

Raphael; Or, Pages of the Book of Life at Twenty

Alphonse de Lamartine



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[Illustration: ALPHONSE DE LAMARATINE.]

RAPHAEL, or

PAGES OF THE BOOK OF LIFE AT TWENTY

BY ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE

ILLUSTRATED BY SANDOZ

SOCIÉTÉ DES BEAUX-ARTS PARIS, LONDON AND NEW YORK

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INTRODUCTION

It is all very well for Lamartine to explain, in his original prologue, that the touching, fascinating and pathetic story of Raphael was the experience of another man. It is well known that these feeling pages are but transcripts of an episode of his own heart-history. That the tale is one of almost feminine sentimentality is due, in some measure, perhaps, to the fact that, during his earliest and most impressionable years, Lamartine was educated by his mother and was greatly influenced by her ardent and poetical character. Who shall say how much depends on one's environment during these tender years of childhood, and how often has it not been proved that "the child is father to the man?" The marvel of it is that a man so exquisitely sensitive, of such extraordinary delicacy of feeling, should have been able, in later years, to stand the storm and stress of political life and the grave responsibilities of statesmanship.

Although not written in metrical form, Raphael is really a poem—a prose poem. Never upon canvas of painter were spread more delicate tints, hues, colors, shadings, blendings and suggestions, than in these pages. Not only do we find ourselves, in the descriptions of scenery, near to Nature's heart, but, in the story itself, near to the heart of man. Aix in Savoy was, in Lamartine's time, a fashionable resort for valitudinarians and invalids. Among the patrons of the place was Madame Charles, whose memory Lamartine has immortalized as "Julie" in Raphael and as "Elvire" in the beautiful lines of the *Méditations*. In drawing the character "Julie," idealism and sentimentalism have full play. The whole story is romantic in the extreme. The influence of Byron is clearly to be seen. The beautiful hills of Savoy, tinged with the melancholy tints of autumn, were a fit setting for the meeting with the fair invalid. Besides physical invalidism, the pair were soul-sick and heart-sick. Such were their points of sympathy, an affinity was the most natural thing in the world. "Ships that pass in the night" were these two creatures, stranded by illness, "out of the world's way, hidden apart." At the feast of pure, unselfish, romantic love that followed, there

was always a death's-head present, always the sinking fear, always the mute resignation on one side or the other. Death and love have been a combination that poets have used since the world began. And so, as the early snow whitened the pines on the hilltops of Savoy, this pathetic and ultra-sentimental love-affair between the banished *Parisienne* and the poet had its beginning. That it could have but one ending the reader knows from the start. But with what breathless interest do we follow this history of love! We seem to be admitted to the confidences of beings of another sphere, to celestial heights of affection. We hear the heart-beats and see the glances of the languid, languorous eyes. The universe itself seems to stand still for these two lovers. Their heads are among the stars, their hearts in heaven. Their love is as pure as a sonnet of Keats, as ineffable as shimmering starlight. Day by day we trace its current, we cannot say growth because it sprang into life full-grown. Although Julie said that "her life was not worth a tear," she caused torrents of tears to flow. From the first, their love seemed centuries old, so entirely was it a part of their being. Day after day their souls were revealed to each other, their hearts became more united. Every pure chord of psychic affection was struck, even almost to the distracting discord of suicide together, that they might never part, and from which they were saved as by a miracle. In such unsullied love, there is an element of worship. It is the sublimation of passion, freed from sensuous dross, a spiritual efflorescence, a white flame of the soul.

The parting of the lover, the pursuit, their meeting again in Julie's home in Paris, the flickering candle of her waning life, burning down to its socket, the touching interchange of letters, the gathering shadows of the end, all these have stirred the hearts of entire Christendom, appealing to all ages and conditions. Raphael is a lovers' rosary.—C. C. STARKWEATHER.

LAMARTINE AND HIS WRITINGS

Lamartine was born at Mâcon, October 21, 1790. His father was imprisoned during the Terror, narrowly escaping the guillotine. Taught at first by his mother, young Lamartine was sent to a boarding school at Lyons, and later to the college of the Pères de la Foi at Belley. Here he remained till 1809, and after studying at home for two years, he traveled in Italy, taking notes and receiving impressions which were to prove so valuable to him in his literary work. He saw service in the Royal Body-Guard upon the restoration of the Bourbons. When Napoleon came back from Elba, Lamartine went to Switzerland and then to Aix in Savoy. At Aix he fell in love with Madame Charles, who died in 1817. This love-episode, ending so pathetically, became the subject of much of his verse, and forms the basis of the famous *Raphael*, a book of the purest, most delicate and elevated sentiment. Resigning from the guard, he enjoyed two more "wander-years," revisiting Switzerland, Savoy and Italy.

A collection of his poems, including the famous *Lac*, was published under the title *Méditations Poétiques* in 1820, and leaped into immediate popularity both with the sternest critics and the public at large. His literary success led to political preferment, and he entered the diplomatic service as Secretary to the French Embassy at Naples in 1823. That same year he was married at Geneva to an English lady, Marianne Birch. His second volume of poetry now appeared, the *Nouvelles Méditations*. He was transferred to Florence in 1824. In 1825 he published his continuation of Byron, *Le Dernier Chant du Pèlerinage de Childe Harold*. A passage in this poem gave offense to an Italian officer, Colonel Pepe, with whom Lamartine fought a duel. The *Harmonies Politiques et Religieuses* appeared in 1829. He became active in politics, and was sent on a special mission to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, afterward King of the Belgians. He was elected during this year to the French Academy, at his second candidacy.

After the publication of his pamphlet *La Politique Rationnelle* he was defeated in a contest for membership in the National Assembly. He started, in 1832, upon a

long journey in the East with his wife and daughter, Julia. The latter died at Beyrout in 1833. A description of his travels was the theme of his *Voyage en Orient*, appearing in 1835. In his absence he had been elected from Bergues to the Assembly, in which, on his return, he made his first speech early in 1834. As a political orator his power was second to none.

His poems now became more philosophical. *Jocelyn* was printed in 1836, *La Chute d'Un Ange* in 1838, and *Les Recueils* in 1839. A political as well as a literary sensation was produced by his *Histoire des Girondins*, 1847, which, in fact, was inspired by his newly acquired belief in democracy. He became Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Government in 1848, was elected to the new Assembly from ten different departments, and became a member of the Executive Committee, which made him one of the most conspicuous statesmen of Europe. He was unsuited, however, for executive authority, and soon disappeared from power, being supplanted in popular favor by Cavaignac. His rise and fall in the field of statesmanship were equally sudden, the same year including both.

Lamartine now began to pay off his debts by literary labor. *Les Confidences*, containing *Graziella* and the ever popular *Raphael* came from the press in 1849, followed by the *Nouvelles Confidences* in 1851. Among his other works are: *Genièvre*, 1849; *Le Tailleur de Pierres de Saint Point*, 1851; *Fior d'Aliza*, 1866; and the histories, *Histoire de la Restauration*, 1851-1853; *Histoire de la Turquie*, 1854; *Histoire de la Russie*, 1855. His wife died in 1863. He had not been able to save much money, and, in 1867, when he was an old man, the Government of France came to his assistance with a pension of 25,000 francs. He died, March 1, 1869, having profoundly influenced the literature of his time. His works have been translated into many languages. A beautiful monument to his memory was erected by public subscription near Mâcon, in 1874.

C.C.S.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE

RAPHAEL'S DEVOTION

THE LOVERS' COMPACT

RAPHAEL SEES JULIE IN PARIS

PROLOGUE

The real name of the friend who wrote these pages was not Raphael. We often called him so in sport, because in his boyhood he much resembled a youthful portrait of Raphael, which may be seen in the Barberini gallery at Rome, at the Pitti palace in Florence, and at the Museum of the Louvre. We had given him the name, too, because the distinctive feature of this youth's character was his lively sense of the beautiful in Nature and Art,—a sense so keen, that his mind was, so to speak, merely the shadowing forth of the ideal or material beauty scattered through-out the works of God and man. This feeling was the result of his exquisite and almost morbid sensibility,—morbid, at least, until time had somewhat blunted it. We would sometimes, in allusion to those who, from their ardent longings to revisit their country, are called home-sick, say that he was heaven-sick, and he would smile, and say that we were right.

This love of the beautiful made him unhappy; in another situation it might have rendered him illustrious. Had he held a pencil he would have painted the Virgin of Foligno; as a sculptor, he would have chiselled the Psyche of Canova; had he known the language in which sounds are written, he would have noted the aerial lament of the sea breeze sighing among the fibres of Italian pines, or the breathing of a sleeping girl who dreams of one she will not name; had he been a poet, he would have written the stanzas of Tasso's "Erminia," the moonlight talk of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," or Byron's portrait of Haidee.

He loved the good as well as the beautiful, but he loved not virtue for its holiness, he loved it for its beauty. He would have been aspiring in imagination, although he was not ambitious by character. Had he lived in those ancient republics where men attained their full development through liberty, as the free, unfettered body develops itself in pure air and open sunshine, he would have aspired to every summit like Cæsar, he would have spoken as Demosthenes, and would have died as Cato. But his inglorious and obscure destiny confined him, against his will, in speculative inaction,—he had wings to spread, and no

surrounding air to bear them up. He died young, straining his gaze into the future, and ardently surveying the space over which he was never to travel.

Every one knows the youthful portrait of Raphael to which I have alluded. It represents a youth of sixteen, whose face is somewhat paled by the rays of a Roman sun, but on whose cheek still blooms the soft down of childhood. A glancing ray of light seems to play on the velvet of the cheek. He leans his elbow on a table; the arm is bent upwards to support the head, which rests on the palm of the hand, and the admirably modelled fingers are lightly imprinted on the cheek and chin; the delicate mouth is thoughtful and melancholy; the nose is slender at its rise, and slightly tinged with blue, as though the azure veins shone through the fair transparency of the skin; the eyes are of that dark heavenly hue which the Apennines wear at the approach of dawn, and they gaze earnestly forward, but are slightly raised to heaven, as though they ever looked higher than Nature,—a liquid lustre illuminates their inmost depths, like rays dissolved in dew or tears. On the scarcely arched brow, beneath the delicate skin, we trace the muscles, those responsive chords of the instrument of thought; the temples seem to throb with reflection; the ear appears to listen; the dark hair, unskilfully cut by a sister or some young companion of the studio, casts a shadow upon the hand and cheek; and a small cap of black velvet, placed on the crown of the head, shades the brow. One cannot pass before this portrait without musing sadly, one knows not why. It represents the reverie of youthful genius pausing on the threshold of its destiny. What will be the fate of that soul standing at the portal of life?

Now, in idea, add six years to the age of that dreaming boy; suppose the features bolder, the complexion more bronzed; place a few furrows on the brow, slightly dim the look, sadden the lips, give height to the figure, and throw out the muscles in bolder relief; let the Italian costume of the days of Leo X. be exchanged for the sombre and plain uniform of a youth bred in the simplicity of rural life, who seeks no elegance in dress,—and, if the pensive and languid attitude be retained, you will have the striking likeness of our "Raphael" at the age of twenty-two.

He was of a poor, though ancient family, from the mountainous province of Forez, and his father, whose sole dignity was that of honor (worth all others), had, like the nobles of Spain, exchanged the sword for the plough. His mother, still young and handsome, seemed his sister, so much did they resemble each other. She had been bred amid the luxurious elegancies of a capital; and as the

balmy essence of the rose perfumes the crystal vase of the seraglio in which it has once been contained, so she, too, had preserved that fragrant atmosphere of manners and language which never evaporates entirely.

In her secluded mountains, with the loved husband of her choice, and with her children, in whom she had complacently centred all the pride of her maternal heart, she had regretted nothing. She closed the fair book of youth at these three words,—“God, husband, children.” Raphael especially was her best beloved. She would have purchased for him a kingly destiny, but, alas, she had only her heart with which to raise him up, for their slender fortune, and their dreams of prosperity, would ever and anon crumble to their very foundation beneath the hand of fate.

Two holy men, driven by persecution to the mountains, had, soon after the Reign of Terror, taken refuge in her house. They had been persecuted as members of a mystical religious sect which dimly predicted a renovation of the age. They loved Raphael, who was then a mere child, and, obscurely prophesying his fate, pointed out his star in the heavens, and told his mother to watch over that son with all her heart. She reproached herself for being too credulous, for she was very pious; but still she believed them. In such matters, a mother is so easy of belief! Her credulity supported her under many trials, but spurred her to efforts beyond her means to educate Raphael, and ultimately deceived her.

I had known Raphael since he was twelve years old, and next to his mother he loved me best on earth. We had met since the conclusion of our studies, first in Paris, then at Rome, whither he had been taken by one of his father's relatives, for the purpose of copying manuscripts in the Vatican Library. There he had acquired the impassioned language and the genius of Italy. He spoke Italian better than his mother tongue. At evening he would sit beneath the pines of the Villa Pamphili, and gazing on the setting sun and on the white fragments scattered on the plain, like the bleached bones of departed Rome, would pour forth extemporaneous stanzas that made us weep; but he never wrote. “Raphael,” would I sometimes say, “why do you not write?”

“Ah!” would he answer, “does the wind write what it sighs in this harmonious canopy of leaves? Does the sea write the wail of its shores? Nought that has been written is truly, really beautiful, and the heart of man never discloses its best and most divine portion. It is impossible! The instrument is of flesh, and the note is of fire! Between what is felt and what is expressed,” would he add, mournfully,

"there is the same distance as between the soul and the twenty-six letters of an alphabet! Immensity of distance! Think you a flute of reeds can give an idea of the harmony of the spheres?"

I left him to return to Paris. He was at that time striving, through his mother's interest, to obtain some situation in which he might by active employment remove from his soul its heavy weight, and lighten the oppressive burden of his fate. Men of his own age sought him, and women looked graciously on him as he passed them by. But he never went into society, and of all women he loved his mother only.

We suddenly lost sight of him for three years; though we afterwards learned that he had been seen in Switzerland, Germany, and Savoy; and that in winter he passed many hours of his nights on a bridge, or on one of the quays of Paris. He had all the appearance of extreme destitution. It was only many years afterwards that we learned more. We constantly thought of him, though absent, for he was one of those who could defy the forgetfulness of friends.

Chance reunited us once more after an interval of twelve years. It so happened that I had inherited a small estate in his province, and when I went there to dispose of it, I inquired after Raphael. I was told that he had lost father, mother, and wife in the space of a few years; that after these pangs of the heart, he had had to bear the blows of fortune, and that of all the domain of his fathers, nothing now remained to him but the old dismantled tower on the edge of the ravine, the garden, orchard, and meadow, with a few acres of unproductive land. These he ploughed himself, with two miserable cows; and was only distinguished from his peasant neighbors by the book which he carried to the field, and which he would sometimes hold in one hand, while the other directed the plough. For many weeks, however, he had not been seen to leave his wretched abode. It was supposed that he had started on one of those long journeys which with him lasted years. "It would be a pity," it was said, "for every one in the neighborhood loves him; though poor, he does as much good as any rich man. Many a warm piece of cloth has been made from the wool of his sheep; at night he teaches the little children of the surrounding hamlets how to read and write, or draw. He warms them at his hearth, and shares his bread with them, though God knows he has not much to spare when crops are short, as this year."

It was thus all spoke of Raphael. I wished to visit at least the abode of my friend,

and was directed to the foot of the hillock, on the summit of which stood the blackened tower, with its surrounding sheds and stables, amid a group of hazel-trees. A trunk of a tree, which had been thrown across, enabled me to pass over the almost dried-up torrent of the ravine, and I climbed the steep path, the loose stones giving way under my feet. Two cows and three sheep were grazing on the barren sides of the hillock, and were tended by an old half-blind servant, who was telling his beads seated on an ancient escutcheon of stone, which had fallen from the arch of the doorway.

