas! How many misfortunes would have been spared me, if the Marquis had been conquered! It was the Count who fell. "Heaven is just!" cried out M. de B***, "may all perish thus who offend me! All who bear a deceitful physiognomy. I shall send as soon as possible the necessary assistance, he added; stay near him. See now what a countenance is! What an alteration already in this man's."

He withdrew. The Count, extended on the ground, beckoned to me to stoop, that I might hear him, and said to me in a very weak tone of voice: "My friend, I am severely wounded this time; I don't think I shall ever recover. Faublas, certify at least to Madame de B***, that previous to my breathing my last, I have sincerely repented my cruel proceedings towards her—cruel! More so than you imagine. Faublas, it is too true that——" Rosambert could say no more, he lost the use of his senses.

Several people who had heard a rumour of the fight, were come, and we were contriving to stop the blood of my unfortunate friend, when the surgeons arrived. He was carried home with the greatest speed. What a sight for his young bride! The wound was probed; but we obtained from the surgeons this perplexing answer only: "We can say nothing until the third dressing is taken off."

I returned home, my imagination replete with sinister images: "Father, he is dying!"

"Who?"

"M. de Rosambert; he has been dangerously wounded by the Marquis."

"The Marquis, replied the Baron, may he never wound anyone else! That is a sad event, and a fatal one, entirely so! It will bring back upon you the attention of the public."

"O my dear brother," said Adelaide to me, softening by her tender caresses, her reflection cruelly just; "dearest brother, I cannot tell exactly what your conduct may be, but I am sensible that for some time past, you meet with nothing but misfortunes."

XXX.

How long did that night appear to me which succeeded that fatal evening! What terrible dreams disturbed my painful slumbers! As soon as I closed my eyes, I only beheld objects of horror; naked swords suspended over my head! My vestments tinctured with blood! The skies in a blaze! I knew not what river overflowed, and carrying away, besides a thousand fragments, a corpse! The images of death all around me! If I awoke, I felt my heart to be oppressed, a cold sweat was over my face; and in order to remove those dreadful sights, I strove to direct all my thoughts towards the happy day which was to illumine my existence, that Friday so impatiently waited for, which was to procure me some happy moments in the company of the Vicomte de Florville, and the liveliest pleasures in the arms of my Eleanor. But in vain would I attempt to soothe an imagination, struck with the most sinister presentiments, it rejected every consoling idea; my soul was profouudly comfortless. Alas! Too soon did that Friday come, which seemed to promise me nothing but happiness! It came too soon, indeed, that dreadful day, followed by one more dreadful still.

At an early hour in the morning, I called at Rosambert's. The Count had had a very bad night. I returned in the afternoon: the first dressing had just been taken off, but it could not yet be ascertained whether the wound would not be mortal.

At seven in the evening, I left Rosambert to fly to the Rue du Bac. I did not, as I expected, see there the Vicomte de Florville: it was Madame de B*** whom I met with, Madame de B***, in all the eloquence of dress, as if she were going to Longchamps; how beauteous she looked.

In the first transports of my admiration, I threw myself at her feet; and the Marchioness, apparently beholding me in that posture with less pride than gratification, with a more gentle intoxication than that which self-love occasions, did not hurry me up.

"Dear mamma, have not you acted very imprudently in coming here in so remarkable a costume?"

"Would it have been better for me not to come at all: I am just returned from Versailles in my whisky,<66> with no other attendant than Després; besides it was already dark, and I did not get in from the Rue du Bac."

"So there is a private back door then?"

"There is, my dear."

"Permit me, beautiful mamma, to express my utmost gratitude. The papers which you had promised me—have they provided the intended effect?"

"Yes: my father no longer thinks of undertaking a journey with me; yet there is still one circumstance, which I confess makes me uneasy! Namely, my being obliged to leave Paris so soon. Is there no possibility of having my departure retarded for a few days?"

"On the contrary," she exclaimed, "I am afraid you will receive an order to be off still sooner. A war is spoken of; most officers have already joined their regiments; and it was not without great difficulty that I obtained for you the delay of a fortnight."

"Good God! How shall I manage to—"

She interrupted me hastily: "You don't speak to me of the calamitous event that took place yesterday evening."

"Do you deem it calamitous, mamma?"

"How can you ask me such a question? Was it from the hand of M. de B***, that Rosambert should have received his death blow? I shall then have endured with impunity the outrage of his calumnies, and the stain of his embrace! I shall not have been allowed to force from him in your presence, with the tardy remorse of his last crime, the avowal of all his impostures!"

"Accuse not destiny. Your courage has been rewarded by the success of your fight at Compiègne; and in the rencounter of yesterday, all your expectations have been fulfilled."

"Fulfilled!"

"Let me repeat what the Count said prior to losing the use of his senses: "Faublas, certify at least to Madame de B***, that previous to my breathing my last, I have sincerely repented my cruel proceedings towards her—"

"Cruel! More so than you did imagine—Faublas, it is too true that—"

"That? My lovely mamma, the Count was unable to proceed."

"Unable to proceed! But Faublas, how did you interpret that involuntary omittance?"

"The sense does not appear to me equivocal."

"What then?"

"I comprehended that he wished to confess that he had not possessed your person—your person with your love, I mean to say."

"Confess!" She exclaimed, taking both my hands between hers; "you therefore believe it was I who spoke the truth to you?"

"I can assure you, mamma, it would hurt me most grievously not to be convinced of it."

"She placed my hand upon her heart: "You believe it, Faublas! My good friend! Feel—feel its throbbing—for six months past, this is the only moment of joy that has fallen to my lot. Suffer, my dear friend, suffer my tears to flow. Those that I have shed for such a length of time were so bitter! These I find so sweet! Suffer my tears to run, they relieve me from a burden that began to overpower me. Ah! Nevertheless, Faublas, what a greater happiness, if I myself had washed away my injuries in the blood of my enemy, and by this means had proved deserving to obtain in your own estimation, my complete restoration! What have I said," she added, placing her burning lips upon mine, "what signifies my vengeance? Am I not fully justified! Have I not a proper claim upon your esteem, and am I not even entitled to a love equal to—"

Enraptured with her caresses, I was lavish of mine in return. "Well, be it so!" she exclaimed, yielding without reserve; "let love at last, invincible love triumph! For two months back I have opposed all the resistance which a mortal can command. Twenty times it has forced my secret from me; let it triumph also over my resolutions! Let it restore to me with my idolised love, some moments of supreme happiness! Though I were to purchase them at the cost of several ages of trouble! Though I were

to hear an ingrate when in my arms, call Sophia, and regret Madame de Lignolle though I were in short some day to lose my life!"

She said no more; I had just carried her on a bed, where our two souls were confounded into one. What an unforeseen catastrophe was near awaking us from our rapturous ecstasy, to cause the groans of rage and grief to succeed the tender sighs of love!

The door of the room in which we were, having suddenly been burst open: "Will you believe it now," said Madame Fonrose to M. de B***.

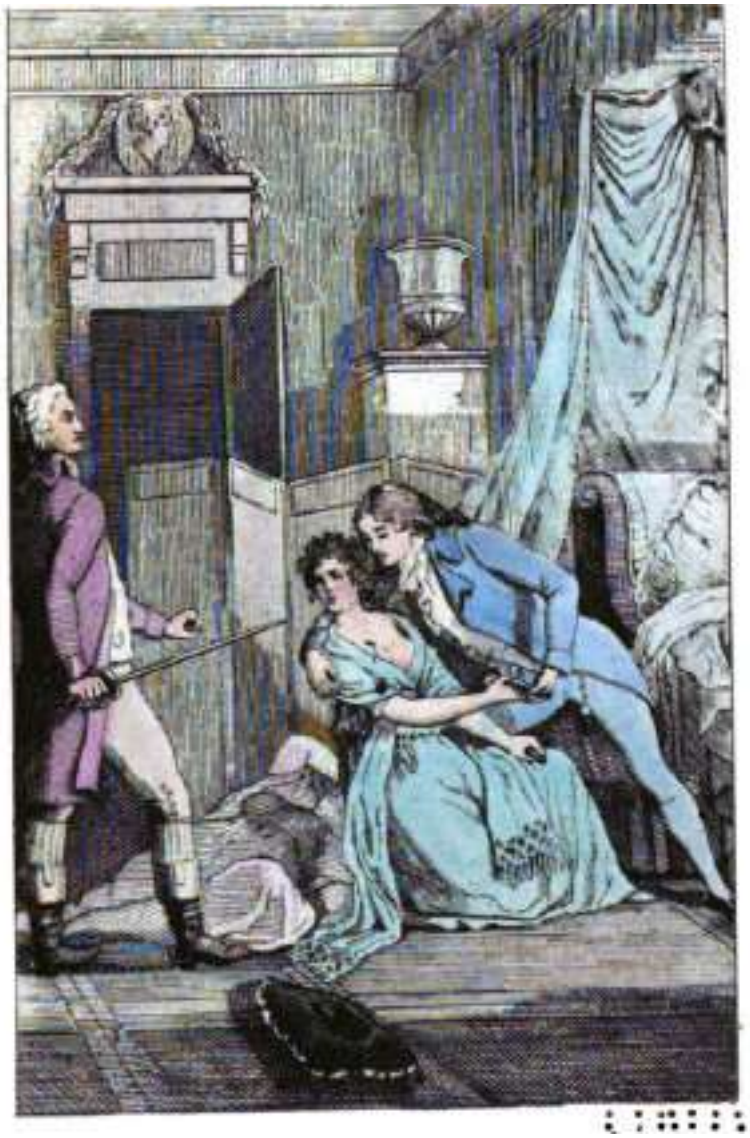

Illustration: The Marquis, unable to question any longer his unhappy lot, became enraged.

The Marquis, unable to question any longer his unhappy lot, became enraged; sword in hand, he rushed upon a man unarmed, and who besides, surprised in the greatest disorder, was totally defenceless.

The Marchioness, too prompt, my too generous lover, ran to meet the threatening weapon. The Marquis struck the blow. Great God! Madame de B***, however, stood, at first, the violence of the thrust, and at the same instant pulling out of her pocket a brace of loaded pistols, she fired one at the Baroness. She then said to

her husband: You have just attempted my life, yours is at my disposal; I shall not try to avenge my death, which undoubtedly is near; but, she added, leaning upon me, I declare to you that I am determined, against all, to save him.

Notwithstanding I made great efforts to hold her up, she fell on her knees, supported herself on her right hand, and presented me the pistol which she still held in her left: "Lay hold of this, Faublas, and if you, M. de B***, offer to advance one step towards him, let him stop you!"

She had scarcely spoken these words, when she dropped backward into my arms, and lost the use of her senses.

The Marquis no longer thought to threaten my life; his fatal sword had already fallen from his hand. "Unhappy wretch," he cried, with signs of the deepest despair," what have I been doing? Whither shall I go to hide myself? You who are present, do not forsake her; be lavish of your care and attention. How shall I get out of this place?"

So great indeed was his agitation that he was scarcely able to find the door.

In the meanwhile, Madame de Fonrose, whose lower jaw was fractured, uttered horrid cries. Crowds of people, unknown to me, and whom I could hardly see, came running in. Several surgeons arrived. The Baroness was immediately carried home, but they did not dare to remove the unfortunate Marchioness. Four of us carried her, dying, where, some minutes before,— Oh, ye gods! Avenging gods! If it is an act of vengeance, it is indeed a very cruel one!

The deep wound was in the left breast, close to the heart. Madame de B***, perhaps, was not to live till next morning. The first dressing being put on, she recovered the use of her senses.

"Faublas! Where is Faublas?"

"Here I am; here I am, overwhelmed with grief."

"Madam," cried out the first surgeon, "don't speak."

"Though I were to die immediately," she retorted, "I must speak to him;" and in an extinct voice she stammered out these broken words: "You will come again, my friend; you will not suffer indifferent people to close my eyes; you will hear my last confession, and my last breathing. But leave me for a few minutes; run; the *lettre de cachet*<67> no doubt will soon arrive from Versailles, run, save the unfortunate Countess, if there is still time enough."