He told me that Raphael was not gone, but had been ill for the last two months; that it was plain he would never leave the tower but for the churchyard; and the old man pointed with his meagre hand to the burying ground on the opposite hill. I asked if I could see Raphael. "Oh, yes," said the old man; "go up the steps, and draw the string of the latch of the great hall-door on the left. You will find him stretched on his bed, as gentle as an angel, and," added he drawing the back of his hand across his eyes, "as simple as a child!" I mounted the steep and worn-out steps which wound round the outside of the tower, and ended at a small platform covered by a tiled roof, the broken tiles of which strewed the stone steps. I lifted the latch of the door on my left, and entered. Never shall I forget the sight. The chamber was vast, occupying all the space between the four walls of the tower; it was lighted from two windows, with stone cross-bars, and the dusty and broken lozenge-shaped panes of glass were set in lead. The huge beams of the ceiling were blackened by smoke, the floor was paved with bricks, and in a high chimney with roughly fluted wooden jambs, an iron pot filled with potatoes was suspended over a fire, where a long branch was burning, or rather smoking. The only articles of furniture were two high-backed arm-chairs, covered with a plain-colored stuff, of which it was impossible to guess the original color; a large table, half covered with an unbleached linen table-cloth in which a loaf was wrapped, the other half being strewed pell-mell with papers and books; and, lastly, a rickety, worm-eaten four-post bedstead, with its blue serge curtains looped back to admit the rays of the sun, and the air from the open window.

A man who was still young, but attenuated by consumption and want, was seated on the edge of the bed, occupied in throwing crumbs to a whole host of swallows which were wheeling their flight around him.

The birds flew away at the noise of my approach, and perched on the cornice of the hall, or on the tester of the bed. I recognized Raphael, pale and thin as he

was. His countenance, though no longer youthful, had not lost its peculiar character; but a change had come over its loveliness, and its beauty was now of the grave. Rembrandt would have wished for no better model for his "Christ in the Garden of Olives." His dark hair clustered thickly on his shoulders, and was thrown back in disorder, as by the weary hand of the laborer when the sweat and toil of the day is over. The long untrimmed beard grew with a natural symmetry that disclosed the graceful curve of the lip, and the contour of the cheek; there was still the noble outline of the nose, the fair and delicate complexion, the pensive and now sunken eye. His shirt, thrown open on the chest, displayed his muscular though attenuated frame, which might yet have appeared majestic, had his weakness allowed him to sit erect.

He knew me at a glance, made one step forward with extended arms, and fell back upon the bed. We first wept, and then talked together. He related the past; how, when he had thought to cull the flowers or fruits of life, his hopes had ever been marred by fortune or by death,—the loss of his father, mother, wife, and child; his reverses of fortune, and the compulsory sale of his ancestral domain; he told how he retired to his ruined home, with no other companionship than that of his mother's old herdsman, who served him without pay, for the love he bore to his house; and lastly, spoke of the consuming languor which would sweep him away with the autumnal leaves, and lay him in the churchyard beside those he had loved so well. His intense imaginative faculty might be seen strong even in death, and in idea he loved to endow with a fanciful sympathy the turf and flowers which would blossom on his grave.

"Do you know what grieves me most?" said he, pointing to the fringe of little birds which were perched round the top of his bed. "It is to think that next spring these poor little ones, my latest friends, will seek for me in vain in the tower. They will no longer find the broken pane through which to fly in; and on the floor, the little flocks of wool from my mattress with which to build their nests. But the old nurse, to whom I bequeath my little all, will take care of them as long as she lives," he resumed, as if to comfort himself with the idea; "and after her—Well! God will; for He feedeth the young ravens."

He seemed moved while speaking of these little creatures. It was easy to see that he had long been weaned from the sympathy of men, and that the whole tenderness of his soul, which had been repulsed by them, was now transferred to dumb animals. "Will you spend any time among our mountains?" he inquired. "Yes," I replied. "So much the better," he added; "you will close my eyes, and

take care that my grave is dug as close as possible to those of my mother, wife, and child."

He then begged me to draw towards him a large chest of carved wood, which was concealed beneath a bag of Indian corn at one end of the room. I placed the chest upon the bed, and from it he drew a quantity of papers which he tore silently to pieces for half an hour, and then bid his old nurse sweep them into the fire. There were verses in many languages, and innumerable pages of fragments, separated by dates, like memoranda. "Why should you burn all these?" I timidly suggested; "has not man a moral as well as a material inheritance to bequeath to those who come after him? You are perhaps destroying thoughts and feelings which might have quickened a soul."

"What matters it?" he said; "there are tears enough in this world, and we need not deposit a few more in the heart of man. These," said he, showing the verses, "are the cast-off, useless feathers of my soul; it has moulted since then, and spread its bolder wings for eternity!" He then continued to burn and destroy, while I looked out of the broken window at the dreary landscape.

At length he called me once more to the bedside. "Here," said he—"save this one little manuscript, which I have not courage to burn. When I am gone, my poor nurse would make bags for her seeds with it, and I would not that the name which fills its pages should be profaned. Take, and keep it till you hear that I am no more. After my death you may burn it, or preserve it till your old age, to think of me sometimes as you glance over it."

I hid the roll of paper beneath my cloak, and took my leave, resolving inwardly to return the next day to soothe the last moments of Raphael by my care and friendly discourse. As I descended the steps, I saw about twenty little children with their wooden shoes in their hands, who had come to take the lessons which he gave them, even on his death-bed. A little further on, I met the village priest, who had come to spend the evening with him. I bowed respectfully, and as he noted my swollen eyes, he returned my salute with an air of mournful sympathy.

The next day I returned to the tower. Raphael had died during the night, and the village bell was already tolling for his burial. Women and children were standing at their doors, looking mournfully in the direction of the tower, and in the little green field adjoining the church, two men, with spades and mattock, were digging a grave at the foot of a cross.

I drew near to the door. A cloud of twittering swallows were fluttering round the open windows, darting in and out, as though the spoiler had robbed their nests.

Since then I have read these pages, and now know why he loved to be surrounded by these birds, and what memories they waked in him, even to his dying day.

RAPHAEL

I.

There are places and climates, seasons and hours, with their outward circumstance, so much in harmony with certain impressions of the heart, that Nature and the soul of man appear to be parts of one vast whole; and if we separate the stage from the drama, or the drama from the stage, the whole scene fades, and the feeling vanishes. If we take from René the cliffs of Brittany, or the wild savannahs from Atala, the mists of Swabia from Werther, or the sunny waves and scorched-up hills from Paul and Virginia, we can neither understand Chateaubriand, Bernardin de St. Pierre, or Goethe. Places and events are closely linked, for Nature is the same in the eye as in the heart of man. We are earth's children, and life is the same in sap as in blood; all that the earth, our mother, feels and expresses to the eye by her form and aspect, in melancholy or in splendor, finds an echo within us. One cannot thoroughly enter into certain feelings, save in the spot where they first had birth.

II.

At the entrance of Savoy, that natural labyrinth of deep valleys, which descend like so many torrents from the Simplon, St. Bernard, and Mount Cenis, and direct their course towards France and Switzerland, one wider valley separates at Chambéry from the Alpine chain, and, striking off towards Geneva and Annecy, displays its verdant bed, intersected with lakes and rivers, between the Mont du Chat and the almost mural mountains of Beauges.

On the left, the Mont du Chat, like a gigantic rampart, runs in one uninterrupted ridge for the space of two leagues, marking the horizon with a dark and scarcely undulated line. A few jagged peaks of gray rock at the eastern extremity alone break the almost geometrical monotony of its appearance, and tell that it was the hand of God, and not of man, that piled up these huge masses. Towards Chambéry, the mountain descends by gentle steps to the plain, and forms natural terraces, clothed with walnut and chestnut trees, entwined with clusters of the creeping vine. In the midst of this wild, luxuriant vegetation, one sees here and there some country-house shining through the trees, the tall spire of a humble village, or the old dark towers and battlements of some castle of a bygone age. The plain was once a vast lake, and has preserved the hollowed form, the indented shores, and advanced promontories of its former aspect; but in lieu of the spreading waters, there are the yellow waves of the bending corn, or the undulating summit of the verdant poplars. Here and there, a piece of rising ground, which was once an island, may be seen with its clusters of thatched roofs, half hidden among the branches. Beyond this dried-up basin, the Mont du Chat rises more abrupt and bold, its base washed by the waters of a lake, as blue as the firmament above it. This lake, which is not more than six leagues in length, varies in breadth from one to three leagues, and is surrounded and hemmed in with bold, steep rocks on the French side; on the Savoy side, on the contrary, it winds unmolested into several creeks and small bays, bordered by vine-covered hillocks and well-wooded slopes, and skirted by fig-trees whose

branches dip into its very waters. The lake then dwindles away gradually to the foot of the rocks of Châtillon, which open to afford a passage for the overflow of its waters into the Rhône. The burial-place of the princes of the house of Savoy, the abbey of Haute-Combe, stands on the northern side upon its foundation of granite, and projects the vast shadow of its spacious cloisters on the waters of the lake. Screened during the day from the rays of the sun by the high barrier of the Mont du Chat, the edifice, from the obscurity which envelops it, seems emblematical of the eternal night awaiting at its gates, the princes who descend from a throne into its vaults. Towards evening, however, a ray of the setting sun strikes and reverberates on its walls, as a beacon to mark the haven of life at the close of day. A few fishing boats, without sails, glide silently on the deep waters, beneath the shade of the mountain, and from their dingy color can scarcely be distinguished from its dark and rocky sides. Eagles, with their dusky plumage, incessantly hover over the cliffs and boats, as if to rob the nets of their prey, or make a sudden swoop at the birds which follow in the wake of the boats.

III.

At no great distance, the little town of Aix, in Savoy, steaming with its hot springs, and redolent of sulphur, is seated on the slope of a hill covered with vineyards, orchards, and meadows. A long avenue of poplars, the growth of a century, connects the lake with the town, and reminds one of those far-stretching rows of cypresses which lead to Turkish cemeteries. The meadows and fields, on either side of this road, are intersected by the rocky beds of the often dried-up mountain torrents and shaded by giant walnut-trees, upon whose boughs vines as sturdy as those of the woods of America hang their clustering branches. Here and there, a distant vista of the lake shows its surface, alternately sparkling or lead-colored, as the passing cloud or the hour of the day may make it.

When I arrived at Aix, the crowd had already left it. The hotels and public places, where strangers and idlers flock during the summer, were then closed. All were gone, save a few infirm paupers, seated in the sun, at the door of the lowest description of inns; and some invalids, past all hope of recovery, who might be seen, during the hottest hours of the day, dragging their feeble steps along, and treading the withered leaves that had fallen from the poplars during the night.

IV.

The autumn was mild, but had set in early. The leaves which had been blighted by the morning frost fell in roseate showers from the vines and chestnut-trees. Until noon, the mist overspread the valley, like an overflowing nocturnal inundation, covering all but the tops of the highest poplars in the plain; the hillocks rose in view like islands, and the peaks of mountains appeared as headlands in the midst of ocean; but when the sun rose higher in the heavens, the mild southerly breeze drove before it all these vapors of earth. The rushing of the imprisoned winds in the gorges of the mountains, the murmur of the waters, and the whispering trees, produced sounds melodious or powerful, sonorous or melancholy, and seemed in a few minutes to run through the whole range of earth's joys and sorrows its strength or its melancholy. They stirred up one's very soul, then died away like the voices of celestial spirits, that pass and disappear. Silence, such as the ear has no preception of elsewhere, succeeded, and hushed all to rest. The sky resumed its almost Italian serenity; the Alps stood out once more against a cloudless sky; the drops from the dissolving mist fell pattering on the dry leaves, or shone like brilliants on the grass. These hours were quickly over; the pale blue shades of evening glided swiftly on, veiling the horizon with their cold drapery as with a shroud. It seemed the death of Nature, dying, as youth and beauty die, with all its charms, and all its serenity.

Scenes such as these exhibiting Nature in its languid beauty were too much in accordance with my feelings. While they gave an additional charm to my own languor, they increased it, and I voluntarily plunged into an abyss of melancholy. But it was a melancholy so replete with thoughts, impressions, and elevating desires, with so soft a twilight of the soul, that I had no wish to shake it off. It was a malady the very consciousness of which was an allurements, rather than a pain, and in which Death appeared but as a voluptuous vanishing into space. I had given myself up to the charm, and had determined to keep aloof from society, which might have dissipated it, and in the midst of the world to wrap

myself in silence, solitude, and reserve. I used my isolation of mind as a shroud to shut out the sight of men, so as to contemplate God and Nature only.

Passing by Chambéry, I had seen my friend, Louis de ——; I had found him in the same state of mind as myself, disgusted with the bitterness of life, his genius, unappreciated, the body worn out by the mind, and all his better feelings thrown back upon his heart.

Louis had mentioned to me a quiet and secluded house, in the higher part of the town of Aix, where invalids were admitted to board. The establishment was conducted by a worthy old doctor (who had retired from the profession), and communicated with the town by a narrow pathway, which lay between the streams that issue from the hot springs. The back of the house looked on a garden surrounded by trellis and vine arbors; and beyond that there were paths where goats only were to be seen, which led to the mountain through sloping meadows, and through woods of chestnut and walnut-trees. Louis had promised to join me at Aix, as soon as he should have settled some business, consequent on the death of his mother, which detained him at Chambéry. I looked forward with pleasure to his arrival, for we understood each other, and the same feeling of disenchantment was common to us both. Grief knits two hearts in closer bonds than happiness ever can; and common sufferings are far stronger links than common joys. Louis was, at that particular time, the only person whose society was not distasteful to me, and yet I awaited his arrival without eagerness or impatience.

V.

I was kindly and graciously received in the house of the old doctor, and a room was allotted to me, which overlooked the garden and the country beyond. Almost all the other rooms were untenanted, and the long table d'hôte was deserted. At meal times a few invalids from Chambéry and Turin, who had over-stayed the season, assembled with the family. These boarders had arrived late, when most of the visitors of the baths were already gone, in hopes of finding cheaper lodgings, and a style of living in accordance with their poverty. There was no one with whom I could converse or form a passing acquaintance. This the old doctor and his wife soon saw, and threw the blame on the advanced season, and on the bathers who had left too soon. They often spoke with visible enthusiasm, and tender and compassionate respect, of a young stranger, a lady, who had remained at the baths in a weak and languid state of health, which it was feared would degenerate into slow consumption. She had lived alone with her maid for the last three months, in one of the most retired apartments of the house, taking her meals in her own rooms; and was never seen except at her window that looked towards the garden, or on the stairs when she returned from a donkey ride in the mountains.

I felt compassion for this young creature, a stranger like myself in a foreign land, who must be ill, since she had come in quest of health, and was doubtless sad, since she avoided the bustle and even the sight of company; but I felt no desire to see her spite of the admiration her grace and beauty had excited on those around me. My worn-out heart was wearied with wretched and short-lived attachments, of which I blushed to preserve the memories; not one of which I could recur to with pious regret, save that of poor Antonina. I was penitent and ashamed of my past follies and disorders; disgusted and satiated of vulgar allurements; and being naturally of a timid and reserved disposition, without that self-confidence which prompts some men to court adventures, or to seek the familiarity of chance acquaintances, I neither wished to see nor to be seen. Still

less did I dream of love. On the contrary, I rejoiced, in my stern and mistaken pride, to think that I had forever stifled that weakness in my heart, and that I was alone to feel, or to suffer in this nether world. As to happiness, I no longer believed in it.

VI.

I passed my days in my room with no other company than some books which my friend had sent me from Chambéry. In the afternoon, I used to ramble alone amid the wild mountains which, on the Italian side, form the boundary of the valley of Aix; and returning home in the evening, harassed and fatigued, would sit down to supper, and then retire to my room and spend whole hours seated at my window. I gazed at the blue firmament above, which, like the abyss attracting him who leans over it, ever attracts the thoughts of men as though it had secrets to reveal. Sleep found me still wandering on a sea of thoughts, and seeking no shore. When morning came, I was awaked by the rays of the sun and by the murmur of the hot springs; and I would plunge into my bath, and after breakfast recommence the same rambles and the same melancholy musings as the day before. Sometimes in the evening, when I looked out of my window into the garden, I saw another lighted window not far from my own and the face of a female, who, with one hand throwing back the long black tresses from her brow, gazed like myself on the mountains, the sky, and moonlit garden. I could only distinguish the pale, pure, and almost transparent profile and the long, dark waves of the hair, which was smoothed down at the temples. I used to see this face standing out on the brilliant background of the window, which was lighted from a lamp in the bedroom. At times, too, I had heard a woman's voice saying a few words or giving some orders in the apartment. The slightly foreign, though pure accent, the vibrations of that soft, languid, and yet marvellously sonorous voice, of which I heard the harmony without understanding the words had interested me. Long after my window was closed that voice remained in my ear like the prolonged sound of an echo. I had never heard any like it, even in Italy; it sounded through the half-closed teeth like those small metallic lyres that the children of the Islands of the Archipelago use when they play on the seashore. It was more like a ringing sound than like a voice; I had noticed it, little dreaming that that voice would ring loud and deep forever through my life. The next day I thought no more of it.