I immediately started. I did not walk, I flew along the streets. They would wish to confine my Eleanor! They must take away my life first. But if the cruel order is executed already? If it should have been executed? It would be all over! I should have no resource! No hopes left! The Countess, equally impatient and enamoured, will not be able, were it only for a week, to support captivity and absence, the mother and child will perish! And I, miserable sufferer! Must I be compelled to survive them? Who could prevent my following them to the grave?

I reached the hôtel of Madame de Lignolle, my mind replete with those gloomy ideas! Without stopping at the lodge of the Swiss, I called out La Fleur, passed on, crossed the yard, flew up the private staircase, and knocked at the door of Mademoiselle de Brumont's apartment. It was opened in a trice. How happy! It was

the Countess! An exclamation of joy esctaped me, which she answered by one of the same kind: "Are you come already, my beloved?"

"My dear Eleanor, I apprehended it was too late; come."

"Where?"

"Come with me."

"How so?"

"Make haste. They threaten your liberty!"

"My liberty! I should be deprived of the sight of my beloved!"

"What are you looking for?"

"My jewels!"

"They are at my house; you have not taken them away!"

"My aunt."

"Where is she?"

"In the drawing-room!"

"Run to bid her adieu; but no, Madame d'Armincour would wish to take you with her; you must come with me. Besides, the Marchioness's charms might be conducive to our detection; it is better that for a short time she should not know what is become of you. However, be quick, let us make haste, we have not a moment to lose."

We went downstairs without making any noise. Favoured by the night, the Countess reached unperceived the street-door. I then, pulling my hat over my eyes, knocked at the Swiss's window: "It is me, who have been speaking to La Fleur; please to pull the string." The man, engaged in a game of cards, obeyed mechanically.

Behold Madame de Lignolle in the street, I hasten to join her. My Eleanor lays hold of my arm, and quickens her pace as much as possible. We dare not speak a word, every new object on our way occasions us mortal inquietude; thus, tormented by a thousand apprehensions, but still supported by the sweetest hopes, we reached the Place Vendome.

We entered the hôtel at the garden door, and as we immediately got to the back stair-case, nobody could see us except Jasmin.

As soon as we had lights brought in; "Dear me," exclaimed Madame de Lignolle, "here is blood about my hands! Faublas, yours are besmeared all over!" I could not check a cry of horror, and on a sudden, melted into tears: "This blood is the blood of a lover! In what a moment are you come to unite your destiny to mine? Eleanor, my dear Eleanor, keep strict watch! Take care of yourself; I am surrounded by the persecutions of avenging heaven; death hovering around me, either strikes or threatens those objects that are dearest to my heart. Keep a strict watch! This blood is the blood of a lover."

"What discourses you hold out, Faublas! Whence proceeds your sad despair? You fill me with terror!"

"My dear, that blood is the blood of a lover. The Marchioness—"

"Has stabbed herself?"

"No, her husband."

"Ah! The cruel man!"

"Although dying, she collected all her powers to warn me of the perils to which you were exposed."

"How thankful I am!"

"And to request of me to return soon, that I might receive her last breath."

"Poor woman! You must hurry to her, my dear; let me go with you."

"Impossible! So many people who threaten you! So many people by her."

"Well then, go by yourself, go and soothe her last moments. However, do not stop with her long; Faublas, you will tell her that my hatred is entirely extinct, that I feel deeply afflicted at her hard fate; that I wish it was in my power—"

"Yes, my Eleanor, I will tell her that you are possessed of an excellent heart."

"But make haste to return, don't leave me here."

"I shall be as quick as possible. Jasmin, as my father might take it into his head to come up into my apartment, take the Countess into the boudoir. Don't let M. de Belcourt find her out! Let no one see her. Jasmin, I trust you with the care of the Countess, I recommend her to your care, you become answerable to me for her safety; remember that my existence is at stake."

From the Place Vendome to the Rue du Bac, it is but a stone's throw; and I returned to the Marchioness in a moment.

Several females, and one gentleman, surrounded her bed. "Let everyone withdraw," she said, upon seeing me enter the room. The doctor represented to her that she must not speak: "Let me have a last conversation with him," she replied; "after that you may govern me as you think proper. Let all retire without exception!" The physician wanted to say more, but an absolute order closed his lips.

"Is she safe, my dear friend?"

"She is at my house."

"Don't keep her there long. At any rate Després is just gone to Versailles, with my secret instructions: so long as I retain a breath of life, dread nothing more for the Countess."

Madame de B*** observed for some time a gloomy silence; she then fixed upon me her eyes, full of tears; and having beckoned to me to lay hold of her hand: "Well, Faublas," she said, "don't you wonder at my sad destiny. Some time back, at the village of Holrisse, you saw me extended on a bed of opprobium; you behold me now on my death bed, and the most cruel reverse, at the present as at a former period, has subverted all my projects at the moment appointed for their execution. I wish now as I did then, to lay my soul open before you; and when you have heard me, when you will know me thoroughly, when above all things, you will have compared my transient pleasures and durable tortures, my early weaknesses, and my last struggles, my good resolutions, and my blameable designs, finally, my errors and my punishment; when you have compared the whole, Faublas, then you will dare, I doubt

not, to affirm that your lover, after having lived more unfortunate than guilty, has died still less deserving of blame than of compassion.

"Wherefore should I recall here the commencement of our connection? At that period, it is true, your lover spent some very happy days; but how soon were they poisoned by the most poignant alarms, so speedily followed by your inconstancy and my complete disaster! Ah! Who would wish to purchase the like enjoyments at the same price? Who? I! Faublas, I, who notwithstanding my approaching dissolution, still feel burning with the fire that has unceasingly consumed me! But in the whole world I am probably the only one. Believe me, I have not forgot your rising love for Sophia, the fatal period of her elopement, the still more fatal day on which I saw my lover with my rival before the altar, and the horrors of that night when, by the vilest of all attempts, your perfidious friend completed my disgrace, and paved the way to my real misfortunes.

"Faublas, now at my last hour, I take my solemn oath, and call to witness the God who hears me, Rosambert has deserved death. Rosambert, prior to his degrading me in your opinion, had basely calumniated me. I avow that, seduced by some of his brilliant qualifies, I paid more attention to him than to anyone else, showed him a marked preference, no doubt. He might well have conceived great hopes, though I have good reasons to believe that the event would never have justified them. Don't imagine, Faublas, that I mean speaking to you of my principles, my modesty, of all the virtues to which my sex have been wisely condemned: with you I have not kept even the appearance of them. What shall I say to you, my friend! Placed by chance in an elevated rank, I moreover had received from nature an uneasy mind, an ardent soul, perhaps I was born to obey the criminal dictates of ambition; but I saw you, I was allured, and plunged into all the extravagance of love.

"Yes, it was by perpetrating a crime, that Rosambert annulled my designs at Luxembourg. Those designs, I know, might have appeared blameable: but at least they were not such as a lover void of liberality and of courage, a vulgar woman, moderately enamoured with an ordinary man, could have conceived. Rosambert subverted them all. It appeared to me that henceforth I was not allowed to produce to your embrace a woman who despised herself; and from that period presuming too much on my own strength, or rather still unacquainted with the irresistible empire of a passion, thinking that I was able to manage the great concerns of the heart as easily as I governed the petty interests of a court, I swore, you heard me, I swore henceforward to live only to exercise my vengeance and procure your promotion.

"It was requisite first of all, to have you liberated from a state prison, where you would not have lingered four months, if my enemies had not leagued to counteract in a thousand ways all my endeavours. At last M. de ——, promoted in consequence of my efforts to the high post which he now occupies, M. de —— was nevertheless to set your liberation at a price which nearly rendered the procuring of it impossible. Judge if the sacrifice required appeared painful to me! The business was to restore you to the world, and I hesitated for several days. My friend, I shall repeat it, I do not pretend to boast here of my virtue, or of the virtue of women in general. What a difference however between the principles, inclinations and passions of the two sexes! How far your love from that I feel for you! You, Faublas, especially, who are able to divide yourself between three lovers, still find charms in the possession of the first object that chance throws in your way!

"Alas! On the contrary, how grievously hurt did Madame de B*** (so miserable already for having been obliged, that her justification should be complete, to acknowledge the rights of a husband, and to fulfil with him a rigorous duty) feel on the fatal day when to procure your rescue, she was forced to submit herself to the brutal libidinous desires of a man destitute of delicacy; to the cruel caresses of a man totally indifferent to her! Yea, my friend, M. de —— has enjoyed me! It was only at my last hour that I was to make an avowal of the kind; nevertheless, among so many proofs of my unlimited attachment, consider this shameful devotedness as the most prominent.

"You were set at liberty, I dared to see you again, I dared so to do! That was my first wrong, it was conducive to my latter errors, and to my tragical end.

"Four months of absence must have cured me of my fatal love: at least I flattered myself it was so, when I had you called to Madame de Montdesir's; at our first interview your presence occasioned me much less emotion than it used to do formerly; I spoke to you of Justine without anger, of the Countess without much acrimony, and of Sophia without agitation, without any feeling of jealousy. I mentioned to you, in the sincerity of my heart, laudable resolutions which I thought would be immutable. At last, when I left you, I congratulated myself upon feeling only friendship for you; foolish woman! How was I deceived! The ill-extinguished fire still burned under the ashes; a spark was going to escape, and to cause a new conflagration.

"Remember, remember the day, when ready to set off for Compiègne, I went to bid you adieu. Hitherto, whilst preparing to chastise Rosambert, I had only entertained the desire of being revenged; you caused me to fear death. The sudden idea that there was a possibility of our being soon separated forever, made me shudder, and chilled me with terror. I immediately felt it was less desirable for me to accomplish my vengeance against an enemy; but I felt also more impatient of being rehabilitated in the eyes of my lover. Meanwhile, the new apprehensions which had astonished me, the momentary irresolution which they had produced, my still violent agitation, the perturbation of my senses, the emotions of my heart, all suggested plainly, that while attempting the life of Rosambert, I must, above all other things, take care to defend my own; that now the question was not so much to triumph as not to die; that I must especially strive to live, that I might adore you!

"How could I have still been insensible of my real disposition, since, even at Compiègne, in the moment of intoxication which followed my victory, my secret escaped me in your presence, and that of the Countess? It was, however, without having previously given it a thought, from a mere instinct of revived jealousy, that, seeing you on the point of joining again my most dangerous rival, I advised you to re-enter Paris again with Madame de Lignolle. Then, without rendering to myself a faithful account of my sentiments, I only discovered, amidst a crowd of jarring ideas, that I had been strangely mistaken when I had promised to restore Sophia to you, and with tranquillity to see you lavish your caresses upon her. I was made sensible, that a female, though she may have given a courageous example of self-abnegation, should not flatter herself of attaining the more heroical effort of entire devotedness. I ascertained, that a lover, though capable of renouncing her own happiness, could yet be un-provided with sufficient fortitude to suffer another to be happy. I found it out, felt indignant at the discovery, and shuddered at it. But at last, without presuming to

form, for times to come, any decided project, I adopted at least to retard for the present a re-union, the idea whereof alone occasioned my secret despair.

"I despatched immediately Després from Compiègne to Fromonville to apprise M. du Portail of your arrival, and to throw more obstacles in your way, in case the Countess would allow you to go in search of your wife. Faublas, I see you turn pale and tremble. Oh, you, whom I have loved too much! Do not hate me! Oh, you, the author of all my errors, refuse not to view them with pity and indulgence! Too happy, believe me, is the woman of feeling, to whom propitious love has commanded proceedings not very blameable, who never was necessitated to betray an ungrateful lover, or to persecute rivals, alas! And whom the first step towards the abyss did not hurl to its bottom.