One day, however, on returning home earlier, and entering by the little garden-door near the arbor, I had a nearer view of the stranger, who was seated on a bench under the southern wall, enjoying the warm rays of the sun. She thought herself alone, for she had not heard the sound of the door as I closed it behind me, and I could contemplate her unobserved. We were within twenty paces of each other, and were only separated by a vine, which was half-stripped of its leaves. The shade of the vine-leaves and the rays of the sun played and chased each other alternately over her face. She appeared larger than life, as she sat like one of those marble statues enveloped in drapery, of which we admire the beauty without distinguishing the form. The folds of her dress were loose and flowing, and the drapery of a white shawl, folded closely round her, showed only her slender and rather attenuated hands, which were crossed on her lap. In one, she carelessly held one of those red flowers which grow in the mountains beneath the snow, and are called, I know not why, "poets' flowers." One end of her shawl was thrown over her head like a hood, to protect her from the damp evening air. She was bent languidly forward, her head inclined upon her left shoulder; and the eyelids, with their long dark lashes, were closed against the dazzling rays of the sun. Her complexion was pale, her features motionless, and her countenance so expressive of profound and silent meditation, that she resembled a statue of Death; but of that Death which bears away the soul beyond the reach of human woes to the regions of eternal light and love. The sound of my footsteps on the dry leaves made her look up. Her large half-closed eyes were of that peculiar tint resembling the color of lapis lazuli, streaked with brown, and the drooping lid had that natural fringe of long dark lashes, which Eastern women strive by art to imitate, in order to impart a voluptuous wildness to their look and energy even to their languor. The light of those eyes seemed to come from a distance which I have never measured in any other mortal eye. It was as the rays of the stars, which seem to seek us out, and to approach us as we gaze, and yet have travelled millions of miles through the heavens. The high and narrow forehead seemed as if compressed by intense thought, and joined the nose by an almost straight and Grecian line. The lips were thin and slightly depressed at the corners with an habitual expression of sadness; the teeth of pearl, rather than of ivory, as is the case with the daughters of the sea or islands. The face was oval, slightly emaciated in the lower part and at the temples, and, on the whole she seemed rather an embodying of thought than a human being. Besides this general expression of revery there was a languid look of suffering and passion, which made it impossible to gaze once on that face without bearing its ineffaceable image stamped forever in the memory. In a word, hers was a contagious sickness of the soul, veiled in a shape of beauty the most majestic and attractive that the

dreams of mortal man ever embodied.

I passed rapidly before her, bowing respectfully, and my deferential air and downcast eyes seemed to ask forgiveness for having disturbed her. A slight blush tinged her pale cheeks at my approach. I returned to my room trembling and wondering that the evening air should thus have chilled me. A few minutes later I saw her re-enter the house, and cast one indifferent look at my window. I saw her again on the following days, at the same hour, both in the garden and in the court, but never dared to think of accosting her. I even met her sometimes near the châlets, with the little girls who drove her donkey or picked strawberries for her, at other times, in her boat on the lake; but I never showed any sign of recognition or interest, beyond a grave and respectful bow; she would return it with an air of melancholy abstraction, and we each went our separate ways, on the hills or on the waters.

VII.

And yet when I had not met her in the course of the day, I felt sad and disturbed; when evening came, I would go down to the garden, I knew not why, and stay there, with my eyes riveted on her windows, spite of the cold night air. I could not make up my mind to return to the house until I had caught a glimpse of her shadow on the curtains, or heard a note of her piano, or one of the strange tones of her voice.

The apartment she occupied was contiguous to my room, from which it was separated by a strong oaken door with two bolts. I could hear confusedly the sound of her footsteps, the rustling of her gown, or the crumpling of the leaves of her book as she turned over the pages. I sometimes fancied I heard her breathe. Instinctively I placed my writing-table on which my lamp stood near the door, for I felt less lonely when I heard these sounds of life around me. It seemed to me that this unknown neighbor, who insensibly occupied all my time, shared my life. In a word, before I had the slightest idea that I loved, I had already all the thoughts, the fancies, and the refinements of passion. Love did not consist for me in one particular symptom, look, or confession, in any one external circumstance against which I could have fortified myself. It was an invisible miasma diffused in the surrounding atmosphere; it was in the air and light, in the expiring season, in my lonely life, in the mysterious proximity of another equally isolated existence; it was in the long excursions which took me from her and made me feel the more forcibly the unconscious attraction which recalled me; in her white dress, seen at a distance through the mountain firs; in her dark hair loosened by the wind on the lake; in the light at her window, in the slight creaking of the wooden floor under her tread, in the rustling of her pen on the paper when she wrote, in the very silence of those long autumnal evenings which she spent in reading, writing, or in thought within a few paces of me; and lastly, it was in the fascination of her fantastic beauty, too much seen though scarcely beheld, and which, when I closed my eyes, I still saw through the wall, as though

it had been transparent.

With this feeling, however, there mingled no desire or eager curiosity, on my part, to find out the secret reason of her solitude, or to break down the fragile barrier of our almost voluntary separation. What to me was this woman whom I had met by chance among the mountains of a foreign land, ill in health and sick at heart though she might be? I had shaken the dust from my feet, or at least I thought I had, and felt no wish to hold to the world once more by any link of the mind, or of the senses, still less by any weakness of the heart. I felt supreme contempt for love, for under its name I had met only with affectation, coquetry, fickleness, and levity; if I except the love of Antonina, which had been but a childish ecstasy, a flower fallen from the stem before its hour of perfume.

VIII.

Again, who was this woman? Was she a being like myself, or one of those visions which, like living meteors, shoot athwart the sky of our imagination, dazzling the eye? Was she of my own country, or from some distant land, from some island of the tropics, or the far East, whither I could not follow her? After adoring her for a few days, might I not have to mourn forever her absence? Was her heart free to respond to mine? Was it likely that enthralling beauty such as hers should have traversed the world and reached maturity without kindling love in some of those upon whom the glance of her eye had fallen? Had she a father or a mother, brothers or sisters? Was she not married? Was there not one man in the world who, though separated from her by inexplicable circumstances, lived for her only, as she lived for him?

All this I said to myself, to drive away this one besetting, hopeless fancy. I scorned even to make inquiries. I was too much of a stoic to strive to penetrate the unknown, and thought it more dignified, or perhaps more pleasant, to go on dreaming in uncertainty.

IX.

The old doctor and his family had not the pride of heart that induced me to respect her secret. At table our hosts, with the curiosity natural to all those who live by strangers, would interpret every circumstance, discuss every probability, and collect even the vaguest notions concerning the stranger. I soon learned all that had transpired respecting her, although I never interrogated and even studiously avoided making her the subject of our discourse. In vain I sought to turn the conversation into another channel; every day the same subject recurred; men, women, children, bathers, and servants, the guides of the mountains, and the boatmen on the lake, had all been equally struck and charmed by her, although she spoke to no one. She was an object of universal respect and admiration.

There are some beings who, by their dazzling radiance, draw all around them into their sphere of attraction without desiring or even perceiving it. It seems as though certain natures were like the suns of some moral system, obliging the looks, thoughts, and hearts of their satellites to gravitate around them. Their moral and physical beauty is a spell, their fascination a chain, love is but their emanation. We track their upward course from earth to heaven, and when they vanish in their youth and beauty, all else seems dark to the eye that has been blinded by their brilliancy. The vulgar, even, recognize these superior beings by some mysterious sign. They admire without comprehending, as the blind enjoy the sunshine, who have never seen the sun.

X.

It was thus I learned that the young stranger lived in Paris. Her husband was an old man, who had rendered his name illustrious, at the close of the last century, by many discoveries which held a high place in the history of science. He had been struck with the beauty and talent of this young girl, and had adopted her in order to bequeath to her his name and fortune. She loved him as a father, wrote to him every day, and sent him a journal of her feelings and impressions. Two years ago she had fallen into a declining state, which had alarmed him. She had been recommended to remove southward and try change of air, and her husband, being too infirm to accompany her, had confided her to the care of some friends from Lausanne, with whom she had travelled all over Italy and Switzerland. The change had not restored her to health, and a Genevese doctor, fearing a disease of the heart, had recommended the baths of Aix; he was to come to fetch her, and take her back to Paris at the beginning of the winter.

This was all I learned of a life already so dear. Still I persisted in fancying that all these details were indifferent to me. I felt a tender pity for this enchanting and beautiful being, blighted in the flower of youth by a disease which, while it consumes life, renders the sensations more acute and stimulates the flame which it is destined to extinguish. When I met the stranger on the staircase, I sought to discover the trace of her sufferings in the scarcely perceptible lines of pain round her somewhat pale lips, or in the dark circle which want of sleep had left round her beautiful blue eyes. I was interested by her beauty, but still more by the shadow of death by which she was overcast, and which made her appear more as a phantom of the night than as a reality. This was all. Our lives rolled on; we continued to live in close proximity as far as distance was concerned, but morally, as widely separated as ever.

XI.

I had given up my mountain excursions since the snow had fallen on the highest peaks of Savoy, for the gentle warmth of the latter days of October seemed to have taken refuge in the valley; and on the banks of the lake the weather was still mild. The long avenue of poplars was my delight, with its gleams of sunshine, waving tops, and murmuring branches. I spent, also, a great part of my time on the water. The boatmen all knew me, and I am told they still remember how we used to sail into the wildest creeks and remotest bays of France and Savoy. The young stranger, too, would sometimes embark in the middle of the day for less distant expeditions. The boatmen, who were proud of her confidence, always took care to give her notice of the least symptom of wind or cold weather, thinking far more of her health and safety than of their own gains. On one occasion, however, they were themselves deceived. They had undertaken to row her safely over to Haute-Combe, on the opposite shore of the lake, in order to visit the ruins of the Abbey. They had scarcely got over two-thirds of the distance, when a sudden gust of wind, rushing forth from the narrow gorges of the valley of the Rhône, stirred up the waves of the lake, and produced one of those short seas which so often prove fatal. The sail of the little boat was soon gone, and it seemed like a nutshell dancing on the still-increasing waves. It was impossible to think of returning, and full half an hour of fatigue and danger must elapse before the boat could be moored in safety under the hanging cliffs of Haute-Combe. Fate willed that my wandering sail should be on the lake at the same hour. I was in a larger boat, with four stout oarsmen, and was going to visit M. de Chatillon, a relation of my Chambéry friend. His chateau was situated on the summit of a rock, in a small island at one end of the lake. A few strokes of the oar would have brought us into the harbor of Chatillon, but I, who had unconsciously been watching the other boat and saw it struggling against the wind, perceived the danger in which it was placed. We put about immediately, and with one heart affronted the tempest and the dangers of the lake, to try and succor the little craft, which every now and then disappeared, and was lost in a

mist of foam and spray. My anxiety was intense during the hour that was required to cross the lake before we could join the little bark. When we came up to it, the shore was close at hand, and one long wave lodged it in safety before our eyes on the sand at the foot of the ruined Abbey.

We shouted for joy, and rushed through the water to the boat, in order to carry the invalid ashore. The poor boatman was making signs of distress, and calling for help; he was pointing to the bottom of the boat, at something we could not see. On reaching the spot where he stood, we found that the stranger had fainted, and was lying at the bottom of the boat. Her body and arms were completely immersed in water, and her head rested like that of a corpse against the little wooden chest at the stern, in which the boatmen put their tackle and provisions. Her hair streamed in disorder about her neck and shoulders, like the dark wings of a lifeless bird floating on the surface of the waters. Her face, from which all color had not fled, was calm and peaceful as in slumber and shone with that preternatural beauty death leaves on the countenance of those who die young; like the last and fairest ray of retiring life, lingering on the brow from which it is about to depart, or the first beam of dawning immortality on the features which are henceforward to be hallowed in the memory of those who survive. I had never before, and have never since, seen her so divinely transfigured. Was Death the most perfect form of her celestial beauty, or did Providence intend this first and solemn impression, as a foreshadowing of that unchangeable image of beauty, which I was destined to entomb in my memory, and eternally evoke!

We jumped into the boat, to take up the apparently dying woman, and carry her beyond the rocks. I placed my hand upon her heart, and approached my ear to her lips, as I would to those of a sleeping infant. The heart beat irregularly, but with strong pulsations; the breath was warm, and I saw that she had only fainted from terror and from cold. One of the boatmen took up her feet, I supported the shoulders and the head, which rested on my breast. She gave no sign of life while we carried her thus to a fisherman's house, below the rocks of Haute-Combe, which serves as an inn for the boatmen, when they conduct strangers to the ruins. This poor dwelling consisted merely in one long, dark, smoky room, furnished with a table upon which were wine, bread, and cheese. A wooden ladder led to an upper room, which was lighted by a single round window without glass, looking towards the lake. Almost the whole space of this room was occupied by three beds, which could be closed up by wooden doors, like large presses. The whole family slept there. We confided the stranger, who was still insensible, to the care of the two girls of the house and their mother, and we

stood outside the door, while they extended a mattress near the chimney, and having lighted a fire of furze, undressed her, dried her clothes, chafed her limbs, and wrung her streaming hair; they then carried her upstairs, and placed her in one of the beds, on which they had spread clean sheets, which had been warmed with one of the heated hearth-stones, according to the custom of the peasants of that country. They tried in vain to make her swallow a few drops of wine and vinegar to bring her to life; but finding all their efforts unavailing, gave way to tears and lamentations, which soon recalled us into the house. "The lady is dead! the lady is dead! We can only weep, and send for a priest." The boatmen mingled their cries with those of the women, and increased their confusion. I rushed up the ladder and entered the room. The dim twilight still showed the bed over which I bent. I touched her forehead; it was burning hot; I could distinguish the low and regular breathing which made the coarse brown sheet alternately rise and fall on the chest. I bid the women be quiet, and giving some money to one of the boatmen, ordered him to fetch a doctor, who, I was told, lived two leagues off, in a little village on the Mont du Chat. The boatman set off at full speed; the others, comforted by the assurance that the lady was not dead, sat down to eat. The women went and came from the parlor to the cellar, and from the cellar to the poultry-yard, to make preparations for supper. I remained seated on one of the bags of Indian corn at the foot of the bed, my hands clasped on my knees, and my eyes fixed on the inanimate face and closed eyelids of the sufferer. Night had closed in. One of the young girls had fastened the shutter, and suspended a small copper lamp against the wall; its rays fell on the sheets and on the sleeping countenance like the light of holy tapers on a death-bed. Since then, I have thus watched, alas, by other bedsides, but the sleepers never woke!

XII.

Never perhaps was the heart of man absorbed for so many long hours in one strange and overwhelming speculation. Suspended between death and love, I was unable to divine, as I gazed on the angel form that lay sleeping before me, whether this night in its mystery would bring-forth endless anguish, or whether undying love would come in the morning, with returning life and joy. In the convulsive movements of her troubled sleep she had thrown the sheet off one of her shoulders upon which fell the long luxuriant curls of her lustrous hair. The neck had yielded to the weight of the head, which was thrown back on the pillow, and slightly inclined towards the left shoulder; one of the arms was disengaged from the cover-lid and was placed beneath the head, showing the ivory whiteness of the elbow, which stood out on the coarse brown linen in which the peasant women had dressed her. On one of the fingers of the hand, which was half concealed in the masses of dark hair, there was a small gold ring with a sparkling ruby, on which the rays of the lamp flashed. The girls had lain down on the floor without undressing, and their mother had fallen asleep with her hands folded on the back of a wooden chair. As soon as the cock crowed in the yard, they got up, and taking their wooden shoes in their hands, noiselessly descended the ladder to go to work. I remained alone.