"If you could form an idea of what I suffered at that inn at Montargis, especially at that castle in Gatinois, at that fatal castle of the Countess! Incomprehensible young man! How then, can you unite so much inconstancy to so much sensibility, such exquisite mildness and such barbarity? Your Sophia was no less dear to you, and yet you adored Madame de Lignolle! Yes, I was an eye-witness, you already adored her! Ingrate! In the delirium of your fever, you pronounced the name of Eleanor as often as you did mine. Cruel youth! In your intervals of rationality, you would make me the confidant of all the love, the burning love you felt for her! It was not enough for me to tremble for the life of my lover, to see him in a house I abhorred, to witness another woman bestowing upon him those attentions I wished were committed to my only charge, I was moreover to hear from the mouth of unfaithful man—but let those dreadful recollections be laid aside. Who could have told me then that I was not to die through grief, because I was reserved to undergo numberless other trials, equally unsupportable, because all the horrors of my destiny were indispensably to be accomplished.

"Faublas, my pocket book is there; look for the fatal letter that occasioned me to hasten the execution of my most dreadful determinations. Take away your father-in-law's letter, take it away; I know it by heart, and have no further occasion for it. What a letter! Good gods! How I am treated in it! How many crimes are there attributed to me, the idea whereof had never come into my head! What a dreadful hereafter was I threatened with, that as yet I had not merited? The deep sentiment of an act of injustice irritates a proud mind, and will too frequently prompt it to commit the most unpardonable enormities. I have had the misfortune of experiencing the truth of that assertion: Mademoiselle de Pontis sharing a universal lover and public contempt with the Marchioness de B***! Ah! Du Portail, you know but very little of that Marchioness de B***, whom your fury thus accuses! She never was affectionate nor generous by half. It was not to share Faublas that she went to seek him at Luxembourg! It was not to dispute him to Sophia that she subsequently permitted him to go and join her! Your hatred, notwithstanding, is the reward of the sacrifices which she has already made, and as a recompense for her painful daily struggles, you promise her, in addition to public contempt, unavoidable misfortunes. I well knew that you and your daughter both detested me; that men severely condemn from appearances, and never recall their judgments; that destiny, as inflexible as men, never revoked its decrees, and that a great reverse was too often the pledge of a greater reverse still; I know it. But you yourself protest that your common persecutions will have no end. Well then, since I cannot be guarded against them, I will justify them! Du Portail, I am weary of imposing upon myself privations, without getting indemnified; I am tired of sacrificing myself for ingrates. Since I have no hopes left,

since I have nothing more to lose, I wish at least to reap some benefit from my disgrace, which you rejoice at: I wish that love should return to abridge my existence, the termination whereof you call for. You will see what the Marchioness, though surrounded by enemies, can still undertake! You will see whether I am a woman to share a lover!

"Thus, Faublas, thus in my despair, I took my oath that Sophia would not be restored to you, and that Madame de Lignolle, in her turn, would be made acquainted with the tortures that I had endured so long.

"Compelled to let you re-enter Paris, I nevertheless found it necessary to have you leave it as soon as possible, lest some event, inimical to my new designs, should tend to make you discover that your father-in-law was returned to seek an asylum in the metropolis."

"What! My Sophia!"

"I beg," exclaimed Madame de B***, "you will not interrupt me; the burning fever which supports me may leave me on a sudden, and I then would not retain sufficient powers to be able to speak. Do not interrupt me; strive above all things to conceal from me your cruel joy; compassionate the situation I am in.

"Listen to me," she continued: "M. du Portail was hurrying away from Fromonville with your wife and two female strangers unknown to me. Després commissioned one of my agents to stop at Puy-la-Lande, and to manage matters so that you could not procure horses; Després continued in pursuit of your father-in-law, who, leaving the two strangers at some distance from Montargis, proceeded on the same road, got out of his carriage with his daughter, and then across by-roads, took post-horses again at Dormans, and returned to Paris through Meaux. He was lost sight of at Bondy. Your father-in-law is certainly in the capital, but I know not by what means he has found the impenetrable retreat wherein, for upwards of two months, he has escaped all my researches.

"Nevertheless, through mere chance, you might have unexpectedly discovered what I sought to no purpose; I therefore thought it expedient to procure a situation for you, which would necessitate your leaving Paris, to go and inhabit a distant province, where I flattered myself I would soon render your exile agreeable; I had you appointed to a company in the regiment of ——.

"Madame de Fonrose, unhappily placed between the Countess and the Baron, might doubly oppose my designs. I easily brought on her rupture with Madame de Lignolle, and found means to persuade M. de Belcourt to give up his unworthy mistress.

"I continued to harbour just projects against my most cruel persecutor; I entertained still, hopes of obliging him within a few days to fight me again; and if, as in the first instance, I did not strike a decisive blow, if Rosambert escaped with his life, I expected I might at least force from him an avowal of his impostures, thus recover your esteem, and resume some value in mine own eyes. However, as your friend most assuredly would not pardon Madame de B***, for the excesses of which he had been guilty towards her, it appeared indispensable to me at first to remove the perfidious adviser, and to try to put an end to the jokes with which he unceasingly outraged hymen in general, and some husbands in particular; I had Mademoiselle de Mésanges betrothed to him, and an order to join his regiment.

"I had another infinitely formidable enemy left, namely, Madame de Lignolle, whom I would have loved much, if you had not made her my rival. La Fleur, whom I had bribed, the traitor La Fleur, would daily make to me such reports as continually increased my inquietude. It became pressing to raise between the Countess and you obstacles insurmountable for ever; I induced the Captain to come to Paris; and he hastened to Versailles to solicit a *lettre de cachet*,<67> which was readily obtained; Madame de Lignolle was going to be arrested.

"Faublas, wherefore this lively agitation? Whence comes this sudden paleness? Do you accuse me of having been cruel to Eleanor? Wait, my friend, if you judge me precipitately, you will judge me with too much rigour, tomorrow the Captain was to be ordered back to Brest, and to re-embark there; the Countess was to be deprived of her liberty for a few days only; soon after she would have been assigned as a prison, the estate which her aunt possesses in the Franche-Comté. Nothing, I protest, would have been neglected to protect that unehappy child against the resentment of her relatives and those of her husband. But after the rumours which her detention would have set afloat, you never could have seen her again, and I besides had kept in reserve several means of preventing any further connection between you.

"Lastly, you were going to Nancy, in the vicinity of which place you and I were to meet again; it was in Lorraine that I was to recover my lover, and to see more days of happiness. How many vain projects! Ah! Unfortunate woman! When I was in hopes of devoting my life to you, death awaited me! The fatal sword of the Marquis, after depriving me of my victim, is come to strike his own within your very arms. It is all over then! I see my grave open to receive me! There I must descend at six-and-twenty!

"Fatal consequence of a passion too tardily opposed! May my example serve as a warning to the crowd of unfortunate females threatened with a similar end! May it, amongst the great number, save some! Let them all be told of my first weaknesses, of my first reverses, of my useless resistance, my culpable projects, and my deplorable end. Let them be informed that love never procured me one moment's felicity, but which had been preceded by lively inquietudes, accompanied with the greatest dangers, and followed by most irreparable misfortunes. Let them know as much, and may they, filled with salutary terror, stop, if possible, on the brink of the precipice into which I have sunk.

"And in order that they may conceive the supreme power of the love which allured me, you, Faublas, who perhaps, will have wondered at me, even in my last moments, you, my ever idolised lover, tell them that my good name, my riches, my rank, my beauty forfeited beyond redemption, did not cost me a regret, but that our eternal separation was the only cause of my despair; tell them, nevertheless, that before I left you, I found myself too happy in saving your dearer life at the cost of my own; too happy for being able, at least, once more to be yours, and in a last embrace to calm partly the ardour of the fire that consumed it, of that devouring fire which was to be quenched only with—"

She did not finish, a sudden and extreme weakness prevented her. The physician came running in, alarmed by my cries; he requested me to withdraw, if I did not wish, repeated he several times, to accelerate the fatal moment.

On my return, Madame de Lignolle exclaimed: You have stopped a long while! Is she dead?"

"No, my dear."

"No? So much the worse."

"How so?"

"To be sure! I had not thought of it at first! Her husband killed her, because he surprised you in the act of infidelity to me!"

I was at great pains to pacify the Countess. At last, however, her heart reopened to compassion in behalf of the unfortunate Madame de B*** and the critical predicament in which she stood herself, calling for all her attention, we consulted together on the means of preventing the misfortunes with which we were threatened.

We were allowed another happy night, during which my Eleanor, whilst manifesting proofs of unlimited affection, ceased not speaking of her elopement, which had become indispensable. It was agreed upon, that in the course of the following day, I should make every necessary preparation, so that we might be ready to set off at night.

Madame de Lignolle, with unbounded confidence, already fancied she was far from her native country; whereas I, my heart oppressed with grief, and my mind still agitated with secret irresolutions, trembled at the prospect of doubtful days, and scarcely dared to think of the two certain present circumstances. Oh, Madame de B***! I could see you continually on your death-bed! Oh, my father! Oh, my sister! Oh, my Sophia! I made useless efforts to remove the recollection of you that oppressed me!

It was now day-break. A shocking sight, a sinister omen awaited me. When I entered the room of the Marchioness, her eyes were wandering, and, in broken accents, she would say: "Yes, this is my grave; but that other, whom is it intended for? Where is Faublas?" she cried several times, while looking at me: "Where is Faublas? Run, tell him that my enemies intend to assassinate him, that the Marquis and the Captain—The Captain!—He approaches!—He drags!—Ah, poor little women! Come, then, Faublas! Quick! What are you doing? Who detains you? Come to her assistance! It is too late! It is all over! Ye gods! Great gods! It was for her they were digging that grave by the side of mine!"

Madame de B***, violently agitated, was strong enough to be seated in her bed, but as her attendants came running to oblige her to take another position, she fell backward. I could hear her still mutter some incoherent sentences, which redoubled my apprehensions and grief.

"A terrible fever!" said the physician, "A continual delirium! In this situation she has spent the whole night! Sir, I must not flatter you, it is impossible she can resist long."

I went to Rosambert's; he began to give some hopes; nevertheless, the surgeons could not yet presume to answer for his perfect recovery. I was not permitted to speak to him.

It is true, then, that everything fails me at once; that no support is left me, at a moment when I stand in need of the assistance of everybody. It is true, then, that I am going to forsake my father, and to leave, perhaps forever, the place in which I know

that my Sophia now breathes. It must be so, unless I wish to lose both my Eleanor and my child. Unfortunate man! I must.

I went all over Paris to procure a number of articles necessary for the elopement of Madame de Lignolle; yet I know not what dolorous presentiment warned me that she was going on too long a journey. Whilst I was preparing everything for our common departure, it seemed to me as if I was tormented by a painful dream, which was ere long to be at an end, but a secret voice cried out to me, that my awakening would be dreadful.

When I returned to the hôtel, I found that Madame d'Armincour was waiting for me in my father's apartment; she asked me what I had done with her niece. Eleanor and I had foreseen the visit and the questions of the Marchioness; we had agreed upon the answers I was to return: "Your niece, Madame, is gone under the care of a friend, whose courage and fidelity are known to me. It is in Switzerland she has sought an asylum; she has preferred that country, because it is not far distant from your Franche-Comté."

"She is saved!" exclaimed the Marchioness, embracing me: "Ah, how much I am obliged to you! She is gone to Switzerland! I shall follow her! My dear niece! How have you managed to tear her from her enemies? No one has seen you appear at the hôtel; no one has seen her go out; and yet it was not a quarter of an hour since I had been speaking to her in her room, when they came to arrest her. She is saved! But alas! A thousand perils still surround her! Admitting that she can escape her persecutors, what will become of her, far from her native country, far from her relations, and, must I say it, far from him whom she loves with idolatry? Ah, young man! Young man! You have plunged my child into an abyss of miseries!"

At these words, Madame d'Armincour left me with tears in her eyes.

I hastened to the attic, to join Madame de Lignolle, who was to remain all day long in my servant's room.

"My dear Eleanor, everything is ready, nothing more appears to impede our flight; keep yourself prepared for twelve at night precisely."

"Keep yourself prepared!" she repeated. "At any time, and in every place, but to-day especially, and in this room, what else have I to do but to wait for you with an impatience, of which you have no idea. Keep yourself in readiness! Faublas, wherefore do you address me without thinking of what you are saying? Wherefore that air, for ever preoccupied? Wherefore that sad countenance, when the happy moment approaches which is to re-unite us, never again to be separated? When it is certain that, henceforth, we shall have it in our power to live and die together?"

"My love, Madame d'Armincour has just been here."

"I know it; I saw her from this window."

"The Marchioness is going immediately to Switzerland; she thinks of arriving there only after her niece; she will be there a few hours before us. Your aunt will be there; my father and sister will not!"

"Leave a letter for M. de Belcourt."

"Undoubtedly; I was thinking of it. A letter? What is a letter? My Eleanor, the Baron is waiting for me; I cannot dispense appearing at the table; I shall leave it as soon as possible, and shall return to try and eat a bit of dinner with you."

"Well, go Faublas, and make haste back. So long as I can see you, I am easy in my mind; I die with inquietude when you are not by me."

She kissed me, and I went down.

M. de Belcourt saw me refuse all kind of food; he heard me answer him only by monosyllables; he withdrew, and watered with his tears the hand which he had just been holding out to me: "You have not left your father and your sister to follow your mistress," he said to me at last; "your father and your sister will reward you for it; they will lavish upon you, in your misfortune, the most tender consolation, and your afflictions then, being shared, will not overwhelm you. My son, it was from you that I heard that on the day before yesterday, M. de Rosambert had fallen by the sword of M. de B***, but it is public rumour that has informed me since, in another rencounter, the Marquis had exercised upon a dearer enemy a more dreadful vengeance. Sooner or later, my son, all the objects of our illegitimate affections must perish, or be torn away from us by some accident; but cannot you expect a lasting felicity, you, to whom heaven, till such time as it will restore to you the adorable wife who idolises you, has left good relatives who cherish you."

The Baron was still speaking, when a letter was brought to him: "God of Mercy!" he exclaimed, after reading it, "you already have compassion on him! Here, my friend, here, read yourself."

> At length the Marchioness has received the punishment due to her crimes; and the unfortunate Countess is henceforward lost for your son, who I am very willing to believe, is now more unhappy than he has ever been reprehensible, the lessons of adversity must have corrected him forever. Tell him, that in the course of two hours I will bring his wife back to him, and that if he is entirely deserving of meeting her again, the day on which my children are reeunited, will ever be reckoned the happiest day of my existence.
> LE COMTE LOVINSKI.

My first movement was a transport of joy; what a happiness! What an unexpected happiness! But a moment of reflection made me sensible of the embarrassments and dangers of my new situation.

"Great God! But—"

"What is the matter? What ails you, brother!"

"Nothing, sister."

"Whence the extreme agitation in which I see you, my son? What disturbs your peace of mind?"

"Can you ask me, sir? Madame de B*** is dying! A thousand perils still surround Madame de Lignolle, and you ask me what disturbs my peace! I certainly adore my wife! But in what moment is she restored to me! You know but the least part of my inequietudes! You are a stranger to one-half of the sorrow that weighs on my heart! I stand in need of complete tranquillity. I request of you, as a particular favour, sir, and I beg of you too, my dear Adelaide, permit me to indulge at liberty my reveries; leave me by myself, leave me quite alone till the arrival of Sophia."

"Whither are you running, my friend?"

"To Jasmin, to call him—no, to my room—not at all! I am going down into the garden—don't follow me there, I beseech you!"

Sophia returns in two hours, and I set off to-night with Madame de Lignolle! I go, when at length in the arms of my wife, love is preparing for me the reward—ungrateful lover of Eleanor! What a desire do I dare to form in behalf of Sophia!—Ah!—I know which of those two charming women I prefer; but who will tell me by which I am the most beloved?

On this day, however, to secure the happiness of the one, I must cause the despair of the other. Cause the despair of Sophia! May rather Madame de Lignolle perish a hundred times! May she perish! My Eleanor! My Eleanor and my child! O the most barbarous of men, what have you been saying?

Unless I can carry away Madame de Lignolle, she is ruined; persecuted by the family of her husband, degraded in the opinion of her own, threatened with eternal confinement, she has no friends left in the world but him for whom her love has sacrificed everything. In me rest all her hopes; if I betray them, the Countess will find her greatest enemy in her own heart: how will she be able to defend herself against her persecutors? How, above all things, will she escape the violence of her passion?

Sophia has hitherto resisted absence, because our separation was not to be imputed to me; but when, on the very day of her return, I shall run away with a rival, my forsaken wife—if I desert Sophia, her grief will kill her.

Unhappy man! What am I to do? Nothing, except by a prompt death to get rid of all my perplexities! Nothing! Except to end by a crime, a life already—If I immolate myself, neither of the two will survive me.

Unhappy man! Hear your destiny; to live is the law it imposes upon you; also, between two objects almost equally dear and sacred, to choose a victim.

Such is the fruit of my errors! Remorse! Great God! And wherefore? You have given me the most loving heart, and the most ardent senses; you have willed that I should meet at the same time with several women, formed purposely to please the eye, and to charm the soul; I have adored them all at the same time—adored them still less than they deserved! I have done no more! If ever I was blameable, the fault is yours. If I am now too cruelly punished, is the fault to be imputed entirely to that other unfortunate creature whom you have not cured of her fatal love? O Madame de B***, what miseries you have accumulated upon me!

If I do not carry away my Eleanor, she will be ruined; my Sophia, if I forsake her, will die through grief. What man, if he were in my situation, after the most violent struggles, could have firmness sufficient, or rather be barbarous enough, to be able to fix upon a determination? If at least anyone deigned to help me with succouring advice. Let me go and consult my father—I am not in my proper senses!

What, are there no means of conciliating—"Sir," interrupted my servant, who had approached me unperceived, "Madame, who sees you from yonder window, wonders at your leaving her by herself in my room, to walk alone in this garden."

"Madame? I am not at home! I don't wish to see anybody; no more females especially!"

"My dear master, 'tis Madame la Comtesse!"

"Oh! It is not Madame, then! Well, what does my Eleanor want?"

"That you would not forsake her."

"Tell her that is what I am thinking of."

"But she desires you to go up to her directly."

"Be it so—show me the way."

"Show me the way!" he repeated, "I thought you knew it! O my dear master! How sorry I am to see you in the situation you are in!"

"These are still but roses! It can't be helped, Jasmin, my hour is come! Hark, my friend, you will soon hear it rumoured"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"What!"

"Why don't you finish?"

"I don't remember what I was saying to you."

"You will soon hear it rumoured!"

"Yes, that my wife is returned; but don't mention it to the Countess."

"Take care: here are M. de Belcourt and Mademoiselle Adelaide coming."

"Return to Madame de Lignolle, I shall follow you."

I went to meet my father: "Oh! I request of you, suffer me at liberty to meditate and weep, let me indulge my grief alone. I will not leave the hôtel, and you will see me again as soon as Sophia makes her appearance."

My father and sister having left the garden, I was again absorbed in my deep reveries, from which Jasmin came a second time to rouse me.

I went up to the Countess. "So then I must send for you," she said.

"Do you think, my dear, that your aunt is already gone?"

"Wherefore do you ask that question?"

"I was thinking that Madame d'Armincour could have taken you away."

"Taken me away! With you?"

"With me? Perhaps she would not have been so condescending."

"And what then?"

"What then? I would have gone to join you."

"So we would not have gone together?"

"My dear, if it were become impossible?"

"Who could prevent it? Not an hour ago you were telling me yourself—"

"An hour ago I did not know—how could I have guessed?"

"What?"

"Nothing, my Eleanor, I speak at random. We shall quit Paris at midnight precisely."

I could not withhold my tears; and as she asked me what occasioned my weeping, I repeated that truly cruel question: "Do you think that your aunt is already gone?"

"What does my aunt signify to me in the present occasion?" she exclaimed. "Was it that I should go with Madame d'Armincour that I have sacrificed my fortune and character? Was it for her sake that I have exposed myself to all sorts of miseries? Yet, sir, the more the decisive moment draws near, the more I see your irresolutions to redouble. It is not your father alone who gives rise to them! It is not the death of Madame de B*** that makes you shed tears! Ingrate! You shudder at the idea of burying yourself in a solitude where Sophia could not penetrate!"

"Where Sophia could not penetrate!"

"Remember, sir, that I had projected my flight before it became necessary; make yourself satisfied, that it is not my present hopeless situation that compels me to seek an asylum in a foreign country. If, therefore, you are prompted by no other motive to come along with me, but that of securing me against the resentment of my family, you may stay where you are. I declare to you that I have kept in reserve against my enemies divers resources. Divers resources! I have; do not reduce me, however, to the necessity of using them. If you have already ceased loving the mother, compassionate the child; reduce me not to the necessity of using them," repeated she, falling on her knees before me. "Too long since have I flattered myself, with the hope of consecrating my whole life to you; it would be too dreadful for me to end it now, while accusing you of barbarity."

These last words of Madame de Lignolle, completely discomposed me. I could not tell whether my answers were calculated to remove or to increase her inquietudes; all I can recollect is, that during the whole course of that day, equally preoccupied as myself, she looked very sad. The more evening was drawing near, the more I felt my dolorous impatience and my secret struggles to increase: my body, the same as my mind, underwent the most violent agitation. I was continually going from my father's apartment to the room of my servant, enquiring of all I met, what o'clock it was, and repeatedly looking at my watch; sometimes I would find that the hours went on very slow, sometimes I accused them of being too fast.

At last, towards dusk, a carriage entered the yard of the hôtel: "Excuse me, my Eleanor, it is a visit which I must receive, I shall be with you in a moment"

"A visit! she exclaimed. I heard no more, but flew into the passage where Jasmin was waiting for orders. "Be quick, go in, and do not suffer her to quit the room."

I ran down as quick as lightning. I found in the hall the most beauteous of women, improved within seven months. She flew into my arms: O my beloved! If I had not been constantly promised this happy day, I never could have borne the tortures of absence! My father-in-law embraced me: "Oh! That I had been permitted sooner," he said to me, "to make both her and you happy!" Adelaide, transported with joy, came to share with me the caresses of her dear friend, and my father shed delicious tears, as he pressed M. du Portail to his bosom.

We altogether mounted into M. de Belcourt's apartment. I shall not attempt to describe the transports of Sophia, those of her lover, the unspeakable satisfaction of my sister and of our happy fathers, all I can tell is that a whole hour elapsed like a

minute. Alas I you must know that during a whole hour the unhappy Madame de Lignolle was entirely forgotten.

"It is no mistake! I hear somebody crying out," the Baron said.

"Crying out! Father!"

"Great God!"

"Ah! 'tis Jasmin who amuses himself in counterfeiting a female's voice. I shall leave you for a moment."

I found the Countess in a fit of dreadful anger; "So you are come at last! Sir, am I your prisoner? Your impertinent valet has kept me here by force!" While she was speaking, Jasmin on his side was saying: "Sir, she wished to jump into the yard, and that is the reason why I have fastened the window."

"You have had plenty of time to receive your visit; resumed Madame de Lignolle; I hope you will not leave me again."

"Supper is waiting for me."

"It is too early! Besides you shall not sup to-day. When are we to set off?"

"My dearest, I beg of you, grant me one day longer, only one day."

"One day! Perfidious man!

She rushed towards the door, I stopped her.

"Leave me," she cried, "I insist upon going out."

"Going out to be ruined."

"I will go down! I wish to speak to her! I wish to tell her that I am your wife!"

"How!"