The first gleams of dawn came through the closed shutter in almost imperceptible streaks of light. I opened the window in the hope that the balmy morning air from the lake and mountains, which awakened all Nature, would have the same effect on one whom I would willingly have revived at the cost of my own life. The chill air rushed into the room, and extinguished the expiring lamp. Nothing stirred on the bed. I heard the poor women below joining in common prayer, before commencing their day's labor. The thought of praying likewise entered my heart. I felt, as all do who have exhausted the whole strength of their soul, the wish to superadd the force of some mysterious and preterhuman power to the impotent tension of ardent desires. I knelt on the floor,

with my hands clasped on the edge of the bed, and my eyes riveted on the face of the sleeper. I wept, and prayed long and fervently; the tears chased each other down my face and hid from my blinded eyes the features of the one whose recovery I so ardently desired. My whole heart and soul were so absorbed in one feeling and one sensation, that I might have remained hours in the same attitude without being aware of the lapse of time, or the pain of kneeling on the stone floor; when suddenly, while I was unconsciously wiping away my tears, I felt a hand touch mine, part the hair from my face, and gently rest upon my head, as if to bless me.

I looked up with a cry of delight; I saw her unclosed eyes, her smiling lips, her hand extended towards mine, and heard these words: "O God! I thank thee. I have now a brother!"

XIII.

[Illustration: RAPHAEL'S DEVOTION.]

The cool morning air had awakened her, while I was praying by her bedside, with my face buried in my hands. She had noted my ardent pity, and my ardent prayer, and had recognized me by the clear light of morning, which now streamed into the chamber. When she had fainted she was lonely and indifferent, and had revived under the tender care, and perhaps the love of a pitying stranger. She, who, in the neglected flower of her days, had been deprived of all the kindred ties of the heart, had unexpectedly found in me the care and pity, the tears and prayers, of a youthful brother; and that tender name had escaped her lips at the moment that returning life gave her the consciousness of so great a joy.

"A brother! Ah, no, not a brother!" I exclaimed, reverently removing her hand from my brow, as though I had not been worthy of her touch, "not a brother, but a slave, a living shadow following on your steps, who asks but one blessing of Heaven, and one felicity on earth—the right of remembering this night; who only desires to preserve eternally the image of the superhuman vision he would wish to follow unto death, or for whom alone he could bear to live." As I faltered out these words in a low voice, the rosy tints of life gradually reappeared on her cheeks, a sad smile, implying an obstinate unbelief in happiness, played round her mouth, and she raised her eyes to the ceiling, as though they listened to words which responded not to the ear, but to the thoughts. Never was the change from life to death, from a dream to reality, so rapid; on her countenance, now blooming with youth and refreshed by rest, surprise, languor, delight, repose, joy and melancholy, timidity and grace were all painted in quick succession. Her radiance seemed to illumine the dark recess more than the light of morning. There existed more languor, more revealings, more sympathy in her looks and

silence, than in millions of words. The human face speaks a language to the eye, and in youth the countenance is an instrument of which one look of passion sweeps the keys. It transmits from soul to soul mysteries of mute communion, which cannot be translated into words. My countenance, too, must have revealed what I felt to those eyes which were bent so earnestly upon me. My damp clothes, my long, dishevelled hair, my eyes heavy with watching, my pale and anxious looks, the pious enthusiasm with which I bent before the holiness of suffering beauty, my emotion, joy, and surprise, the dimness of the room in which I durst not take a step for fear of dispelling the enchantment of so divine a dream, the first rays of sun, which showed the tears still glistening in my eyes,—all conspired to lend to my countenance a power of expression, and a look of tenderness, which it will doubtless never wear again in the course of a long life.

Unable to bear any longer the reaction of these feelings, and the internal vibration of such silence, I called up the women. On entering the room, they broke out into repeated exclamations of surprise at the sight of a resurrection which appeared to them a miracle. At the same moment the doctor made his appearance. He prescribed repose and an infusion of certain plants of the mountain which allay the irregular movements of the heart. He reassured every one by telling us that the lady's malady was one of youth, produced by excessive sensibility, and which time would mitigate; that it was but a superabundance of life, although it often wore the appearance of death, and was never fatal, except when inward grief or some moral cause changed its character into one of habitual melancholy, or an unconquerable distaste to life. While some of the women went out into the fields, to gather the samples ordered by the doctor, and others were ironing out her damp clothes in the lower room, I left the house to wander alone among the ruins of the old Abbey.

XIV.

But my heart was too full of its own emotions to feel interested in the anchorites of the Abbey. The enthusiasm and self-denial of the early monasteries had subsided into a profession; and at a later period their lives, unlinked with those of their fellow-beings, had fruitlessly evaporated within these cloisters, and left no trace behind. I felt no regret as I stood upon their tombs, but only wondered, as I noted how speedily Nature seizes on the empty dwellings and deserted abodes of man, and how superior is the living architecture of shrubs and briars, waving ivy, wall-flowers and creeping plants, throwing their mantle on the ruined walls, to the cold symmetry of stones, or the lifeless ornaments of the chiselled monuments of men.

There was now more sunshine, music, and perfume, more holy psalmody of the winds and waters, of birds, and sonorous echoes of the lakes and forests, beneath the crumbling pillars, dismantled nave, and shattered roof of the empty Abbey, than there had been holy tapers, fumes of incense and monotonous chants in the ceremonies and processions that filled it night and day. Nature is the high priest, the noblest decorator, the holiest poet and most inspired musician of God. The young swallows in their nests below the broken cornice, greeting their mother with their cheerful chirping; the sighing of the breeze, which seems to bear to the unpeopled cloisters the sound of flapping sails, the lament of the waves, and the dying notes of the fisherman's song; the balmy emanations which now and then are wafted through the nave; the flowers which shed their leaves upon the tombs, the waving of the green drapery which clothes the walls; the sonorous and reverberated echoes of the stranger's steps upon the vaults where sleep the dead,—are all as full of piety, holy thoughts, and unbounded aspirations, as was the monastery in its days of sacred splendor. Man is no longer there, with all his miserable passions contracted by the narrow pale in which they were confined, but not extinguished; but God is there, never so plainly seen as in the works of Nature,—God whose unshadowed splendor seems to re-enter once more these

intellectual graves, whose vaulted roofs no longer intercept the glorious sunshine and the light of heaven.

XV.

I was not at the time sufficiently composed to understand my own feelings. I felt as one just relieved from a heavy burden, who breathes freely, relaxes his contracted muscles, and walks to and fro in his strength, as though he could devour space, and inhale all the air of heaven. My own heart was the burden of which I had been relieved, and, in giving it to another, I felt as if I had for the first time entered into the fulness of life. Man is so truly born to love, that it is only when he has the consciousness of loving fully and entirely that he feels himself really a man. Until then he is disturbed and restless, inconstant and wandering in his thoughts; but from thenceforward all his waverings cease, he feels at rest, and sees his destiny before him.

I sat down upon the ivy-covered wall of a high dilapidated terrace which overlooked the lake. My eyes wandered over the bright expanse of water and the luminous immensity of the sky; they were so well blended in the azure line of the horizon that it would have been impossible to define where the sky commenced, and where the lake terminated. I seemed to float in the pure ether, or to be merged in a universal ocean. But the inward joy which inundated my soul was far more infinite, radiant, and incommensurate, than the atmosphere with which I seemed to mingle. I could not have defined my joy, or rather my inward serenity. It was as some unfathomable secret revealed to me by feelings instead of words,—as the sensation of the eye passing from darkness into light, or as the rapture of some mystical soul, secure in the possession of its God. It was dazzling light, intoxication without giddiness, repose without heaviness, or immobility. I could have lived on thus during as many thousand years as there were ripples on the lake, or sands upon its shores, without perceiving that more seconds had elapsed than were required for a single respiration. When the immortal dwellers in heaven first lose the consciousness of the duration of time, they must feel thus; it was an immutable thought, in the eternity of an instant.

XVI.

These sensations were not precise, or definable. They were too complete to be scanned; thought could not divide, nor reflection analyze them. They did not take their rise in the loveliness of the superhuman creature that I adored, for the shadow of death still lay between her beauty and my eyes; or in the pride of being loved by her, for I knew not if I was more in her sight than a dream of morning; or in the hope of possessing her charms, for my respect was too far above such vile gratifications of the senses even to stoop to them in thought; or in the satisfaction of displaying my triumph, for selfish vanity held no place in my heart, and I knew no one in that secluded spot before whom I could profane my love by disclosing it; or in the hope of linking her fate with mine, for I knew she was another's; or in the certainty of seeing her, and the happiness of following her steps, for I was as little free as she was, and in a few days fate was to divide us; nor, lastly, in the certainty of being beloved, for I knew nothing of her heart, except the one word and look of gratitude that she had addressed to me.

Mine was another feeling; pure, calm, disinterested, and immaterial. It was repose of the heart, after having met with the long sought-for, and till then unfound, object of its restless adoration; the long-desired idol of that vague, unquiet adoration of supreme beauty which agitates the soul until the divinity has been discovered, and that our heart has clung to as a straw to the magnet, or mingled with as sighs with the surrounding air.

Strange to say, I felt no impatience to see her once more, to hear her voice, to be near her, or to converse freely with one who had become the sole object of my life and thoughts. I had seen her and she had become part of myself. Henceforward nothing could rob my soul of its possession; far or near, present or absent, I bore her with me; all else was indifferent. Perfect love is patient, because it is absolute, and knows itself to be eternal. No power could tear her from my heart. I felt that henceforward her image was completely mine; it was

to me what light is to the eye that has once seen it, air to the lungs that have once inhaled it, or thought to the mind in which it has once been conceived. I defied Heaven itself to rob me of this divine embodying of my desires. I had seen her, and that was enough. For the contemplative, to see is to enjoy. It scarcely mattered to me whether she loved me, or whether she passed me by without perceiving me. I had been touched by her splendor, and was still enveloped in her rays; she could no more withdraw them from me than the sun can take from the earth the beams which he has shed upon it. I felt that darkness and night had fled forever from my heart, and that she would evermore shine there, as she then shone, though I lived for a thousand years.

XVII.

This conviction gave to my love all the security of immutability, the calm of certainty, the overflowing ecstasy of joy that would never be impaired. I took no note of time, knowing that I had before me hours without end, and that each in succession would give me back her inward presence. I might be separated from her during a century without reducing by one day the eternity of my love. I went and came; sat down and got up again. I ran, then stopped and walked on without feeling the ground beneath my feet, like those phantoms which glide upon earth, upheld by their impalpable, ethereal nature. I extended my arms to grasp the air, the light, the lake; I would have clasped all Nature in one vast embrace in thankfulness that she had become incarnate, for me, in a being that united all her charms and splendor, power, and delights. I knelt on the stones and briars of the ruins without feeling them and on the brink of precipices without perceiving them. I uttered inarticulate words, which were lost in the sound of the noisy waters of the lake; I strove to pierce the vaults of heaven, and to carry my song of gratitude, and my ecstasy of joy, into the very presence of God. I was no longer a man, I was a living hymn of praise, prayer, adoration, worship of overflowing, speechless thankfulness. I felt an intoxication of the heart, a madness of the soul; my body had lost the consciousness of its materiality and I no longer believed in time, or space, or death. The new life of love which had gushed forth in my heart gave me the consciousness, the anticipated enjoyment, of the fulness of immortality.

XVIII.

I was made aware of the flight of time by seeing the meridian sun striking on the summit of the Abbey walls. I came down the hill through the woods bounding from rock to rock, and from tree to tree. My heart beat as though it would burst. As I approached the little inn, I saw the stranger in a sloping meadow behind the house. She was seated at the foot of a sunny wall, against which the inhabitants of the place had piled a few stones. Her white dress shone out on the verdant meadow, and the shade of a haystack screened her face from the sun. She was reading in a little book that lay open on her lap, and every now and then interrupted her reading to play with the children from the mountain, who came to offer her flowers, or chestnuts. On seeing me, she attempted to rise as if to meet me half-way, and her gesture was quite sufficient to encourage me to approach. She received me with a blushing look and tremulous lip, which I perceived, and which increased my own bashfulness. The strangeness of our situation was so embarrassing, that we remained some time without finding a word to say to each other. At last, with a timid and scarcely intelligible gesture, she motioned to me to sit down on the hay, not far from her; it seemed to me that she has expected me, and had kept a place for me. I sat down respectfully at some distance. Our silence remained unbroken, and it was evident that we were both ineffectually seeking to exchange some of those commonplace phrases which may be called the base coin of conversation, and serve to conceal thoughts instead of revealing them. Fearing to say too much or too little, we gave no utterance to what was in our hearts; we remained mute, and our silence increased our embarrassment. At length, our downcast eyes were raised at the same moment and met; I saw such depth of sensibility in hers, and she read in mine so much suppressed rapture, truth, and deep feeling, that we could no longer take them off each other's face, and tears rising to our eyes, at the same instant, from both our hearts we each instinctively put up our hands as if to veil our thoughts.

I know not how long we remained thus. At last, in a trembling voice, and with a

somewhat constrained and impatient tone, she said: "You have wept over me; I have called you brother, you have adopted me for your sister, and yet we dare not look at each other? A tear," she added, "a disinterested tear from an unknown heart is more than my life is worth,—more than it has ever yet called forth!" Then with a slightly reproachful accent she said: "Am I then become once more a stranger to you, since I no longer require your care? Oh, as to me," she proceeded in a resolute tone of confidence, "I know nothing of you but your name and countenance, but I know your heart! A century could not teach me more!"

"For my part," said I, faltering, "I would wish to learn nothing of all that makes you a being like unto ourselves, and bound by the same links as us to this wretched world. I require but to know this,—that you have traversed it, and that you have allowed me to contemplate you from afar, and to remember you always."

"Oh, do not deceive yourself thus!" she replied; "do not see in me a deified delusion of your own heart; I should have to suffer too much when the chimera vanished. View me as I am; as a poor woman, who is dying in despondency and solitude, and who will take with her from earth no feeling more divine than that of pity. You will understand this, when I tell you who I am," added she; "but first answer me on one point, which has disquieted me since the day I first saw you in the garden. Why, young and gentle as you seem to be, are you so lonely and so sad? Why do you fly from the company and conversation of our host, to wander alone on the lake, and in the most secluded parts of the mountains, or to retire into your room? Your light burns far into the night, I am told. Have you some secret in your heart that you confine to solitude?" She waited my answer with visible anxiety, and kept her eyes closed, as if to conceal the impression it might make upon her. "My secret," said I, "is to have none; to feel the weight of a heart that no enthusiasm upheld until this hour; of a heart which I have endeavored to engage in unsatisfactory attachments, and which I have ever been obliged to resume with such bitterness and loathing, as forever to discourage me, young and feeling as I am, from loving." I then told her, without concealment, as I would have spoken before Heaven, of all that could interest her in my life. I related my birth, my humble and poor condition; I spoke of my father, a soldier of former days; my mother, a woman of exquisite sensibility, whose youth had been passed in all the refinement and elegance of letters; my young sisters, their pious and angelic simplicity; I mentioned my education among the children of my native mountains; my ready enthusiasm for study; my involuntary inaction;

my travels; my first thrill of the heart beside the youthful daughter of the Neapolitan fisherman; the unprofitable acquaintances I formed in Paris,—the levity, misconduct, and self-abasement which had been the result; my desire for a soldier's life, which peace had counteracted at the very time I entered the army; my leaving my regiment; my wanderings without an object; my hopeless return to the paternal roof; my wasting melancholy; my wish to die; my weariness of everything; and lastly, I spoke of my physical languor, A proceeding from heaviness of the soul, and of that premature decrepitude of the heart, and distaste of life, which was concealed beneath the appearance and features of a man of four-and-twenty. I dwelt with inward satisfaction on the disappointments, weariness, and bitterness of my life, for I no longer felt them! A single look had regenerated me. I spoke of myself as of one that was dead; a new man was born within me. When I had ended, I raised my eyes to her, as towards my judge. She was trembling and pale with emotion. "Heavens," she exclaimed, "how you alarmed me!" "And why?" said I. "Because," she rejoined, "if you had not been unhappy and lonely here below, there would have been one link the less between us. You would have felt no desire to pity another; and I should have quitted life without having seen a shadow of myself, save in the heartless mirror where my own cold image is reflected."