"Perfidious man! I saw her getting out of her carriage. I knew her again by her shape, by her head of hair. I knew her to be the woman at Fromonville! Ah! I how miserable I am! Ah! How beautiful she is! And the cruel man demands of me one day! I shall stop here, in a garret of his hotel! I shall stop devoured with ennui, inquietude, and jealousy, whilst he will occupy with her the apartment where last night—ingrate! I shall stop here, while in the arms of a rival—One day! Not even one hour! Hear me, Faublas, she continued with excessive vehemence: do you love me?"

"More than my very life, I take my oath I do."

"Save me then. Take notice, you have not a moment to lose; you have not two ways left of preserving me. Let us depart immediately."

"Immediately!"

"Yes, it is already dark, let us go down, get into a hackney coach, reach the first inn beyond the turnpike: Jasmin will bring us our post-chaise there"

"My Eleanor—"

"Say yes or no."

I was going to kneel before her, but she drew back. "My Eleanor."

"Yes or no!" she resumed.

"Consider that in the present moment it is impossible."

"Impossible! See, perfidious man, remember, that it is you who will have murdered me."

She held concealed in her right hand a pair of short scissors with which she stabbed herself. Notwithstanding I had stopped her arm rather late, the violence of the blow was much diminished, yet the blood ran in great abundance, and the Countess fainted away. My God! Gracious heaven! That was wanted to complete my miseries. "Go, Jasmin, go then and fetch the best surgeon. Run. Bring him through the garden back door. Run, my man, the dearest half of me is in danger."

Till such time as he could return, I paid every attention to Madame de Lignolle. What a joy succeeded my mortal apprehensions, when I discovered that by stopping the Countess's arm, I had most luckily averted the blow; the double pointed weapon, instead of entering her breast, had slipped on the surface, where I could see only one single wound. I neverthe, less could not bind it without mingling my tears with the blood that continued to flow.

I had just done, when the Baron called out: "Faublas, are you not coming down?"

"Presently, father."

How could I leave my Eleanor, who had not yet recovered the use of her senses? I remained by the side of her and called her a hundred times, but to no purpose.

At length, however, she began to give some signs of life, when the Baron in a tone of the greatest impatience, came calling out a second time: "Are you not coming down!"

"In a moment, father, in a moment."

Judge of my alarms, when I heard M. de Belcourt, instead of re-entering his apartment, coming up into Jasmin's room. "What can he be doing continually," he cried, "in his servant's room ever since dinner-time?" I had only time to seize the fatal scissors, to pull the, door after me, and to go and meet the Baron. In order to plead a likely excuse, I hastened to represent to him that notwithstanding Sophia's return, I sometimes wanted to be alone.

We returned to the drawing-room. "He has been weeping!" said my wife. She then added in a low tone of voice: "It is the recollection of Madame de B*** that cost you those tears. I forgive you; her end has been so truly awful! O my beloved, I will endeavour to restore to you all that you have lost, and I will love you so much, that henceforth you will not have it in your power to love any other."

My father, M. du Portail, and my sister joined Sophia to lavish upon me their cruel consolations; I wished to avoid them, I wanted to go out, but they all detained me. What I suffered upon the occasion is not to be conceived, their tender anxiety was troublesome, even Sophia's caresses were insupportable to me. However, another quarter of an hour having elapsed, in the most violent struggles, inquietude got the better of every other consideration; I rushed to the door vociferating: "Leave me! I wish to be alone."

I went upstairs, and found in the passage on the attic, a surgeon and my servant, who were waiting for me. I applied the key to the lock, but the door flew open of itself. "How comes this? I had locked it!"

"That may be," retorted Jasmin, "but the lock did not hold fast."

We entered the room, Madame de Lignolle was no longer there. A stab from a dagger would not have hurt me so much. Great God! What is become of her? Where can she be gone?

I rushed out, and met on the staircase my sister, my wife, her father and my own; I passed through the midst of them all and made off. "Where is he thus running away from me?" exclaimed Sophia.

"To find her out, to save her, or to perish with her."

"Yes, sir," answered the Swiss; "she has been gone about ten minutes; I thought she was a woman that Madame had brought with her."

"Yes, sir," answered a good lady who had just taken shelter under an archway in the place Vendome; "I have just spoken to her; the poor child was dreadfully agitated! She refused taking a part of my umbrella. 'No, no,' she said to me; 'I want water, I am burning! I saw her going to the Tuileries through the Passage des Fenillans; the poor little thing will be wet through."

What in fact must have redoubled my terror was that no one could have ventured about the streets in such bad weather; the heat had been excessive during the whole day; the south wind began to blow; thick clouds were gathering round, dreadful flashes of lightning blazed in the sky, while hail and rain poured in torrents. My soul was filled with consternation; the enraged elements I viewed as forerunners of heavenly vengeance.

I reached the passage, and enquired of the waiters at the coffee-house whether they had seen the wretched woman? I was answered that she had made towards the drawbridge; there I ran; found an invalid on duty: "She has walked twice round this basin he said, and then went up the great terrace." There again I ran, and made enquiries of the Swiss, who referred me to the sentry of the Port-Royale.

At that moment—methinks I hear it still, and my pen drops from my hand—at that same moment the clock of the Théatins<78> struck nine.

"Sentinel! A female, young, pretty, dressed in a white gown, with a handkerchief tied round her head."

"There she is," he answered, coolly. The cruel man extended his arm, and pointed to the river.

"How! There?"

"To be sure, she has just jumped in; it is her whom they are searching after."

"You miscreant! Why did you not stop her?" and, without waiting for the barbarian's reply, I plunged after the unfortunate Countess.

At first I could scarcely resist the waves, which opened, roared, and drove me at a distance. At length I collected all my powers, and through the bellowing stream, sought at random that which the boatmen were also in search of. On a sudden, a loud clap of thunder was heard, and the heavenly fires struck the liquid element. By their tremendous blaze, however, I distinguished I know not what, which only showed

itself to disappear again; I immediately dived, seized by the hair, and brought on shore. What an object did I bring up, what an object of eternal compassion! This is my beloved! I turned my eyes aside, and fell close to her, too happy to lose, with the recollection of my existence, that of my troubles.

The cruel men have just called me to life again; they enquire of me whither they are to carry that woman? They ask me for her name and her direction?

"What is that to you?" I was answered, that she must be examined, that it is still time, perhaps, to save her life.

"To save her life! The whole of my fortune would not suffice to repay so great a service! Quick! Place Vendome. But no. What a sight for—Rue du Bac; the distance to Rue du Bac is not so great."

Madame de Lignolle was carried into the bed-room next to that in which Madame de B*** still breathed. The Marchioness had entirely recovered the use of her senses.

She heard my groans, and knew my voice again. She sent me a message requesting I would go and speak to her. "What is the occasion of all that bustle?" she asked, in an almost extinct voice. I was going to answer her, when I saw the Count de Lignolle, followed by two strangers, entering the room: There he is, he cried to them, pointing at me; and one of those gentlemen, drawing up to me, said: "I arrest you by the king's command."

The Marchioness heard those words, and reanimated by the excess of her grief: "Is it possible," she exclaimed? "What! My eyes are not yet closed, and my enemies already triumph! The ungrateful M. de —— already forgets me! Ah Faublas, my ruin then will have caused yours!"

"Yes, you barbarian!" I replied, in a fit of despair; "and the misfortune of which you now complain is the least of all those which your fatal passion has brought upon me. A victim to your rage, Madame de Lignolle is now dying! What do I say? She is already dead, perhaps! Ah, wherefore did not I die on the first day of my acquaintance with you? Or, rather, wherefore did not righteous heaven from the first moment crush you under the weight?"

She interrupted me. "Unmerciful Gods! You must be satisfied! Your most cruel vengeance is accomplished. I descend into the grave loaded with maledictions of Faublas!"

She fell backward on her bed and expired.

As I was returning to the other room where Madame de Lignolle was surrounded by members of the faculty, one of them was saying: "Why strip her naked before everyone? Wherefore thus violate decorum to no purpose? There is no resource; she is dead."

Thus, almost at the same moment struck with several mortal blows, I lost the use of my senses a second time. Then, indeed, it was an act of great inhumanity to call me to life again. Yes, my Sophia, if now, under pain of being separated from you by a speedy death, if I were to have a relapse, and merely for an hour to suffer what I have endured for several weeks; if I were so reduced, O my Sophia! Judge of my past tortures! I would rather leave you and die.

XXXI.

BARON DE FAUBLAS TO COUNT LOVINSKI.

3rd May, 1785

I am delighted, my friend, to hear that your king, just in his clemency, has called you back into your native country, and has been pleased to restore your confiscated property, to re-instate you in your former offices, besides granting you his royal protection. Yet in what moment did you leave me! I must have been carried away by my excessive grief if your daughter and mine had not been by me.

I have already informed you that they had detained him for ten days in the castle of Vincennes; that, on account of my particular request, he was removed to a house at Picpus, where lunatics are treated. At last, however, mercy has been shown to the most unhappy of fathers; I have been allowed to take my child to my own house. I am just returned with him. Great God! What a situation did I find him in! Almost naked, loaded with chains, his body bruised, his hands torn, his face all over blood, his looks fiery, it was not cries that he uttered, but bellowings, dreadful bellowings.

He knew neither his father, nor my Adelaide, nor even your Sophia. His derangement is complete; it is shocking. The most horrid images constantly stand before his eyes; he speaks of nothing but of tombs and assassins.

Such is the result of my guilty weakness.

From one moment to another I expect, from London, a physician famous for the treatment of those diseases. I am told that no one will cure my son, if Doctor Willis does not. Let him come, then, let him restore my Faublas to me, and accept of all I am worth.

My son, at least, will no longer be chained. I have had a room matted all round, where six men are to attend, day and night. Six men, perhaps, will not be sufficient. I have seen him just now in a fit of rage, break with his teeth, as if it had been a frail glass, the silver dish that contained his dinner; I have seen him drag, from one corner of the room to the other, his wondering keepers. If this horrible frenzy should last some days longer, it will be all over with my son, and with me.

It was only the day before yesterday, that your amiable sisters returned from Briare, and took, in my hôtel, an apartment close to that of their niece. Their niece! What shall I say to you of her grief? It is equal to mine.

Adieu, my friend! Finish your business, and make haste to return.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

4th May, 1785, midnight.

Dr. Wills arrived last night; he has spent the whole forenoon near his patient, with the keepers.

At two o'clock, he came to let me know that my son was going to be bled; but that, subsequently, to make him undergo his first experiment, it was requisite he should be chained. The unfortunate youth was therefore loaded with irons; and from an excess of precaution, of which the event proved all the wisdom, the doctor insisted upon the keepers staying in the room, at some distance from him.

Every preparation being completed at six o'clock, Sophia was the first person who entered the room.

He looked at her attentively for some minutes, without speaking a single word; but, by degrees, his countenance became more placid, and his looks more mild. At length, he said: "It is you! I see you again! You are restored to me! My too generous dear! Come nearer! Come near to me!"