"The history of your life," she continued, "is the history of mine, with the change of a few particulars. Only yours commences, and mine—" I would not let her conclude. "No, no!" said I hoarsely pressing my lips to her feet, which I embraced convulsively as if to hold her down to earth; "no, no! you will not, must not die; or, if you do, I feel two lives will end at once!"

I was alarmed at my own gesture and at the exclamation which had involuntarily escaped me; and I durst not raise my face off the ground, from which she had withdrawn her feet. "Rise," she said, in a grave voice, but without anger; "do not worship dust—dust as lowly as that in which you are soiling your fine hair, and which will be scattered as light and as impalpable by the first autumnal wind. Do not deceive yourself as to the poor creature you see before you. I am but the shadow of youth, of beauty, and of love,—of the love you will one day feel and inspire, when this shadow shall long have passed away. Keep your heart for those who are to live, and only give to the dying what the dying ask, a gentle hand to support their last steps, and tears to mourn their loss."

The grave and serious tone-with which she said these words struck to my heart. Yet as I looked on her, and saw the glowing tints of the setting sun illumining her

face, which shone with hourly increasing youth and serenity of expression, as though a new sun had risen in her heart, I could not believe in death concealed under these glorious signs of life. Besides, what cared I? If that heavenly vision was death, well, it was death I loved. It might be that the vast and perfect love for which I thirsted was only to be found in death. It might be that God had only showed me its nearly extinguished light on earth, to urge me to follow the trace of its ray into the grave, and from thence to heaven.

"Do not stay dreaming thus," she said, "but listen to me!" This was not said with the accent of one who loves, and affects a sportive seriousness, but with the tone of a still youthful mother, or an elder sister counselling a brother or a son. "I do not wish you to attach yourself to a false appearance, a delusion, a dream; I wish you to know her to whom you so rashly pledge a heart which she could only retain by deceiving you. Falsehood has always been so odious and so impossible to me, that I could not desire the supreme felicity of heaven, if I must enter heaven by deceit. Stolen happiness would not be happiness for me, it would be remorse."

As she spoke, there was so much candor on her lips, so much sincerity in her tone, and limpid purity in her eyes, that I fancied as I looked at her that under her pure and lovely form I saw immortal Truth, in the broad light of day, pouring her voice into the ear, her look into the eye, and her soul into the heart. I stretched myself on the hay at her feet and, with my elbow leaning on the ground, I rested my head upon my hand; my eyes were riveted upon her lips, of which I strove not to lose a single motion, a single modulation, or a single sigh.

XIX.

"I was born," she said, "in the same land as Virginia (for the poet's fancy has given a real birthplace to his dream), in an island of the tropics. You may have guessed it from the color of my hair, and from my complexion, which is paler than that of European women. You must have perceived, too, the accent which still lingers on my lips. In truth, I rather wish to preserve that accent as my only memento of my native land; it recalls to my mind the plaintive and harmonious sounds of the sea-breeze that are heard at noon beneath the lofty palms. You may also have noticed that incorrigible indolence of walk and attitude, so different from the vivacity of French women, which indicates in the Creole a wild and natural frankness that knows not how to feign or to dissemble.

"My family name is D——, and my own is Julie. My mother was lost in a boat in attempting to leave our native island during an insurrection of the blacks. I was washed ashore and saved by a black woman, who took care of me for several years, and then delivered me over to my father. He brought me to France when I was six years old, with an elder sister, and a short time after he died in poverty and exile in the house of some poor relations, who had hospitably received us in Brittany. The second mother whom I had found in exile provided for my education until her death, and, at twelve years old, I was adopted by the government as being the daughter of a man who had done some service to his country.

"I was brought up in all the luxurious splendor, and amid the choice friendships of those sumptuous houses, in which the State receives the daughters of those who die for their country. I grew in years, in talent, and also, it was said, in beauty. Mine was a grave and saddened grace, like the flower of some tropical plant blooming awhile beneath a foreign sky. But my useless beauty and my unavailing talents gladdened no eye or heart beyond the narrow precincts in which I was confined. My companions, with whom I had formed those close intimacies which make the friends of childhood the kindred of the heart, had all

left, one by one, to join their mothers, or to follow their husbands. No mother took me home; no relation came to visit me; no young man heard of me, or sought me for his wife. I was saddened by these successive departures of all my friends, and felt sorrowful to think I was forsaken by the whole world, and doomed to an eternal bereavement of the heart without ever having loved. I often wept in secret, and regretted that the poor black woman had not allowed me to perish in the waves of my native shore, more merciful to me than the ocean, of the world on which I was cast.

"Now and then, an old man of great celebrity would come to visit, in the name of the Emperor, the national house of education, and inquire into the progress of the pupils in the arts and sciences, which were taught by the first masters of the capital; I was always pointed out to him as the brightest example of the education bestowed on the orphans. He invariably treated me with peculiar predilection from my childhood. 'How I regret,' he would sometimes say, loud enough for me to hear, 'that I have no son!'

"One day I was called down to the parlor of the Superior. I found there my illustrious and venerable friend, who seemed as discomposed as I was myself. 'My child,' said he, at length, 'years roll on for every one,—slowly for you, swiftly for me. You are now seventeen; in a few months you will have attained the age at which you must leave this house for the world; but there is no world to receive you. You have no country, no home, no fortune, and no family in France; your unprotected and dependent situation has made me feel anxious on your account for many years. The life of a young girl who earns her livelihood by her labor is full of snares and bitterness, and a home offered by friends is both precarious and humiliating to the spirit. The extreme beauty that Nature has bestowed upon you will, by its brightness, dispel the obscurity of your fate and attract vice, as the brightness of gold induces theft. Where do you mean to take shelter from the sorrows and dangers of life?' 'I know not,' I answered; 'and I have thought sometimes that death alone can save me from my fate!' 'Oh,' he replied, with a sad and irresolute smile, 'I have thought of another mode of escape, but I scarcely dare propose it.' 'Speak without fear, sir,' I answered; 'you have during so many years spoken to me with the look and accent of a father, that I shall fancy I am obeying mine, in obeying you.' 'Ah, he would be happy indeed,' he replied, 'who had a daughter such as you! Forgive me if I have sometimes indulged in such a dream! Listen to me,' he added in a more tender and serious tone; 'and answer me in thorough frankness and liberty of heart.'

"My life is drawing to a close; the grave will soon open to receive me, and I have no relations to whom to bequeath my only wealth,—the unaspiring celebrity of my name, and the humble fortune that I have acquired by my labors. Hitherto I have lived alone, completely absorbed by the studies that have consumed and dignified my life. I draw near to the close of my existence, and I am painfully aware that I have not commenced to live, since I have not thought of loving. It is too late to retrace my steps, and follow the path of happiness instead of that of glory, which I have unfortunately chosen; and yet I would not die without leaving in some memory that prolongation of existence in the existence of another, which is called affection,—the only immortality in which I believe. I cannot hope for more than gratitude, and I feel that it is from you that I should wish to obtain it. But,' added he, more timidly, 'for that, you must consent to accept, in the eyes of the world, and for the world only, the name, the hand, and the affection of an old man who would be a father under the name of husband, and who, as such, would merely seek the right of receiving you into his house, and loving you as his child.'

"He stopped, and refused that day to hear the answer which was already hovering on my lips. He was the only man among all the visitors of the house who had evinced any feeling towards me, beyond that vulgar and almost insolent admiration which shows itself in looks and exclamations, and is as much an offence as an homage. I knew nothing of love; I only felt an absence of all family ties which I thought the tenderness of my adoptive father would replace. I was offered a safe and honorable refuge against the dangers of the life in which I was to enter in a few months; and a name which would be as a diadem to the woman who bore it. His hair had grown white, it was true, but under the touch of Fame, which bestows eternal youth upon its favorites; his years would have numbered four times mine, but his regular and majestic features inspired respect for time, and no disgust for old age, and his countenance, where genius and goodness were combined, possessed that beauty of declining age which attracts the eye and affection even of childhood."

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"The very day I quitted forever the Orphan Establishment, I entered my husband's house, not as his wife, but as his daughter. The world gave him the name of husband, but he never suffered me to call him anything but father, and he was such to me in care and tenderness. He made me the adored and radiating centre of a select and distinguished circle, composed for the greater part of those

old men, eminent in letters, politics, or philosophy, who had been the glory of the preceding century and had escaped the fury of the Revolution, and the voluntary servitude of the Empire. He selected for me friends and guides among those women of the same period who were most remarkable for their talents or virtues; he promoted and encouraged all those connections most likely to interest my mind or heart, and to diversify the monotonous life I led in an old man's house; and far from being severe or jealous in respect of my acquaintances, he sought by the most courteous attention to attract all those distinguished men whose society might have charms for me. He would have liked whomever I had chosen, and would have been pleased if I had shown preference to any one among the crowd. I was the worshipped idol of the house, and the general idolatry of which I was the object went far, perhaps, to guard me against any individual predilection. I was too happy and too much flattered to inquire into the state of my own heart, and besides, there was so much paternal tenderness in my husband's manner towards me, although he only showed his fondness by sometimes holding me to his heart, and kissing my forehead, from which he gently parted my hair, that I should have feared to disturb my happiness by seeking to render it complete. He would sometimes, however, playfully rally me on my indifference, and tell me that all that tended to add to my happiness would increase his own.

"Once, and once only, I thought I loved and was beloved. A man whose genius had rendered him illustrious, who was powerful from his high favor with the Emperor, and who was doubly captivating by his renown and appearance, although he had passed the meridian of life, sought me with a signal devotion that deceived me. I was not elated with pride, but rather with gratitude and surprise. I loved him for a time, or rather I loved a self-created delusion under his name. I might have yielded to the charm of such a feeling, had I not discovered that what I supposed to be a passionate attachment of the heart was on his part only an infatuation of the senses. When I perceived the real nature of his love, it became odious to me, and I blushed to think how I had been deceived; I took back my heart, and wrapped myself once more in the cold monotony of my happiness.

"The morning was spent in deep and engaging studies with my husband, whose willing disciple I was. During the day we took long and solitary walks in the woods of St. Cloud or of Meudon; and in the evening a few grave, and for the most part elderly, friends would meet and discourse on various topics, with all the freedom of intimacy. These cold but indulgent hearts inclined toward my

youth, from that natural bias which makes the love of the aged descend on the youthful, as the streams of snow-covered summits flow downwards to the plain. But these hoary heads seemed to shed their snows on me, and my youth pined and wasted away in the ungenial atmosphere of age. There lay too great a space of years between their hearts and mine! Oh, what would I not have given to have had one friend of my own age, by the contact of whose warm heart I might have dissolved the thoughts that froze within me, as the dew of morning congeals upon the plants that grow too near these mountain glaciers!

"My husband often looked sadly at me, and seemed alarmed at my pale face and languid voice. He would have desired, at any cost, to give air and motion to my heart. He continually tried to induce me to mingle in diversions which might dispel my melancholy, and would use gentle force to oblige me to appear at balls and theatres, in the hope that the natural pride which my youth and beauty might have given me would have made me share in the pleasure of those around me. The next morning, as soon as I was awake, he would come into my room and make me relate the impression I had produced, the admiration I had attracted, and even speak of the hearts that I had seemed to touch. 'And you,' would he say, in a tone of gentle interrogation, 'do you share none of these feelings that you inspire? Is your young heart at twenty as old as mine? Oh, that I could see you single out from among all these admirers one superior being, who might one day, by his love, render your happiness complete, and when I am gone, continue my affection for you under a younger and more tender form!' 'Your affection suffices me,' I would answer; 'I feel no pain; I desire nothing; I am happy!' 'Yes,' he would rejoin, 'you are happy, but you are growing old at twenty! Oh, remember that it is your task to close my eyes! Live and love! oh, do but live, that I may not survive you!

"He called in one doctor after another; they wearied me with questions, and all agreed in saying that I was threatened with spasm of the heart. The fainting fits, incident to the disease, had begun to show themselves. I required, it was said, to break through the usual routine of my life, to relinquish for some time my sedentary habits, and seek a complete change of air and scene, in order to give me that stimulus and energy that my tropical nature required, and which it had lost in the cold and misty atmosphere of Paris. My husband did not hesitate one moment between the hope of prolonging my life and the happiness of keeping me near him. As he could not, by reason of his age and occupations, accompany me, he confided me to the care of friends who were travelling in Switzerland and Italy, with two daughters of my own age. I travelled with that family two years; I

have seen mountains and seas that reminded me of those of my native land; I have breathed the balmy and stimulating air of the waves and glaciers; but nothing has restored to me the youth that has withered in my heart, although it sometimes appears to bloom on my face, so as to deceive even me. The doctors of Geneva have sent me here, as the last resource of their art; they have advised me to prolong my stay as long as one ray of sun lingers in the autumnal sky; then I shall rejoin my husband. Alas, that I could have shown him his daughter, once more young, and radiant with health and hope! But I feel that I shall return only to sadden his latter days, and perhaps to expire in his arms! Well," she rejoined in a resigned and almost joyful tone, "I shall not now leave earth without having seen my long-expected brother,—the brother of the soul, that some secret instinct taught me to expect, and whose image, foreshadowed in my fancy, had made me indifferent to all real beings. Yes," she said, covering her eyes with her rosy taper fingers between which I saw one or two tears trickle; "oh, yes, the dream of all my nights was embodied in you this morning, when I awoke! ... Oh, if it were not too late to live on, I would wish to live for centuries, to prolong the consciousness of that look, which seemed to weep over me, of that heart that pitied me, of that voice," she added, unveiling her eyes which were raised to heaven,—"of that voice that called me sister! ... That tender name will never more be taken from me," she added with a look and tone of gentle interrogation, "during life, or after death?"

XX.

I sank at her feet overpowered with felicity, and pressed my lips to them without saying a word. I heard the step of the boatmen, who came to tell us that the lake was calm, and that there was but just sufficient daylight left to cross over to the Savoy shore. We rose to follow them, with unsteady steps, as if intoxicated with joy. Oh, who can describe what I experienced, as I felt the weight of her pliant but exhausted frame hanging delightfully on my arm, as though she wished to feel, and make me feel, that I was henceforward her only support in weakness, her only trust in sorrow, the only link by which she held to earth! Methinks I hear even now, though fifteen years have passed since that hour, the sound of the dry leaves as they rustled beneath our tread; I see our two long shadows blended into one, which the sun cast on the left side on the grass of the orchard, and which seemed, like a living shroud tracking the steps of youth and love, to develop them before their time. I feel the gentle warmth of her shoulder against my heart, and the touch of one of the tresses of her hair, which the wind of the lake waved against my face, and which my lips strove to retain and to kiss. O Time, what eternities of joy thou buriest in one such minute, or rather, how powerless art thou against memory; how impotent to give forgetfulness!

XXI.

The evening was as warm and peaceful as the preceding day had been cold and stormy. The mountains were bathed in a soft purple light which made them appear larger and more distant than usual, and they seemed like huge floating shadows through whose transparency one could perceive the warm sky of Italy which lay beyond. The sky was mottled with small crimson clouds, like the ensanguined plumes which fall from the wing of the wounded swan, struggling in the grasp of an eagle.

The wind had subsided as evening came on; the silvery rippling waves threw a slight fringe of spray around the rocks, from which the dripping branches of the fig-trees depended. The smoke from the cottages, which lay scattered on the Mont du Chat, rose here and there, and crept upward along the mountain sides, while the cascades fell into the ravines below, like a smoke of waters. The waves of the lake were so transparent, that as we leaned over the side of the boat, we could see the reflection of the oars and of our own faces, and so warm, that as we drew our fingers through them, we felt but a voluptuous caress of the waters. We were separated from the boatmen by a small curtain, as in the gondolas of Venice. She was lying on one of the benches of the boat, as on a couch, with her elbow resting upon a cushion; she was enveloped in shawls to protect her from the damp of evening, and my cloak was placed in several folds upon her feet; her face, at times in shade, was at others illumined by the last rosy tints of the sun, which seemed suspended over the dark firs of the Grande Chartreuse. I was lying on a heap of nets at the bottom of the boat; my heart was full, my lips were mute, my eyes were fixed on hers. What need had we to speak, when the sun, the hour, the mountains, the air and water, the voluptuous balancing of the boat, the light ripple of the murmuring waters as we divided them, our looks, our silence, and our hearts, which beat in unison,—all spoke so eloquently for us? We rather seemed to fear instinctively that the least sound of voice or words would jar discordantly on such enchanting silence. We seemed to glide from the azure of

the lake to the azure of the horizon, without seeing the shores we left, or the shores on which we were about to land.

I heard one longer and more deep-drawn sigh fall slowly from her lips, as though her bosom, oppressed by some secret weight, had at one breath exhaled the aspirations of a long life. I felt alarmed. "Are you in pain?" I inquired, sadly. "No," she said; "it was not pain, it was thought." "What were you thinking of so intensely?" I rejoined. "I was thinking," she answered, "that if God were at this instant to strike all nature with immobility; if the sun were to remain thus, its disk half hidden behind those dark firs, which seem the fringed lashes of the eye of heaven; if light and shade remained thus blended in the atmosphere, this lake in its same transparency, this air as balmy, these two shores forever at the same distance from this boat, the same ray of ethereal light on your brow, the same look of pity reflected from your eyes in mine, this same fulness of joy in my heart,—I should comprehend what I have never comprehended since I first began to think, or to dream." "What?" said I, anxiously. "Eternity in one instant, and the Infinite in one sensation!" she exclaimed, half leaning over the edge of the boat, as if to look at the water and to spare me the embarrassment of an answer. I was awkward enough to reply by some commonplace phrase of vulgar gallantry, which unfortunately rose to my lips, instead of the chaste and ineffable adoration which inundated my heart. It was something to the effect that such happiness would not suffice me, if it were not the promise of another and a greater felicity. She understood me but too well, and blushed, on my account rather than her own. She turned to me with all the emotion of profaned purity depicted on her face, and in accents as tender, but more solemn and heartfelt than any that had yet fallen from her lips: "You have given me pain," she said in a low voice; "come hither, nearer to me, and listen; I know not if what I feel for you, and what you appear to feel for me, be what is termed love, in the obscure and confused language of this world in which the same words serve to express feelings that bear no resemblance to each other, save in the sound they yield upon the lips of man. I do not wish to know it; and you—oh, I beseech you, never seek to know it! But this I know, that it is the most supreme and entire happiness that the soul of one created being can draw from the soul, the eyes, and the voice of another being like to herself, of a being who till now was wanting to her happiness, and of whom she completes the existence. Besides this boundless happiness, this mutual response of thought to thought, of heart to heart, of soul to soul, which blends them in one indivisible existence, and makes them as inseparable as the ray of yonder setting sun, and the beam of yonder rising moon, when they meet in this same sky, and ascend in mingled light in the

same ether—is there another joy, gross image of the one I feel, as far removed from the eternal and immaterial union of our souls as dust is from these stars, or a minute from eternity? I know not! and I will not, cannot know!" she added in a tone of disdainful sadness. "But," she resumed, with a confiding look and attitude, which seemed to make her wholly mine, "what do words signify? I love you! All nature would say it for me, if I did not; or rather, let me proclaim it first, for both: We love each other!"

"Oh, say, say it once more, say it a thousand times," I exclaimed, rising like a madman, and walking backwards and forwards in the boat, which shook beneath my feet. "Let us say it together, say it to God and man, say it to heaven and earth, say it to the mute, unheeding elements! Say it eternally, and let all nature repeat it eternally with us!" ... I fell on my knees before her, with my hands clasped, and my disordered hair falling over my face. "Be calm," she said, placing her fingers on my lips, "and let me speak without interruption to the end." I sat down and remained silent.

"I have said," she resumed, "or rather I have not said, I have called out to you from the depths of my soul, that I love you! I love with all the accumulated power of the expectations, dreams, and impatient longings of a sterile life of eight-and-twenty years, passed in watching and not seeing, in seeking and not finding, what some presentiment taught me to expect, and you have revealed to me. But, alas, I have known and loved you too late, if you understand love as most men do, and as you seemed to comprehend it, when you spoke just now, those light and profane words. Listen to me once more," she added, "and understand me; I am yours, wholly yours. I belong to you as I do to myself, and I may say so without wronging the adoptive father, who never considered me but as a daughter. I am wholly yours, and of myself I only keep back what you wish me to retain. Do not be surprised at this language, which is not that of the women of Europe; they love and are beloved tamely, and would fear to weaken the sentiments they inspire by avowing a secret that they wish to have wrested from them. I differ from them by my country, by my feelings, and by my education. I have lived with a philosopher in the society of free-thinkers, unshackled by the belief and observances of the religion they have undermined, and have none of the superstitions, weaknesses and scruples which make ordinary women bow before another judge than their conscience. The God of their childhood is not my God. I believe in the God who has written his symbol in Nature, his law in our hearts, his morality in our reason. Reason, feeling and conscience are the only Revelation in which I believe. Neither of these oracles of

my life forbid me to be yours, and the impulse of my whole soul would cast me into your arms, if you could only be happy at that price. But shall you or I place our happiness in a fugitive delirium of the senses, which cannot give half the enjoyment that its voluntary renunciation would afford our hearts? Shall we not more fully believe in the immateriality and eternity of our love, if it remains, like a pure thought, in those regions which are inaccessible to change and death, than if it were degraded and profaned by unworthy delights? If ever," she added, after a short silence, and blushing deeply, "if ever, in a moment of frenzy and incredulity, you exacted from me such a proof of abnegation, the sacrifice would not only be one of dignity, but of existence; in robbing my love of its innocency, you would rob me of life; when you thought to embrace happiness, you would clasp only death in your arms; I am but a shade, and in one sigh I may exhale my soul!..."

We remained silent for some time. At last, with a deep-drawn sigh, I said, "I understand you, and in my heart I had sworn the eternal innocency of my love, before you had done speaking, or required it of me."

XXII.

My resigned tone seemed to delight her, and to redouble the confiding charm of her manner. Night had spread over all, the stars glassed themselves in the lake, and the silence of Nature lulled the earth to rest. The winds, the trees and waves were hushed, to let us listen to all the fugitive impressions of feeling and of thought that whisper in the hearts of the happy. The boatmen sang snatches of their drawling and monotonous chants, which seem like the noted modulations of the waves on the shore. I was reminded of her voice, which seemed ever to sound in my ear, and I exclaimed, "Oh, that you would mark this enchanting night for me, by some sweet tones addressed to these winds and waves, so that they may be forever full of you!" I made a sign to the boatmen to be silent, and to stifle the sound of their oars, from which the drops came trickling back into the lake like a musical accompaniment of silvery notes. She sang a Scotch ballad, half naval and half pastoral, in which a young girl, whose sailor lover has left her to seek wealth beyond the seas, relates how her parents, wearied of waiting his return, had induced her to marry an old man, with whom she might have been happy, but for the remembrance of her early love. The ballad begins thus:

"When the sheep are in the fauld and the ky at hame,
And a' the weary warld to rest are gane,
The waes of my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,
While my gude-man lies sound by me."

After each verse there is a long revery, sung in vague notes, without words, which lulls the heart with unspeakable melancholy, and brings tears into the eyes and voice. Each succeeding verse takes up the story in the dull and distant tone of memory, weeping, regretting, yet resigned. If the Greek strophes of Sappho are the very fire of love, these Scotch notes are the very life's blood and tears of a heart stricken to death by Fate. I know not who wrote the music, but whoever

he may be, thanks be to him for having found in a few notes, and in the mournful melody of a voice, the expression of infinite human sadness. I have never since then heard the first measures of that air without flying from it as one pursued by a spirit; and when I wish to soften my heart by a tear, I sing within myself the plaintive burden of that song, and feel ready to weep,—I, who never weep!

XXIII.

We reached the little mole that stretches out into the lake where the boats are moored; it is the harbor of Aix, and is situated at about half a league from the town. It was midnight, and there were no longer any carriages or donkeys on the pier to convey strangers to the town. The distance was too great for a delicate suffering woman to walk, and after knocking fruitlessly at the doors of one or two cottages in the vicinity of the lake, the boatmen proposed carrying the lady to Aix. They cheerfully slipped their oars from the rings which fastened them to the boat, and tied them together with the ropes of their nets; then they placed one of the cushions of the boat on these ropes, and thus formed a soft and flexible kind of litter for the stranger. Four of them then took up the oars, and each placing one end on his shoulder, they set off with the palanquin, to which they imparted no other motion than that of their steps. I would have wished to have my share in the pleasure of bearing their precious burden, but was repulsed by them with jealous eagerness. I walked beside the litter with my right hand in hers, so that she might cling to me when the movement of her conveyance was too rough. I thus prevented her slipping off the narrow cushion on which she was stretched. We walked in this manner slowly and silently in the moonlight down the long avenue of poplars. Oh, how short that avenue seemed to me, and how I wished that it could have led us on thus to the last step of both our lives! She did not speak, and I said nothing, but I felt the whole weight of her body trustingly suspended to my arm; I felt both her cold hands clasp mine, and from time to time an involuntary pressure, or a warmer breath upon them, made me feel that she had approached her lips to my hand to warm it. Never was silence so eloquent in its mute revealings. We enjoyed the happiness of a century in one hour. By the time we arrived at the old doctor's house, and had deposited the invalid at her chamber door, the whole world that lay between us had disappeared. My hand was wet with her tears; I dried them with my lips, and threw myself without undressing on my bed.

XXIV.

In vain I tossed and turned on my pillow; I could not sleep. The thousand impressions of the preceding days were traced so vividly on my mind that I could not believe they were past, and I seemed to hear and see over again all I had seen or heard the previous day. The fever of my soul had extended to my body. I rose and laid down again without finding repose. At last I gave it up. I tried by bodily motion to calm the agitation of my mind; I opened the window, turned over the leaves of books which I did not understand as I read them, paced up and down, and changed the position of my table and my chair a dozen times, without finding a place where I could bear to spend the night. All this noise was heard in the adjoining room; and my steps disturbed the poor invalid, who, doubtless, was as wakeful as I was. I heard a light step on the creaking floor approach the bolted oak door which separated her sitting-room from my bedroom; I listened with my ear close to the door, and heard a suppressed breathing, and the rustle of a silk gown against the wall. The light of a lamp shone through the chinks of the door, and streamed from beneath it on my floor. It was she! she was there listening too, with her ear perhaps close to my brow; she might have heard my heart beat. "Are you ill?" whispered a voice, which I should have recognized by a single sigh. "No," I answered, "but I am too happy! Excess of joy is as exciting as excess of anguish. The fever I feel is one of life; I do not wish to dispel it, or to fly from it, but I am sitting up to enjoy it." "Child that you are!" she said, "go and sleep while I watch; it is now my turn to watch over you." "But you," whispered I, "why are you not sleeping?" "I never wish to sleep more," she replied; "I would not lose one minute of the consciousness of my overwhelming bliss. I have but little time in which to enjoy my happiness, and do not like to give any portion of it to forgetfulness in sleep. I came to sit here in the hopes of hearing you, or at any rate to feel nearer to you." "Oh, why still so far?" I murmured. "Why so far? Why is this wall between us?" "Is there only this door between us then," she said, "and not our will and our vow? There! if you are only restrained by this material obstacle, it is removed!" and I heard

her withdraw the bolt on her side. "Yes," she continued, "if there be not in you some feeling stronger than love itself to subdue and master your passion, you can pass. Yes," she added with an accent at once more solemn and more impassioned, "I will owe nothing but to yourself,—you may pass; you will meet with love equal to your own, but such love would be my death...."

I was overcome by the violence of my feelings, the impetuous impulse of my heart that impelled me towards that voice, and the moral violence that repulsed me; and I fell as one mortally wounded on the threshold of that closed door. As to her, I heard her sit down on a cushion which she had taken from a sofa, and thrown on the floor. During the greater part of the night we continued to converse in a low tone, through the intervals between the floor and the rough wood-work of the door. Who can describe the outpourings of our hearts, the words unused in the ordinary language of men that seemed to be wafted like night-dreams between heaven and earth, and were interrupted by silence in which our hearts and not our lips communed revealed their unutterable thoughts? At length the intervals of silence became longer, the voices grew fainter and, overcome with fatigue, I fell asleep, with my hand clasped on my knees, and my cheek leaning against the wall.

XXV.

The sun was already high in the heavens when I woke, and my room was flooded with light. The redbreasts were chirping and pecking at the vines and currant bushes beneath my windows; all nature seemed to be illumined and adorned and to have awakened before me, to usher in and welcome this first day of my new life. All the sounds and noises in the house seemed joyful as I was. I heard the light steps of the maid who went and came in the passage to carry breakfast to her mistress, the childish voices of the little girls of the mountains who brought flowers from the edge of the glaciers, and the tinkling bells and stamping hoofs of the mules which were waiting in the yard to carry her to the lake or to the mountain. I changed my soiled and dusty clothes, I bathed my red and swollen eyes, smoothed my disordered hair, put on my leather gaiters, like a chamois hunter of the Alps, and taking my gun in hand, I went down to join the old doctor and his family at the breakfast-table.

At breakfast they talked of the storm on the lake, of the danger in which the stranger had been, her fainting at Haute-Combe, her absence during two days, and my good fortune in having met with her and brought her home. I begged the doctor to request for me the favor of inquiring in person after her health, and accompanying her in her excursions. He came down again with her; she looked lovelier and more interesting than ever, and happiness seemed to have given her fresh youth. She enchanted every one, but she looked only at me. I alone understood her looks and words with their double meaning. The guides lifted her joyfully on the seat with the swinging foot-board, which serves as a saddle for the women of Savoy; and I walked beside the mule with the tinkling bells which was that day to carry her to the highest chalets of the mountain.

We passed the whole day there, but we scarcely spoke, so well did we already understand each other without words. Sometimes we stood contemplating the cheerful valley of Chambery which appeared to widen as we mounted higher; or we loitered on the edge of cascades, whose sun-tinted vapors enveloped us in

watery rainbows that seemed to be the mysterious halo of our love; or we would gather the latest flowers of earth on the sloping meadows before the chalets, and exchange them between us, as the letters of the fragrant alphabet of Nature, intelligible to us alone; or we gathered chestnuts which we brought home to roast at night by her fire; or we sat under shelter of the highest chalets which were already abandoned by their owners, and thought how happy two beings like ourselves might be, confined by fate to one of these deserted huts, made from rough boards and trunks of trees,—so near the stars, so near the murmuring winds, the snows and glaciers, but divided from man by solitude, and sufficing to each other during a life filled with one thought and but one feeling!

XXVI.

In the evening we came down slowly from the mountain with saddened looks, as though we had been leaving our domains and happiness behind us. She retired to her apartment, and I remained below to sup with our host and his guests. After supper I knocked, as had been agreed upon, at her door; she received me as she might a friend of childhood after a long absence. Henceforward I spent all my days and all my evenings in the same manner; I generally found her reclining on a sofa with a white cover, which was placed in a corner between the fireplace and the window; upon a small table on which stood a brass lamp there were some books, the letters she had received or commenced during the day, a little common tea-pot,—which she gave me when she went away, and which has always stood upon my chimney since,—and two cups of blue and pink china, in which we used to take tea at midnight. The old doctor would sometimes go up with me, to chat with his fair patient; but after half an hour's conversation, the good old man would find out that my presence went further than his advice or his baths to re-establish the health that was so precious to us all, and would leave us to our books and conversation. At midnight, I kissed the hand she extended to me across the table, and went to my own room; but I never retired to rest until all was silent in hers.

XXVII.

We led this delightful, twofold life during six long or short weeks; long, when I call to mind the numberless palpitations of joy in our hearts, but short, when I remember the imperceptible rapidity of the hours that filled them. By a miracle of Providence, which does not occur once in ten years, the season seemed to connive at our happiness, and to conspire with us to prolong it. The whole month of October, and half of November, seemed like a new but leafless spring; the air was still soft, the waters blue, the clouds were rosy, and the sun shone brightly. The days were shorter, it is true, but the long evenings spent beside her fire drew us closer together; they made us more exclusively present to each other, and prevented our looks and hearts from evaporating amid the splendor of external nature. We loved them better than the long summer days. Our light was within us, and it shone more brightly when we confined ourselves to the house during the long darkness of November evenings, with the moaning of the autumnal winds around us, and the first rattling of the sleet and hail against the windows. The wintry rain seemed to throw us back upon ourselves, and to cry aloud: Hasten to say all that is yet untold in your hearts, and all that must be spoken before man and woman die, for I am the voice of the evil days that are near at hand to part you!