Sophia transported with joy, was running to him with open arms: "Take care you don't," cried the doctor; and my son immediately repeated: "Take care you don't! Yes, beauteous mamma, take care you don't! The cruel Marquis only waits for the moment

to strike the blow! Here you are, however! What a happiness! I thought you were dead! The deep wound was in the left breast, close to the heart!"
Adelaide then, quite trembling, came to join her dear friend; they mutually supported each other.
"Here you are, my little dear;" he exclaimed in a mild tone of voice. You are come to see me with your mistress! Speak, Justine, speak to me: wherefore do you appear so sad you, whom I have always seen in such good spirits?—But I believe it is Mademoiselle de Brumont! Yes, it is a shade that comes to frighten me!"
Willis immediately said to my daughter: "Retire."
The attentive patient repeated: "Undoubtedly, retire. And you likewise, Madame la Marquis. The fatal hour is drawing near. The Baroness knows that you are here; your cruel husband—I have no arms—he might assassinate you—my too generous friend, withdraw. "But a moment! Begin by restoring me my Eleanor. Restore her to me, perfidious wretch! Restore her to me; if not, I will tear you to pieces with mine own hands!"
Sophia ran away. I made my appearance too soon. The very moment he saw me, he cried out, in a dreadful voice: "The Captain! You are come this distance to tear away your sister from me, to cut her throat! Wait!"
At these words, he took so violent a spring, that he broke his chain. If I had not immediately escaped, and if his keepers had not prevented his pursuing me, the unhappy youth would have killed his father.
Sophia, Adelaide, and myself, listened from the room adjoining. He seemed to have resumed some tranquillity; but towards the close of the day he displayed signs of a violent agitation, which increased in proportion as the night became darker.
At last, in a tone of voice which made us shudder with fear and horror, he distinctly spoke the following words: "The wind is broke loose! The sky is on fire! The waters bellow! What a clap of thunder!—nine o'clock—she is there!"
As he wished to rush out, his keepers prevented him.
"Wherefore stop me! Don't you see her re-appear above the waves? Barbarians! You wish the mother and child to perish! And you likewise, my father, sister, Sophia, you too prevent my assisting her! You command her death; everybody coalesces against her! Well, I shall save her, in spite of you all!"
Seven men scarcely sufficed to hold him; he struggled with them during a whole quarter of an hour; and the burning fever which occasioned those prodigious powers having subsided on a sudden, he fell, nearly motionless. One may easily perceive that he was plagued by horrid dreams. Oh, my son! My dear son!
Severe gods, be just also; is he not too severely punished?
I have just had a long conversation with the doctor; and am infinitely satisfied with the treatment he is preparing for Faublas. Expect the recovery of the patient from the skill of the physician: on that rest all our hopes. Adieu, my friend.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

6th May, 1785, six in the evening.
I have found at Dugny, a village near le Bourget, at three leagues from Paris, a house which has appeared to me well suited to the purpose of the doctor. It is surrounded by a large English garden, across which runs a wide river, though not deep and generally peaceable. On its banks are planted poplars, weeping willows, and cypress trees. In that abode of regret, everything at first sight seems to recall sad recollections; yet the beauty of the place, its tranquil aspect, and the purer air one breathes there, must speedily remove violent passions, and dispose the soul to tender melancholy: there it is that we came to settle this morning.
Towards the evening, at sunset, as usual, my son imagined he could see the dreadful storm, and that he heard the fatal clock to strike. As usual, he repeated those dreadful

words: "Nine o'clock! She is there!" Already in a fit of rage, the unfortunate young man imputed to us the death of that woman whom we prevented him from assisting, when Sophia, concealed in an adjacent room, pursuant to the doctor's prescription, cried out as loud as she could: "Wherefore stop him! Let all the doors be opened! Let him be set at liberty!"
He immediately rushed out, ran downstairs as quick as lightning, and on a sudden, having perceived the river, he jumped into it. We were following him at some distance, and I held myself in readiness to plunge likewise, in case we should be threatened with some new misfortune. He swam for about twenty minutes, always keeping near the bridge, from the top of which he had leaped in. At last he got on shore, and groaned bitterly. He next reached the darkest bower, continued silent for a long time, and then on a sudden exclaimed: "If you do not recover, here I shall dig a grave for you." He afterwards appeared to lend an attentive ear; and as if he only repeated what somebody would have ventured saying to him, cried out: "She is dead. Ah wherefore apprise me of it so bluntly?" He fainted away; and we carried him back into his room.
Adieu, my friend. When will you return? When will you come to assist us in supporting our troubles?
P.S. I was going to forget a piece of news. Before I left Paris, I was told that Madame de Montdesir had just been taken to St. Martin;<79> such is the effect of M. de B***'s just resentment.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

7th May, 1785, midnight.
There has been less agitation in the course of the day; he was heard to speak so often of the Marquis and of the captain; but this evening, at the fatal hour, the horrid idea returned. Sophia then, as on the preceding day, cried out: "Wherefore stop him? let every door be open! Let him be set at liberty!" As on the preceding day, he jumped into the river; but on his return in the bower, he found a block of black marble which the doctor had brought there. At first he shuddered; by degrees we saw him approach, trembling! At last, by the light of a lamp, fastened to,the cypress tree, he ery distinctly read this inscription: "Here lies Madame de Lignolle." He immediately threw himself on the tomb, with his feet and hands he struck the marble, and groaned for a long while; but he did not faint away. Near the block of marble several mattresses had been placed, upon which, after an hour's sufferings, he extended himself, and fell asleep. Blankets were then spread over him. He seemed not to be so agitated in his sleep as usual.
I have received two notes for him: the one from the Vicomte de Lignolle, and the other from the Marquis de B***. Ah! When will my son have it in his power to answer his enemies? Adieu, my friend.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

9th May, 1785, ten in the morning.
Let us hope, my friend, some happy alteration has already taken place. This morning, at daybreak, he returned to his room of his own accord. He has slept a few hours in the daytime. At sunset, he saw no storm; but with symptoms of approaching agitation, said: "O compassionate Divinity! Will you then forget me this day? The moment is coming near, come then to my assistance, deliver me from my enemies." His wife immediately cried out: "Let him be set at liberty." He manifested some signs of joy, went out without much precipitation, advanced towards the river, but stopped on the bridge, casting a sad look upon the water: "So quiet and so cruel!" he said with a deep

sigh. "Alas!"
When he entered the bower he shuddered; he groaned repeatedly, kissed the tomb several times; and then we saw him get up and search for something. He finally broke a branch of the cypress, and on the sand round the tomb wrote the following words: "Here lies also the Marchioness de B***."
He stopped all night in the bower; and, as if he shunned light, re-entered his room at daybreak.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

15th May, 1785.
Dr. Willis seems to have entirely succeeded in what was most pressing; for these last six days the dreadful vision has not returned. The derangement is still complete, but the frenzy has absolutely subsided; and if I am not to flatter myself with my son ever recovering his reason, I am already certain we shall not have to lament his death.
The recollection of the Marquis and of the Captain seldom torments him; and when he speaks of them, it is no longer with the same fury. He no longer threatens the doctor, neither does he beat his keepers; he resumes the natural meekness of his disposition. His memory also begins to return, not only on whatever relates to the Marchioness, but especially to the Countess. The ungrateful young man never speaks of his father or of his sister; sometimes, nevertheless, the name of Sophia is near escaping him. Does he know us again! I dare not believe it; and the doctor pretends it is not time yet for us to make our appearance before the unhappy patient.
Every evening, when he hears the voice of his wife, he goes to groan in the bower; but he cannot weep; but, continually absorbed in profound sadness, he is still far from displaying tender, soft melancholy. Yesterday evening he, however, quitted the tomb several times to pace up and down the adjacent walks. We have not observed without lively sorrow that he always preferred the darkest, that he took long strides, and that whenever he heard the pariah clock strike, agitated with a sudden shivering, he would run to the bank of the river, and look, with extreme inquietude, whether anything appeared on the surface of the water.
The doctor, ever ready to indulge his patient, when there is not too much danger, has had the tomb of the Marchioness placed by the side of that of the Countess. I don't know the reason why their unhappy lover has objected to see the two monuments in the same bower. He has always covered with earth the marble block placed last; and always written on the sand, close to the tomb of Madame de Lignolle: "Here lies also the Marchioness de B***."
I fear, I feel inquietude, I find time very long. The doctor comforts me; he tells me that we must not be in too great a hurry, that he is going on as well as possible. Be it so; but your daughter and mine, the same as myself, stand in need of all our fortitude.
P.S. M. de Rosambert will get cured of his wound; but at the death of Madame de B*** he must have been charged with grave accusations. He has lost his situation at court, and it is rumoured as certain, that the officers of his corps intended to have him apprised that they will serve with him no longer.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

16th May, 1785, nine in the evening.
O my friend! Congratulate me, congratulate yourself; your daughter, your adorable daughter has saved us all.
This evening she exclaimed: "Let him be set at liberty!" She on a sudden makes her escape, springs forward, reaches the bower sooner than her husband, to prevent his entering it. "What are you in search of?" she says to him. Without looking at her he

answers: "I am looking for a tomb." And your daughter, in the most tender tone, in a tone most proper to move the most obdurate soul, your charming daughter replies; "Wherefore look for a tomb, my beloved? Your Sophia is not dead:" He then exclaims: it is the succouring voice! And lifting his eyes upon her: "Sophia! Ye gods! My Sophia!" He fell senseless into her arms, she supported him; we offered to carry him away, the doctor came running: No; love, fortunately rash, has commenced the cure; let love accomplish it, and let it be assisted by nature; let us strike all our blows at once at the young man, already so powerfully agitated. You, his father, stop there; let his sister draw near; let him, when he awakes, find himself surrounded by all the objects dearest to his heart.
Faublas opened his eyes. "My Sophia!" he cried. "My father! My Adelaide! Ah! Whence are you all come? Where are we? I have had a dreadful dream, which methought lasted for several centuries. A dream! Ah! my Eleanor Ah! Madame de B***."

Illustration: He fell senseless into her arms, she supported him

His wife pressed him to her bosom, covered him with kisses, and repeated: "My beloved, your Sophia is not dead."
"Sophia!" he said, "Sophia will return me more than I have lost. Sophia! Ah! How guilty I am! You too, all of you forgive my ingratitude and the sorrows I have heaped upon you."
He dropped on his knees before us, attempted to speak, but could not. His tears finally

opened a passage, and his sobs stifled his voice. The doctor sent forth a scream of joy: "That is it, he is saved! I can now be answerable for his recovery."
When he rose, he felt very weak, nevertheless, supported on the arm of his wife, and of his sister, he proceeded towards the house. He crossed over the bridge without looking at the river; soon after, however, he turned round, to cast a look at the bower from which he was removed. "Pity," he said, "pity a still remaining weakness; do not destroy that tomb."
We have just put him to bed; he there immediately fell asleep most soundly. Your adorable daughter has saved us all.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

18th May, 1785, eleven at night.
He has slept thirty-eight hours without interruption; and since he is awake, neither speaks a word, nor does anything, but that which announces good sense and tender feelings. True, indeed, we see him occasionally indulge sad recollections; but a word from his father, a caress from his sister, and a look from his wife, expel his regret. Meanwhile the doctor agrees to pains being taken to make the convalescent forgetful of his sorrows; but forbids his being importuned; nay, he prescribes his being sometimes up to his melancholy reveries, and above all things, that he should never be disturbed in his nocturnal walks. Sophia alone is permitted to enter the bower.
This evening, at the critical moment, he went down into the garden, and without looking at the river, walked slowly wherever chance seemed to guide him. He nevertheless finally took to the bower, where Sophia was waiting for him.
"Come, my beloved, let us go and weep together."
"This monument, it is true," he replied, "is a gratification to me in my sorrow; but an inscription is wanted to it."
"Let us compose one, my dear, I have my pencil about me: dictate, I am going to write it; we shall have it engraven afterwards."
"Here lies the Countess de Lignolle. Here lies also the Marchioness de B***. Both of them at the same time adored the same young man; both, on the same day and nearly at the same hour, met with an equally tragical end. Victims of a similar destiny, they will be enclosed in the same tomb, but will not leave behind the same regret. The Marchioness died at the age of twenty-six, in the greatest lustre of beauty. My Eleanor, all charming, had scarcely commenced when she ended. She was aged sixteen years, five months, and nine days. My child died with her. Why so? What offence had that innocent creature offered to the gods? Pity the Marchioness de B***. Bestow tears upon Madame de Lignolle. Bestow tears especially upon their lover who has survived them."
"My beloved, your Sophia is not dead."
"Distracted! I must be!" he cried: "Erase; erase that last line."
The dear children returned home together. Faublas is now as fast asleep as if he had been watching the whole of last night. Adieu, my friend, return then, return to partake of our joy.
P.S. The Baroness de Fonrose, it is said, is so disfigured. as not to be known again. It is also stated that unable to be consoled for her deformity, she is going to bury herself in an old castle in Vivarais. That woman has done me a deal of harm.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

18th June, 1785, ten in the morning.
He has recovered his embonpoint, his bloom of youth; but he is always thoughtful and melancholy; and goes every evening to weep over the monument in the bower.