XXVIII.

We visited together, in succession, every creek and cove, or sandy beach of the lake, every mountain pass or ridge; every grotto or remote valley; every cascade hidden among the rocks of Savoy. We saw more sublime or smiling landscapes, more mysterious solitudes, more enchanted deserts, more cottages hanging on the mountain brow half-way between the clouds and the abyss, more foaming waters in the sloping meadows, more forests of dark pines disclosing their gloomy colonnades and echoing our steps beneath their domes, than might have hidden a whole world of lovers. To each of these we gave a sigh, a rapture, or a blessing; we implored them to preserve the memory of the hours we had passed together, of the thoughts they had inspired, the air they had given us, the drop of water we had drunk in the hollow of our hands, the leaf or flower we had gathered, the print of our footsteps on the dewy grass, and to give them back to us one day with the particle of existence that we had left there as we passed; so that nought might be lost of the bliss that overflowed within us, and that we might receive back each minute of ecstasy, or emanation of ourselves, in that faithful treasure house of Eternity, where nothing is lost, not even the breath we have just exhaled, or the minute we think we have lost. Never, perhaps, since the creation of these lakes, these torrents, and these rocks, did such tender and fervent hymns ascend from these mountains to Heaven! There was in our souls life and love enough to animate all nature, earth, air, and water, rocks and trees, cedar and hyssop, and to make them give forth sighs, aspirations, voice, perfume, and flame enough to fill the whole sanctuary of Nature, even if more vast and mute than the desert in which we wandered. Had a globe been created for ourselves alone, we alone would have sufficed to people and to quicken it, to give it voice and language, praise and love for all eternity! And who shall say that the human soul is not infinite? Who, beside the woman he adores, before the face of Nature, and beneath the eye of God, e'er felt the limits of existence, or of his power of life and love? O Love! the base may fear thee, and the wicked proscribe thee! Thou art the high priest of this world, the revealer of Immortality,

the fire of the altar; and without thy ray man would not even dimly comprehend
Eternity!

XXIX.

These six weeks were to me as a baptism of fire which transfigured my soul, and cleansed it of all the impurities with which it had been stained. Love was the torch which, while it fired my heart, enlightened all nature, heaven, and earth, and showed me to myself. I understood the nothingness of this world when I felt how it vanished before a single spark of true life. I loathed myself as I looked back into the past, and compared it with the purity and perfection of the one I loved. I entered into the heaven of my soul, as my heart and eyes fathomed the ocean of beauty, tenderness, and purity which expanded hourly in the eyes, in the voice, and in the discourse, of the heavenly creature who had manifested herself to me. How often did I kneel before her, my head bowed to the earth in the attitude and with the feeling of adoration! How often did I beseech her, as I would a being of another order, to cleanse me in her tears, absorb me in her flame, or to inhale me in her breath,—so that nothing of myself should be left in me, save the purifying water with which she had cleansed me, the flame that had consumed me, or the new breath that she had infused into my new being; so that I might become her, or she might become me, and that God himself in calling us to him should not distinguish or divide what the miracle of love had transformed and mingled!... Oh, if you have a brother or a son, who has never understood virtue, pray that he may love as I did! As long as he loves thus, he will be capable of every sacrifice or heroic devotion to equal the ideal of his love; and when he no longer loves, he will still retain in his soul a remembrance of celestial delights, which will make him turn with disgust from the waters of vice, and his eye will be often secretly uplifted towards the pure spring at which he once knelt to drink. I cannot tell the feeling of salutary shame which oppressed me in the presence of the one I loved; but her reproaches were so tender, her looks so gentle, though penetrating, her pardon so divine, that in humbling myself before her I did not feel myself abased, but rather raised and dignified. I almost mistook for my own and inward light, what was only the reverberation in me of her splendor and purity. Involuntarily I compared her to all the other

women I had approached, except Antonina, who appeared to me like Julie in her artless infancy; and save my mother, whom she resembled in her virtue and maturity, no woman in my eyes could bear the slightest comparison. A single look of hers seemed to throw all my past life into shade. Her discourse revealed to me depths of feelings and refinements of passion, which transported me into unknown regions, where I seemed to breathe for the first time the native air of my own thoughts. All the levity, fickleness, and vanity, the aridity, irony, and bitterness, of the evil days of my youth, disappeared, and I scarcely recognized myself. When I left her presence I felt myself good, and thought myself pure. Once more I felt enthusiasm, prayer, inward piety, and the warm tears which flow not from the eyes, but well out like a secret spring from beneath our apparent aridity, and cleanse the heart without enervating it. I vowed never to descend from the celestial but by no means giddy heights to which I had been raised by her tender reproaches, her voice, her single presence. It was as a second innocence of my soul, imparted by the rays of the eternal innocence of her love.

I could not say whether there was most piety, or fascination in the impression I received, so much did passion and adoration mingle in equal portions, and in my thoughts change, a thousand times in one minute, love into worship, or worship into love. Oh, is not that the height, the very pinnacle of love,—enthusiasm in the possession of perfect beauty, and rapture in supreme adoration?... All she had said seemed to me eternal; all she had looked on appeared to me sacred. I envied the earth on which she had trodden; the sunshine which had enveloped her during our walks appeared to me happy to have touched her. I would have wished to abstract and separate forever from the liquid plains of air, the air that she had sanctified in breathing it; I would have enclosed the empty place that she had just ceased to fill in space, so that no inferior creature should occupy it, so long as the world should last. In a word, I saw and felt, I worshipped God himself, through the medium of my love. If life were to last in such a condition of the soul, Nature would stand still, the blood would cease to circulate, the heart forget to beat, or rather, there would be neither motion, precipitation, nor lassitude, neither life, nor death, in our senses; there would be only one endless and living absorption of our being in another's, such as must be the state of the soul at once annihilated and living in God.

XXX.

Oh, joy! the vile desires of sensual passion were annulled (as she had wished) in the full possession of each other's soul, and happiness, as happiness ever does, made me feel better and more pious than I had ever been. God and my love were so mingled in my heart, that my adoration of her became a perpetual adoration of the Supreme Being who had created her. During the day, when we loitered on the sloping hills or on the borders of the lake, or sat on the root of some tree in a sunny lawn, to rest, to gaze, and to admire, our conversation would often, from the natural overflowing of two full hearts, tend towards that fathomless abyss of all thought,—the Infinite! and towards Him who alone can fill infinite space,—God! When I pronounced this last word, with the heartfelt gratitude which reveals so much in one single accent, I was surprised to see her averted looks, or remark on her brow and in the corners of her mouth a trace of sad and painful incredulity, which seemed to me in contradiction with our enthusiasm. One day, I asked her, timidly, the reason. "It is that that word gives me pain," she answered. "And how," said I, "how can the word that comprehends all life, all love, and all goodness give pain to the most perfect of God's creations?" "Alas!" she said with the tone of a despairing soul, "that word represents the idea of a Being, whose existence I have passionately desired might not be a dream; and yet that Being," she added in a low and mournful tone, "in my eyes, and in those of the sages whose lessons I have received, is but the most marvellous and unreal delusion of our thoughts." "What!" said I, "your teachers do not believe there is a God? But you, who love, how can you disbelieve? Does not every throb of our hearts proclaim Him?" "Oh," she answered hastily, "do not interpret as folly the wisdom of those men who have uplifted for me the veils of philosophy, and have caused the broad day of reason and of science to shine before my eyes, instead of the pale and glimmering lamp with which Superstition lights the voluntary darkness, that she wilfully casts around her childish divinity. It is in the God of your mother and my nurse that I no longer believe, and not the God of Nature and of Science. I believe in a Being who is the Principle and Cause, spring and

end of all other beings, or rather, who is himself the eternity, form, and law of all those beings, visible or invisible, intelligent or unintelligent, animate or inanimate, quick or dead, of which is composed the only real name of this Being of beings, the Infinite. But the idea of the incommensurable greatness, the sovereign fatality, the inflexible and absolute necessity of all the acts of this Being, whom you call God and we term Law, excludes from our thoughts all precise intelligibility, exact denomination, reasonable imagining, personal manifestation, revelation, or incarnation, and the idea of any possible relation between that Being and ourselves, even of homage and of prayer. Wherefore should the Consequence pray to the Cause?

"It is a cruel thought," she added; "for how many blessings, prayers, and tears I should have poured out at His feet since I have loved you! But," she resumed, "I surprise and pain you; pray forgive me. Is not truth the first of virtues, if virtue there be? On this single point we cannot agree; let us never speak of it. You have been brought up by a pious mother, in the midst of a Christian family, and have inhaled with your first breath the holy credulity of your home. You have been led by the hand into the temples; you have been shown images, mysteries, and altars; you have been taught prayers and told, God is here, who listens and will answer you; and you believed, for you were not of an age to inquire. Since then, you have discarded these baubles of your childhood, to conceive a less feminine and less puerile God, than this God of the Christian tabernacles; but the first dazzling glare has not departed from your eyes; the real light that you have thought to see has been blended, unknown to yourself, with that false brightness which fascinated you on your entrance into life; you have retained two weaknesses of intelligence,—mystery and prayer. There is no mystery" she said, in a more solemn tone; "there is only reason, which dispels all mystery! It is man, crafty or credulous man, who invented mystery,—God made reason! And prayer does not exist," she continued mournfully, "for an inflexible law will not relent, and a necessary law cannot be changed.

"The ancients, with that profound wisdom which was often hidden beneath their popular ignorance, knew that full well," she added; "for they prayed to all the gods of their invention, but they never implored the supreme law,—Destiny."

She was silent. "It appears to me," I said after a long pause, "that the teachers who have instilled their wisdom into you have too much subordinated the feeling to the reasoning Being, in their theory of the relation of God to man; in a word, they have overlooked the heart in man,—the heart which is the organ of love, as

intelligence is the organ of thought. The imaginings of man in respect of God may be puerile and mistaken, but his instincts, which are his unwritten law, must be sometimes right; if not, Nature would have lied in creating him. You do not think Nature a lie," I said smiling,—"you, who said just now that truth was perhaps the only virtue? Now, whatever may have been the intention of God in giving those two instincts, mystery and prayer, whether he meant thereby to show that he was the incomprehensible God, and that his name was Mystery; or that he desired that all creatures should give him honor and praise, and that prayer should be the universal incense of nature,—it is most certain that man, when he thinks on God, feels within him two instincts, mystery and adoration. Reason's province," I pursued, "is to enlighten and disperse mystery, more and more every day, but never to dispel it entirely. Prayer is the natural desire of the heart to pour forth unceasingly its supplications, efficacious or not, heard or unheard, as a precious perfume on the feet of God. What matters it if the perfume fall to the ground, or whether it anoint the feet of God? It is always a tribute of weakness, humility, and adoration.

"But who can say that it is ever lost?" I added in the tone of one whose hopes triumph over his doubts; "who can say that prayer, the mysterious communication with invisible Omnipotence, is not in reality the greatest of all the natural or supernatural powers of man? Who can say that the supreme and immortal Will has not ordained from all eternity that prayer should be continually inspired and heard, and that man should thus, by his invocations, participate in the ordering of his own destiny? Who knows whether God, in his love, and perpetual blessing on the beings which emanate from him, has not established this bond with them, as the invisible chain which links the thoughts of all worlds to his? Who knows but that, in his majestic solitude which he peoples alone, he has willed that this living murmur, this continual communing with nature, should ascend and descend continually in all space from him to all the beings that he vivifies and loves, and from those beings to him? At all events, prayer is the highest privilege of man, since it allows him to speak to God. If God were deaf to our prayers, we should still pray; for if in his majesty he would not hear us, still prayer would dignify man."

I saw that my reasonings touched without convincing her, and that the springs of her soul, which science had dried up, had not yet flowed towards God. But love was to soften her religion as it had softened her heart; the delights and anguish of passion were soon to bring forth adoration and prayer, those two perfumes of the souls that burn and languish. The one is full of rapture; the other full of tears,—

both are divine!

XXXI.

In the meantime her health improved daily. Happiness, solitude with a beloved companion (that paradise of tender souls), and the daily discovery on her part of some new mystery of thought in me which corresponded to her own nature; the autumnal air in the mountains, which, like stoves heated during summer, preserve the warmth of the sun until the winter snows; our distant excursions to the chalets, or on the waters; the motion of the boat, or the gentle pace of the mules; the milk brought frothing from the pastures in the wooden cups the shepherds carve; and above all, the gentle excitement, the peaceful revery, the continual infatuation of a heart which first love upheld as with wings and led on from thought to thought, from dream to dream, through a new-found heaven,—all seemed to contribute visibly to her recovery. Every day seemed to bring fresh youth; it was as a convalescence of the soul which showed itself on the features. Her face, which had been at first slightly marked round the eyes with those dark and bluish tints which seem like the impress of the fingers of Death, gradually recovered the roundness of the cheek, the mantling blood, the soft down, and blooming complexion of a young girl who has been on the mountains, and whose cheek has been visited by the first cold bracing winds from the glaciers. Her lips had recovered their fulness, her eyes their brightness; the lid no longer drooped, and the eye itself seemed to swim in that continual and luminous mist which rises like a vapor from the burning heart, and is condensed into tears on the eye, whose fire absorbs these tears, that always rise, and never flow. There was more strength in her attitudes, more pliancy in her movements; her step was light and lively as a child's. Whenever we entered the yard of the house on our return from our rambles, the old doctor and his family would express their surprise at the prodigious change that a day had wrought in her appearance, and wonder at the life and light that she seemed to shed around her.

In truth, happiness seemed to encompass her with a radiant atmosphere, in which she not only walked herself, but enveloped all those who looked upon her. This

radiance of beauty, this atmosphere of love, are not, as many think, only the fancies of a poet; the poet merely sees more distinctly what escapes the blind or indifferent eye of other men. It has often been said of a lovely woman, that she illumines the darkness of night; it might be said of Julie that she warmed the surrounding air. I lived and moved, enveloped in this warm emanation of her reviving beauty; others but felt it as they passed.

XXXII.

When I was obliged to leave her for a short time, and returned to my room, I felt, even at mid-day, as if I had been immured in a dungeon without air or light. The brightest sun afforded me no light, unless its rays were reflected by her eyes. I admired her more, the more I saw her; and could not believe she was a being of the same order as myself. The divine nature of her love had become a part of the creed of my imagination; and in spirit I was ever prostrate before the being who appeared to me too tender to be a divinity—too divine to be a woman! I sought a name for her, and found none. I called her Mystery, and under that vague and indefinite title, offered her worship which partook of earth by its tenderness, of a dream by its enthusiasm, of reality by her presence, and of heaven by my adoration.

She had obliged me to confess that I had sometimes written verses, but I had never shown her any. She did not much like that artificial and set form of speech, which, when it does not idealize, generally impairs the simplicity of feeling and expression. Her nature was too full of impulse, too feeling, and too serious, to bend itself to all the precision, form, and delay of written poetry. She was Poetry without a lyre—true as the heart, simple as the untutored thought, dreamy as night, brilliant as day, swift as lightning, boundless as space! No rules of harmony could have bounded the infinite music of her mind; her very voice was a perpetual melody, that no cadence of verse could have equalled. Had I lived long with her, I should never have read or written poetry. She was the living poem of Nature and of myself; my thoughts were in her heart, my imagery in her eyes, and my harmony in her voice.

She had in her room a few volumes of the principal poets of the end of the eighteenth century, and of the Empire, such as Delille and Fontanes; but their high-sounding and material poetry was not suited to us. She had been lulled by the melodious murmur of the waves of the tropic, and her soul contained treasures of love, imagination, and melancholy, which all the voices of the air

and waters could not have expressed. She would sometimes attempt with me to read these books, on the strength of their reputation, but would throw them down again impatiently; they gave no sound beneath her touch, like those broken chords which remain voiceless when we strike the keys. The music of her heart was in mine, but I could never give it forth to the world; and the verses she was one day to inspire were destined to sound only on her grave. She never knew before she died whom she had loved. In her eyes I was her brother, and it would have mattered little to her that I had been a poet for the rest of the world. Her love saw nothing in me but myself.