Now that it appears certain that the fatal accident will be attended with no dangerous consequences, I must not conceal from you, that one day of last week we were dreadfully alarmed: the heat had been excessive, and at sunset there was a tremendous storm. As soon as he heard the winds roaring, Faublas appeared much agitated; he could not see the dark clouds without shuddering; at the first clap of thunder he rushed into the water; but immediately returned on shore, calling to us all, and weeping abundantly. The following night passed in tranquillity, and on the succeeding day, you would not have believed that on the preceding one my son could have had so violent an attack.

The doctor has not flattered me, but has declared, in my hearing, that the Chevalier de Faublas perhaps would never be able to hear a clap of thunder without suffering great agitation. He has particularly recommended my never allowing my son to re-enter Paris, because it were possible that at the sight of the Pont-Royal he might relapse into the cruel state from which we have been at such pains to rescue him.

Not allow him to re-enter Paris! Where then shall we go and live? In my province, or at Warsaw. The proposal you have made me, my friend, in your last letter, deserves serious reflections. To quit the country of my forefathers, to go and settle in yours with my children! I beg you will allow me time to think of it. Until I fix upon a determination, receive, my dear Lovinski, my congratulations upon your name, estates and commissions being restored to you. Boleslas and your sisters are overjoyed, and only speak of going to join you. I am sensible if I wish to continue in France with my Adelaide, I must renounce my son; for you never will be reconciled to the idea of living separated from the daughter of Lodoiska. I am well aware, that with mental accomplishments, a fortune and beauty, my Adelaide may find an advantageous match anywhere; but to leave behind me in France an ancient name! To remove far from the tombs of my ancestors! Allow me time to think of it.

The day before yesterday, I unintentionally chagrined my poor son. You remember, perhaps, that box of diamonds which Jasmin delivered to us in Faublas's apartment, on the day of the terrible catastrophe. The man, equally discreet and faithful, would never tell me whence came those diamonds: the day before yesterday I showed them to my son: I immediately saw him melting into tears. "These jewels, he exclaimed, belonged to my Eleanor!"

Oh! How I repented I had not guessed at that! He kissed alternately every article in the little box; and then, with great exultation cried out: "Jasmin, take this back immediately to M. de Lignolle: tell him that I have kept for myself the less costly, but the most precious article; tell him from me that the captain is a coward, if he does not come to demand of me the wedding ring of his pretended sister-in-law." This was the proper time, perhaps, to show my son the insolent and barbarous challenge of the captain; but I was apprehensive of occasioning at once too much agitation to the young man, with whose formidable impetuosity I am well acquainted.

I have just heard of the Marchioness d'Armincour being dangerously ill in Franche-Comté. I am afraid her chagrin will kill her. Poor woman! She adored her niece, who indeed was deserving of her unlimited affection! I shall beware of announcing to Faublas the danger of the aunt; he reproaches himself enough already for the misfortunes of the niece.

The Doctor has discovered that the spirited and unhappy young man wanted occupation, and that his melancholy required an object capable first of settling and subsequently of diverting it; he has advised him to write the history of his life; your daughter agrees to it, I likewise grant my consent, provided the manuscript is never made public.

Yesterday, Dr. Willis returned to London; he would not accept of anything; I have forced him to trust me with his pocket-book, in which I have enclosed notes to the value of five years of my income. Upon similar occasions it is that one regrets not being ten times richer. Go, Willis! Carry back with you the blessings of a whole family, and deserve at a future period the blessings of a whole nation.

Your daughter has just received also her due reward: her husband and lover has been restored to her at night. Our happy children are still in bed. Farewell, my dear friend.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

26th June, 1785, four in the afternoon.
I accept of your proposal, my friend; I am almost forced so to do. At a very early hour this morning, my son has received a *lettre de cachet*<67> to the effect of his commencing within twenty-four hours his travels abroad. I am just returned from Versailles; I have seen my friends, I have seen the ministers; it appears that Chevalier de Faublas's exile is to be inedefinite for a long time. What a pity! If parental affection does not blind me, that young man would have merited high promotion in his native country.
I have petitioned a fortnight to make all necessary preparations for our departure; the delay has been granted upon the express condition only that during that interval the Chevalier was not to leave the house at Dugny.
Another fortnight, my friend, and then we shall all set off together, we shall be with you as soon as possible, and contiuue with you for life. Adieu. I shall say nothing of your daughter's impatience; Dorliska writes by every post.

CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS TO THE VICOMTE DE LIGNOLLE.

6th July, 1785.
The Baron has but just communicated to me, Captain, your note, which I had long wished to receive. Madame de Lignolle, whom your rage has ruined, has not yet been revenged; time appears to me very long.
If your challenge contained only gross insults and impertinent bravadoes, I would not wonder at it; but I cannot admire too much the refinemeut of your barbarity; you exact that on the same day, and at the same moment, the father and son should fight the two brothers! You exact it? Be satisfied then. The Baron and the Chevalier de Faublas will repair on the 14th of this month to Kell, where, until the 16th, they will expect the Comte and Vicomte de Lignolle. We shall meet again.

THE SAME TO THE MARQUIS DE B***.

6th July, 1785.
Monsieur Le Marquis—The Baron has just delivered to me your note, which it grieves me to be obliged to answer. If you insist upon it, I shall be on the 17th of this month at Kell, where I shall stop to the 20th; but I wish most ardently, that satisfied with finding here the assurance of my lively regret, you would not quit Paris.
I have the honour to be, etc.

CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS TO COUNT LOVINSKI

Kell, 24th July, ten in the morning.
My dearest father-in-law,
Am I miserable enough? All whom I love, through ill-conceived generosity, wish to sacrifice their lives with an intent of saving mine; as if, whether of two lovers, or of two friends, the most unhappy was not the survivor.
The two brothers arrived this morning. The Count de Lignolle shows some anger at the sight of me; but I see him turn pale, his voice trembles, and I can easily discover, in his whole deportment, that compelled by his brother to an act of vigour, M. le

Comte would prefer having no explanation with me. The Captain accosted me with a wild look, and said to me in a tone intended to be threatening and ironical, "I shall have the honour of sending you to the shades; he will fight your father. At any rate, I announce to you both, that either party must triumph or die; woe, therefore," he continued, looking at M. de Belcourt, "to him who has no other second than an effeminate dolt, or a madman. I declare, Chevalier, that as soon as I have killed you, I will help my brother to finish that gentleman." (He pointed to my father.) I seized the hand of the barbarian, squeezed it most powerfully: "Ferocious tiger! shall I not tear away your odious life?"

My father and I left your sister, mine, and Sophia to the care of Boleslas, and departed with our two enemies. When beyond the ramparts, we immediately dismounted.

I drew my sword: "O my Eleanor, your ashes demand vengeance, receive the blood which is going to run." The Captain vociferated: "Why do not you demand they would enclose you in the same grave?" He advanced towards me; we began a furious fight, which, for a long time, was maintained with perfect equality on both sides.

M. de Belcourt has already, for several minutes back, obtained an early victory over the Count; but, too honourable to exercise against the Captain the horrid condition which the latter had himself imposed, my father remained a motionless spectator of my redoubled efforts.

At last I hit the Vicomte, but my sword broke upon one of his ribs. My antagonist, seeing me nearly disarmed, thought he would overpower me, but, most fortunately, he now only thrust with a weakened arm. Meanwhile, frightened at the inequality of the contest, my father, my too generous father, rushed between us: "Hold," he said giving me his sword, "you will make a better use of it than I can. Alas! While speaking to me, he presented his bare flank to the Vicomte. The barbarian pushed at him. He was going to repeat his thrust, when, threatening him with the steel already crimsoned with the blood of his brother, I forced him to think only of his own defence.

The savage! I have punished him. He rolled in the dust, while the Baron, with his eyes raised to heaven, still supported himself on his right hand and knees. The barbarian! He is dead; but, prior to his breathing his last, he saw the son, free from the least harm, bestow upon his father the most speedy assistance.

Meanwhile M. de Belcourt is in danger; am I miserable enough? Love, fatal Love! How many calamities? The post hour is come, ah! pity me, pity your children; they all love you; they are all plunged in deep sorrow. I remain with due respect, etc.

FAUBLAS.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

27th July, 1785, ten in the morning.

My dearest father-in-law,

Sophia writes very regularly to you every morning; you are informed that the Baron's wound is not so dangerous as had been thought at first; you know that in a fortnight or three weeks, we shall be capable to resume our journey, too happy to have got clear off with the only displeasure of joining you some weeks later. Let me tell you, however, of the favourable event which has occurred this day.

Sophia, Adelaide, and myself had been sitting up all night with the Baron: my wife and my sister, equally tired, were just going to bed. To follow Sophia, I only waited till one of my aunts would come and take my place by the bedside of the dear patient, whom we should feel apprehensive to commit to the care of strangers; it was then seven at most.

My servant came on a sudden and brought me word that somebody wanted to speak to me in private. The Baron, uneasy in his mind, but not without a cause, said to me; "Bid him to speak the truth."

"It is the Marquis!"
"Jasmin, I forbid you to tell a lie: is it the Marquis?"
"It is not the Marquis that wants to speak to you below; but he has sent to let you know that he was waiting for you behind the rampart."
"Faublas," exclaimed M. de Belcourt, "you have wronged M. de B*** most shockingly, but I shall only say one word to you; if you are not back in a quarter of an hour, I shall expire before the day is over."
"You will see me back in a quarter of an hour, father."
I then embraced and left him.
I soon joined my enemy; "M. le Marquis, I had presumed to hope you would not come." He cast a sullen look at me, and without favouring me with an answer, immediately drew. I screamed out; "This sword! It is the one?
"Yes," he said "and tremble!"
I immediately drew mine, rushed upon him, and only aimed at disarming him. Within a few minutes, I had the good fortune to see the fatal sword fly at ten yards distance. I seized it, returned to the Marquis, and kneeling before him, said, "Permit me to keep this sword, take away mine, carry with you the assurance which I renew."
He interrupted me: "Ah! Must I moreover be indebted to him for my life?"
This said, he mounted his horse and disappeared.
I am with respect, etc.

VICOMTE DE VALBRUN TO CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS

Paris, 15th October, 1786.
For too long a period you have left us, my dear Chevalier; must the displeasure of your indifference still add to our regret? Have you then, when you left France, dropped all your friends in oblivion? Wherefore do you refuse corresponding with a man who has never given you the least offence? You must make me amends; and unless you wish me to charge you with ingratitude, let me hear from you, and of your family by the first post, and with particular detail of circumstances.
Public rumour informs me that you are now engaged in writing the Memoirs of your youthful days. I have fancied that you would be glad to be told of the present situation of some personages whom you are frequently to mention in the history of your amours.
The Marchioness d'Armincour, devoured with chagrin, lives more retired than ever on the estate she possesses in Franche Comté. The Baroness de Fonrose, become frightfully ugly, never leaves her old castle in Vivarais. Count Rosambert has also been compelled to retire from the world: his Countess was also brought to bed at the end of the eighth month of her marriage. M. de Rosambert, who, notwithstanding his misfortune, still retains his cheerfulness, jocularly maintains to all who will hear him, that his wife's little boy resembles much Mademoiselle de Brumont; he further says that he would give anything in the world that M. de B***, who is such a connoisseur in physiognomies, would examine the face of that infant, and that M. de Lignolle, from whom no affection of the soul is kept secret, would feel Madame de Rosambert's pulse whenever the Chevalier de Faublas is spoken of in her presence.
That La Fleur, who served the unfortunate woman whose name I purposely suppress, was become valet-de-chambre to the widowed husband; but he took it into his head to rob his master, who from his dislike to thieves, has informed against this one. The wretch has been hanged at the gate of the Hôtel de Lignolle. It is not four months since Justine has left the house of correction, the diet whereof has not embellished her; the poor child, unable to do better, is become cook and factotum to Madame le Blanc, the wife of a physician in Faubourg Saint Marceau. It is said in that part of the town that the mistress and the maid often go, in partnership, to magnetise abroad.
Count de Lignolle, whom your father had not wounded dangerously, lives, possessed

of more genius than he enjoys good health. Some people, nevertheless, have had it reported that last spring, having swallowed the remnant of the prescription of Dr. Rosambert, the Count, for a whole day, had felt as if inclined to marry again, but that, within so short a period, he had never been able to find a female miserable enough to take him for a husband. You must, however, be told that his riddles are well received all over Europe. The Marquis de B*** is in good health; he continues, according to his own saying, to be a good fellow; he nevertheless flies in a rage when he meets with a face that in his opinion resembles yours; at any rate he is pleased with his own, and will even at times regret that of his wife.
Adieu, my dear Chevalier; I am waiting for your answer with impatience, etc.

CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS TO VICOMTE DE VALBRUN.

Warsaw, 28th October, 1786.
I am very thankful, my dear Vicomte, for your kind remembrance of me; you have forwarded to me such documents as I wished for, and since you manifest the obliging desire of knowing exactly what has become of us, I hasten to inform you of the same. For these last fifteen months our family have inhabited at Warsaw, the palace of the Count Lovinski; fifteen months have elapsed like a day. My father-in-law is in high favour with the King. My father, the best of parents, overwhelmed with joy, feels happier for the felicity of his children, than for his own. Our dear Adelaide has just selected for her husband the Palatine of ——, a young nobleman, the highest praise of whom I shall express in a very few words: he is deserving of her. I am now a father: it is not quite four months since Sophia has borne me the prettiest boy in the world. My Sophia, the chief ornament of the Court of Warsaw, becomes daily more adorable. I enjoy with my wife more felicity than I ever had during the course of my extravagance.
Pity me, however; I have forfeited my native country; neither can I hold a commission in the army of the republic, for the whole of my life-time, perhaps; I must renounce the only profession for which I was intended by nature. All the efforts of art, all the efforts of my reason cannot remove from my view a persecuting and beloved phantom, whose frequent apparition tortures and charms me. Oh, Madame de B***! Are you descended into your grave instead of your lover, merely that you might be able to follow him everywhere, without obstacles or relaxation?
Alas that her shade alone pursued me! But the avenging gods have condemned Faublas to still dearer and more frequent recollections!
If, in a summer's evening, the south wind rises, if the lightning opens the clouds, if thunder roars, then I hear a fatal sound; I hear a soldier, barbarously cool, saying to me: "She is there." On a sudden, seized with unconquerable fears, deceived by a ridiculous hope, I run to the roaring main; I behold, struggling in the midst of the waves, a woman. Alas! A woman that I am no more allowed to forget than to reach! Oh! Pity me.
But no, Sophia is left to me. Far from pitying me, envy my lot, and only say, that for ardent men of feeling, who, at the time of their adolescence, have yielded to stormy passions, there is no perfect happiness to be expected upon earth.

NOTES

Notes by the Ex-Classics transcriber are identified by [TN]. Others are footnotes in the original source.

1. *Saint-Preux*: In *La Nouvelle Heloise*. [By Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1761 [TN]

2. *To rouse the Venus loitering in their veins*: i.e. to cure their impotence. This is a quotation from *The Forced Marriage* by John Armstrong (1754.) The original French has only *qu'on les ressuscite* i.e. "which resuscitates them."[TN]

3. M. l'Abbé Pernetti wrote a work on Physiognomy, entitled "*The Knowledge of the Moral Man by the Physical Man*."

4. *Choused*: Swindled. [TN]

5. *Cornuted*: Adorned with horns, i.e. cuckolded. [TN]

6. *Restaut*: Pierre Restaut (1696-1764), author of a French grammar and dictionary. *Barrême*: François-Bertrand Barrême (1638-1703), mathematician, inventor of a system of accountancy known by his name. [TN]

7. *Turenne*: Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne (1611–1675), famous general during the reign of Louis XIV. [TN]

8. *Verdoni, Philidor*: Famous chess players of the late 18th Century. [TN]

9. *M. Mesmer*: Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815), famous 18th Century quack who claimed to cure illnesses by manipulating a spurious force he called "animal magnetism." [TN]

10. *Quartuaires* is the name given to the dragoons established to watch the safety of the frontiers of Podolia and Volhymnia against the Tartars.

11. *Marimont* is a country residence belonging to the court of Saxony, and is nearer to Warsaw by half a league than Beliany.

12. *Polesia*: A district now in southern Belarus. [TN]

13. *The Triple Invasion*: Dismemberment of Poland by the Empress of Russia, the [Holy Roman] Emperor, and the King of Prussia. [1772. TN])

14. Pulauski was killed at the siege of Savannah, in 1795. [*sic*. actually 1779. TN]

15. The reader, perhaps, expected that I was going to give him a journal of my amorous correspondence according to order and date. But he may be assured that of all the letters which I wrote, he will only see such as are absolutely necessary for the knowledge of facts.

16. *De la Clos*: The author of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

17. *Gessner*: Gessner is not our countryman, but what French poet could I compare with him who sung *Les Jardins*?

18. *Philoctete et Melanie*: The names of two excellent works by M. de la Harpe.

19. *Jean-Jacques*: Rousseau. [TN]

20. *Enciente*: Pregnant. [TN]

21. *Chienne*: "Bitch." [TN]

22. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in *La Nouvelle Heloise.*

23. *Luxembourg*: A strongly fortified town in the Austrian Netherlands.

24. *Ptisan*: A drink of barley water and medicinal herbs. [TN]

25. *Medecin Malgré Lui*: A play by Molière. [TN]

26. *Ariette*: Diminutive of *Aria*—a little song. [TN]

27. *The Post-chaise*: That which M. du Portail and myself had left at Vivary, in order to take horses to join Sophia the quicker.

28. If divorces were generally allowed, barbarous parents would be deterred from sacrificing their daughters, knowing they could break the chain the next day.

29. The translator has not omitted anything in this place. The delicacy of the author induced him to omit the fascinating description he might here have given of the seduction of Ursula, and to leave the imagination of the reader to fill up the blank.

30. *The effeminate hunter*: Adonis.

31. *Thy lame blacksmith*: Vulcan.

32. *Your immortal lover*: Mars.

33. *The husband of fifty sisters*: Hercules.

34. *To purchase a great cause*: Perhaps to bribe an attorney to put a brief into his hands.

35. *Where will so much virtue find a niche*: i.e. where will the statue of such a man be put up. A line of Molière which has become a proverb. [TN]

36. *Bouts-rimes*: Before what you write about is determined, you place final words rhyming with each other, which you fill up as you can.

37. *Le Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inegalité parmi lés Hommes*: "An Essay on the Origin of the Inequality among Mankind," by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. [TN]

38. Everyone knows this remark of Charles XII to one of his secretaries: "Well, what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating to you?"

39. *Eleanor*: That was the Christian name of the Countess.

40 *Génovéfain*: An Augustinian monk. [TN]

41. *Mercure de France*: A French gazette and literary magazine first published in the 17th century. It was suppressed by Napoleon but was revived after the restoration. It ceased in 1825. There is a modern publication of the same name. [TN]

42. Sensible readers, remember the letter to my father, sent to the post-office on the preceding day—and conjecture.

43. It was in the month of July, 1788, that I was then urging my claims, in conjunction with all my fellow-citizens. Who could have guessed at the time, that in July, 1789, the Bastille would be carried by storm in less than three hours, by my valiant countrymen. Who could have anticipated the rapid progress of the revolution, which was to secure to us both personal and public liberty? Thanks be returned to thee, God of my country! Thou hast cast upon it an enlivening glance; thou hast supplied it exactly at the same period, all such men, and every necessary event that might accomplish its so desirable and so difficult regeneration.

45. It will be recollected, perhaps, that Baron de Faublas had assumed the name of Belcourt, in the retreat where we lived concealed in the vicinity of Luxembourg.

46. *Frac Anglais*: A morning coat. [TN]

47. *Tandis que tout sommeille*: "While everyone is asleep". An aria from the opera *L'amant jaloux, ou Les fausses apparences* (The Jealous Lover, or False Appearances) by André Grétry: first performed at Versailles on 20 November 1778. [TN]

48. *Mauvaise honte*: Bashfulness. [TN]

49. *Demoiselle de compagnie*: "Young lady companion"(i.e. Faublas disguised as a girl here.) [TN]

50. *Eleanor*: Remember this was the Christian name of the Countess: it will be wanted hereafter.

51. The nobility in France had Swiss as porters.

52. *Phaeton*: The driver of a carriage. Named after a character in Greek myth, who drove the sun-chariot. [TN]

53. *Courir la poste*: To travel by post stages. These were establishments at intervals along a main road where fresh horses could be hired to take one as far as the next stage. [TN]

54. *À gouter*: A light meal or snack. [TN]

55. Remember this dressing closet; we shall return to it some day, and more than once.

56. *Berlin*: A four-wheeled covered carriage, with a seat behind covered with a hood. [TN]

57. The canal of Briare, which begins at the town of that name, and running across twenty-two leagues of the country, ends at Saint Mametz. The bridge of Montcour is thrown over the canal, at six leagues from its mouth. The village of Fromonville, is seen at a quarter of a league's distance.

58. *Foi de gentilhomme*: "By the faith of a gentleman." [TN]

59. *Du celibat*: "Of the bachelor." [TN]

60. Remember that at la Porte Maillot, where I wounded the Marquis, du Portail killed his antagonist.

61. *Roueries:* Cunning tricks. [TN]

62. La Crosière is at four leagues below Montargis.

63. *Manes*: The spirit of a dead person. [TN]

64. *The double sanctuary of the law*: Both Houses of Parliament. If anyone was so unjust as to reprobate me for the superficial and decisive cutting manner in which Count Rosambert judges and denigrates the second European nation, I shall undoubtedly be permitted to observe, without offering offence to anyone, that it is a young French nobleman who is speaking, in 1784.

65. You will know of this anecdote, if ever I am allowed to write the history of Rosambert. Then probably you will hear of Dorothea's adventures. But at present, I am prohibited. The present time is the arch of—the Lord.

66. *Whisky*: A kind of light two-wheeled one-horse carriage, used in England and America in the late 18th and early 19th c. Also called timwhisky. (OED). [TN]

67. *Lettre de cachet*: A warrant ordering a person to be imprisoned, often in the Bastille, or sometimes to leave the country immediately. It could be issued by the King of France or his designated minister, without any formal trial and without giving any reason or allowing the person to defend himself. There was no appeal against it, and the person remained in prison or exile until the King decided otherwise. [TN]

68. In case you should have forgotten this passage of the *History of Rome*, consult the book; you will find it worth your while.

69. *Le chien du jardinier*: Literally "The gardener's dog", the French equivalent of The Dog in the Manger i.e. someone who meanly prevents others from having something for which they themselves have no use. [TN]

70. Madame de B*** knew that closet well.

71. *Marchioness of Rosambert*: His mother.

72. *The Grand Signior*: The Sultan of Turkey. [TN]

73. *Cachemira*: Kashmir, a province in the far north of the Indian subcontinent, disputed between India and Pakistan. [TN]

74. *On dit, &c.*: "It is said, that we never are possessed at the same time of every qualification; and that men of wit, very estimable in other respects, have very little talent to reproduce their like."

75. *Garde de la connétablie*: The royal police of pre-revolutionary France. [TN]

76. *Quiproquos*: Misunderstandings or cases of mistaken identity. [TN]

77. The wisest jurisconsults define dowry: *Pretium deflorata virginitali*s.("The price for deflowering virginity"[TN]) I wish to introduce erudition also to this work, that it may be found to contain a little of everything.

78. *The Théatins*: A religious order so called.

79. *St. Martin*: A house of confinement for prostitutes.

THE END