Only once I involuntarily betrayed before her the poor gift of poetry that I possessed, and which she neither suspected nor desired in me. My friend Louis—had come to stay a few days with us. The evening had been spent till midnight in reading, in confidential talk, in musing, in sadness, and in smiles. We wondered to see three young lives, which a short time before were unknown to each other, now united and identified beneath the same roof, at the same fireside, with the same murmur of autumnal winds around, in a cottage of the mountains of Savoy; we strove to foresee by what sport of Providence, or Chance, the stormy winds of life might scatter or reunite us once more. These distant vistas of the horizon of our future lives had saddened us, and we remained silent round the little tea-table on which we were leaning. At last Louis, who was a poet, felt a mournful inspiration rising in his heart, and wished to write it down. She gave him paper and a pencil, and he leaned on the marble chimney-piece and wrote a few stanzas, plaintive and tearful as the funeral strophes of Gilbert. He resembled Gilbert, and he might have written those lines of his, which will live as long as the lamentations of Job, in the language of men:

Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive,
J'apparus un jour et je meurs;
Je meurs, et sur ma tombe, où lentement j'arrive,
Nul ne viendra verser des pleurs!

Louis's verses had affected me; I took the pencil from him, and, withdrawing for an instant to the end of the room, I wrote in my turn the following verses, which will die with me unknown to all; they were the first verses that sprung from my heart, and not from my imagination. I read them out without daring to raise my eyes to her, to whom they were addressed. They ran thus—

* * * * *

but, no! I efface them! My love was all my genius, and they have departed together.

As I finished reading the verses, I saw on Julie's face, on which the light of the lamp fell, such a tender expression of surprise and such superhuman beauty, that I stood uncertain, as my verses had expressed it, between the woman and the angel,—between love and adoration. This latter feeling predominated at last in my heart, and in that of my friend. We fell on our knees before the sofa, and kissed the end of the black shawl which enveloped her feet. The verses seemed to her merely an instantaneous and solitary expression of my feelings towards her; she praised them, but never mentioned them again. She much preferred our familiar discourse, or even our pensive silence in each other's company, to these exercises of the mind which profane our feelings rather than reveal them, Louis left us after a few days.

XXXIII.

In consequence of these first verses of mine, which were but one feeble strophe of the perpetual hymn of my heart, she requested me to write an ode for her, which she would address as a tribute of admiration, and as a specimen of my talents, to one of the men of her Paris acquaintance, for whom she felt the greatest respect and attachment, M. de Bonald. I knew nothing of him but his name, and the well-deserved renown that attached to it as that of a Christian, a philosopher, and a legislator. I fancied that I was to address a modern Moses, who derived from the rays of another Mount Sinai the divine light which he shed upon human laws. I wrote the ode in one night, and read it the next morning, beneath a spreading chestnut-tree, to her who had inspired it. She made me read it three times over, and in the evening she copied it with her light and steady hand. Her writing flew upon the paper like the shadow of the wings of thought, with the swiftness, elegance, and freedom of a bird on the wing. The next day she sent it to Paris. M. de Bonald replied by many obliging auguries respecting my talents. This was the beginning of my acquaintance with that most excellent man, whose character I have always admired and loved since, without sharing his theocratical doctrines. My approval of his creed, of which I knew nothing, was at that time a concession to my love; at a later period it would have been an homage rendered to his virtues. M. de Bonald was, like M. de Maistre, a prophet of the past, one of those men whose ideas were of bygone days, and to whom we bow with veneration, as we see them seated on the threshold of futurity; they will not pass onward, but tarry to listen to the sublime lament of all that dies in the human mind.

XXXIV.

Autumn was already gone; but the sun shone out now and then between the clouds and lighted and warmed the mild winter which had succeeded. We tried to deceive ourselves, and to say that it was still autumn, so much did we dread to recognize winter, that was to separate us. The snow sometimes fell in the morning in light flakes on the roses and everlastings in the garden, like the white down of the swans which we often saw traversing the air. At noon the snow melted, and then there were delightful hours on the lake. The last rays of the sun seemed to be warmer when they played on the waters. The fig-trees which hung from the rocks exposed to the south, in the sheltered coves, had kept their wide-spreading leaves; and the reflection of the sun on the rocks imparted to them the splendid coloring and the warmth of summer evenings. But these hours glided as swiftly by as the stroke of the oars which served to take us round the foam-covered rocks that form the southern border of the lake. The glancing rays of the sun on the fire-trees; the green moss; the winter birds, more fully feathered and more familiar than those of summer; the mountain streams, whose white and frothing waters dashed down the sides of the sloping meadows, and meeting in some ravine fell with sonorous and splashing murmurs from the black and shining rocks into the lake; the cadenced sound of the oar, which seemed to accompany us with its mysterious and plaintive regrets, like some friendly voice hidden beneath the waters; the perfect repose we felt in this warm and luminous atmosphere, so near each other, and separated from the world by an abyss of waters,—gave us at times so great an enjoyment in the sense of existence, such fulness of inward joy, such an overflowing of peace and love, that we might have defied Heaven itself to add to our felicity. But with this happiness was mixed the consciousness that it was soon to end; each stroke of the oar resounded in our hearts as one step of the day that brought us nearer to separation. Who knows whether these trembling leaves may not to-morrow have fallen in the waters? If this moss on which we still can sit may not to-morrow be covered with a thick mantle of snow; if this blue sky, these illumined rocks and sparkling waves, may

not, during the mists of this next night, be enveloped and confounded in one dim and wintry ocean?

A long sigh would escape our lips at thoughts like these; but we never communicated them to each other, for fear of arousing misfortune by naming it. Oh, who, in the course of his life, has not felt some joy without security and without a morrow; when life seems concentrated in one short hour which we would wish to make eternal, and which we feel slipping away minute by minute, while we listen to the pendulum which counts the seconds, or look at the hand that seems to gallop o'er the dial, or watch a carriage-wheel, of which each turn abridges distance, or hearken to the splashing of a prow that distances the waves, and brings us nearer to the shore where we must descend from the heaven of our dreams on the bleak and barren strand of harsh reality.

XXXV.

[Illustration: THE LOVERS' COMPACT.]

One sunny evening when our boat lay in a calm and sheltered creek, formed by the Mont du Chat, and we were delightfully lulled by the distant sound of a cascade which perpetually murmurs in the grottos through which it filtrates before losing itself in the abyss of water, our boatmen landed to draw some nets they had set the day before. We remained alone in the boat which was moored to the branch of a fig-tree by a slender rope; the motion of the boat caused the branch to bend and break without our being aware of it, and we drifted out to the middle of the bay, nearly three hundred yards from the perpendicular rocks with which it is surrounded. The waters of the lake in this part were of that bronzed color and had that molten appearance and look of heavy immobility which the shade of overhanging cliffs always gives; and the perpendicular rocks which surrounded it indicated the unfathomable depth of its waters. I might have taken up the oars and returned to shore, but we felt a thrill of pleasure at our loneliness and the absence of any form of living nature. We would have wished to wander thus on a boundless firmament, instead of on a sea with shores. We no longer heard the voices of the boatmen who had gone along the Savoy shore, and were now hidden from our view by some projecting rocks; we only heard the distant trickling of the cascade, the harmonious sighs of the pines when some playful breeze swept for an instant through the still and heavy air, and the low ripple of the water against the sides of the boat which gently undulated at our slightest movement.

Our boat lay half in shade and half in sunshine,—the head in sunshine, and the stern in shade. I was sitting at Julie's feet in the bottom of the boat, as on the first day when I brought her back from Haute-Combe. We took delight in calling to remembrance every circumstance of that first day, that mysterious era from which the world commenced for us,—for that day was the date of our meeting

and of our love! She was half reclining with one arm hanging over the side of the boat, the other leaned upon my shoulder, and her hand played with a lock of my long hair; my head was thrown back, so that I could only see the heavens above and her face, which stood out on the blue background of the sky. She bent over me, as if to contemplate her sun on my brow, her light in my eyes; an expression of deep, calm, and ineffable happiness was diffused over her features, and gave to her beauty a radiance and splendor which was in harmony with the surrounding glory of the sky. Suddenly I saw her turn pale and withdraw her arms from the side of the boat and from my shoulder; she started up as if awaked from sleep, covered for one instant her face with her two hands, and remained in deep and silent thought; then withdrawing her hands, which were wet with tears, she said, in a tone of calm and serene determination, "Oh, let us die! ..."

After these words she remained silent for an instant, then resumed: "Yes, let us die, for earth has nothing more to give, and Heaven nothing more to promise!" She gazed at the sky and mountain, the lake and its translucent waves around us. "Seest thou," she said (it was the first and the last time that she ever used that form of speech which is tender or solemn, according as we address God or man), —"seest thou that all is ready around us for the blessed close of our two lives? Seest thou the sun of the brightest of our days which sets, not to rise for us perhaps to-morrow? Seest thou the mountains glass themselves for the last time in the lake? They stretch out their long shadows towards us, as if to say, Wrap yourselves in this shroud which I extend towards you! See! the deep and clear, the silent waves have prepared for us a sandy couch from which no man shall wake us and tell us to be gone! No human eye can see us. None will know from what mysterious cause the empty bark has been washed ashore upon some rock. No ripple on these waters will betray to the curious or the indifferent the spot where our two bodies slid beneath the wave, in one embrace; where our two souls rose mingled in the surrounding ether; no sound of earth will follow us, but the slight ripple of the closing wave!... Oh, let us die in this delight of soul, and feel of death only its entrancing joy. One day we shall wish to die, and we shall die less happy. I am a few years older than you, and this difference which is unfelt now will increase with time. The little beauty which has attracted you will early fade, and you will only recall with wonder the memory of your departed enthusiasm. Besides, I am to you but as a spirit; ... you will seek another happiness; ... I should die of jealousy if you found it with another, ... and I should die of grief, if I saw you unhappy through me!... Oh, let us die, let us die! Let us efface the dark or doubtful future with one last sigh, which will only leave on our lips the unallayed taste of complete felicity."

At the same moment my heart spoke to me as forcibly as she did, and said what her voice said to my ear, what her looks said to my eyes, what solemn, mute, funereal Nature in the splendor of her last hour, said to all my senses. The two voices that I heard, the inward and the outer voice, said the same words, as if one had been the echo or translation of the other. I forgot the universe, and I answered, "Let us die!"

* * * * *

I wound the fisherman's ropes which I found in the boat several times round her body and mine, which were bound as in the same winding sheet. I took her up in my arms, which I had left disengaged in order to precipitate her with me into the lake.

At the very instant that I was taking the spring which would forever have buried us in the waters, I saw her turn pale, her head drooped, its lifeless weight sank upon my shoulder, and I felt her knees give way beneath her body. Excessive emotion and the joy of dying together had forestalled death. She had fainted in my arms. The idea of taking advantage of her insensible state to hurry her, unknown to herself, and perhaps against her will, into my grave, struck me with horror. I fell back into the boat with my burden; I loosed the ropes that bound us, and laid her on the seat; I dipped my hands into the lake and sprinkled the cold drops of water on her lips and forehead. I know not how long she remained thus without color, voice, or motion. When she first opened her eyes and regained consciousness, night was coming on, and the slow drift of the boat had carried us into the middle of the lake.

"God wills it not," I said. "We live; what we thought the privilege of our love was a double crime. Is there no one to whom we belong on earth? No one in heaven?" I added looking upwards reverentially, as though I had seen in the firmament the sovereign Judge and Lord of our destinies. "Speak no more of it," she said in a low and hurried tone; "never speak of it again! You have chosen that I should live; I will live; my crime was not in dying, but in taking you with me!" There was something of bitterness and tender reproach in her tone and in her look. "It may be," said I, replying to her thoughts,— "it may be that heaven itself has no such hours as those we have just passed; but life has,—that is enough to make me love it." She soon recovered her bloom and her serenity. I seized the oars, and slowly rowed back to the little sandy beach, where we heard the voices of the boatmen, who had lighted a fire beneath a projecting rock. We

recrossed the lake, and returned home silently and thoughtfully.

XXXVI.

In the evening, when I went into her room, I found her seated in tears before her little table, where several open letters were lying scattered among the tea things. "We had better have died at once, for here is the lingering death of separation, which begins for me," she said, pointing to some letters which bore the postmark of Paris and Geneva.

Her husband wrote that he began to be very anxious at her long absence at a season of the year when the weather might become inclement from day to day; that he felt himself gradually declining and that he wished to embrace and bless her before he died. His mournful entreaties were intermingled with many expressions of paternal fondness, and some sportive allusions to the fair young brother, who made her forget her other friends. The other letter was from the Genevese doctor, who was to have come to take her back to Paris. He wrote to say that he was obliged unexpectedly to leave home to attend a German prince who required his care, and that he sent in his stead a respectable, trustworthy man, who would accompany her to Paris and act as her courier on the road. This man had arrived, and her departure was fixed for the day after the morrow.

Although this news had been long foreseen, it affected us as though it had been quite unexpected. We passed a long evening and nearly half the night in silence, leaning opposite to one another on the little table, and neither daring to look at each other, or to speak, for fear of bursting into tears. We strove to interrupt the speechless agony of our hearts by a few unconnected words, but these were said in a deep and hollow voice, which resounded in the room like tear-drops on a coffin. I had instantly determined to go also.

XXXVII.

The next day was the eve of our separation. The morning, as if to mock us, rose more bright and warm than in the fairest days of October.

While the trunks were being packed, and the carriage got ready, we started with the mules and guides. We visited both hill and valley, to say farewell, and to make, as it were, a pilgrimage of love to all the spots where we had first seen each other, then met and walked; where we had sat, and talked, and loved, during the long and heavenly intercourse between ourselves and lonely Nature. We began by the lovely hill of Tresserves which rises like a verdant cliff between the valley of Aix and the lake; its sides, that rise almost perpendicularly from the water's edge, are covered with chestnut-trees, rivalling those of Sicily, through their branches, which overhang the water, one sees snatches of the blue lake or of the sky, according as one looks high or low. It was on the velvet of the moss-covered roots of these noble trees, which have seen successive generations of young men and women pass like ants beneath their shade, that we in our contemplative hours had dreamed our fairest dreams. From thence we descended by a steep declivity to a small solitary chateau called Bon Port. This little castle is so embosomed in the chestnut-trees of Tresserves on the land side, and so well hidden on the water side in the deep windings of a sheltered bay, that it is difficult to see it either from the mountain or from the little sea of Bourget. A terrace with a few fig-trees divides the château from the sandy beach, where the gentle waves continually come rippling in, to lick the shore and murmuringly expire. Oh, how we envied the fortunate possessors of this retreat unknown to men, hidden in the trees and waters, and only visited by the birds of the lake, the sunshine and the soft south wind. We blessed it a thousand times in its repose, and prayed that it might shelter hearts like ours.

XXXVIII.

From Bon Port we proceeded towards the high mountains which overlook the valley between Chambéry and Geneva, going round by the northern side of the hill of Tresserves. We saw once more the meadows, the pastures, the cottages hidden beneath the walnut-trees, and the grassy slopes, where the young heifers play, their little bell tinkles continually, to give notice of their wandering march through the grass to the shepherd, who tends them at a distance. We ascended to the highest chalets; the winter wind had already scorched the tips of the grass. We remembered the delightful hours we had spent there, the words we had spoken, the fond delusion we had entertained of an entire separation from the world, the sighs we had confided to the mountain winds and rays to waft them to heaven. We recalled all our hours of peace and happiness so swiftly flown, all our words, dreams, gestures, looks and wishes, as one strips a dwelling that one leaves of all that is most precious. We mentally buried all these treasures of memory and hope within the walls of these wooden chalets which would remain closed until the spring, to find them entire on our return, if ever we returned.

XXXIX.

We came down by the wooded slopes to the foaming bed of a cascade. There we saw a small funereal monument erected to the memory of a young and lovely woman, Madame de Broc; she fell some years ago into this whirl-pool, whose foaming waters gave up a long while after a part of her white dress, and thus caused her body to be found in the deep grotto in which it had been engulfed. Lovers often come and visit this watery tomb; their hearts feel heavy, and they draw closer to each other as they think how their fragile felicity may be dashed to atoms by one false step on the slippery rock.

From this cascade, which bears the name of Madame de Broc, we walked in silence towards the Château de Saint Innocent, from whence one commands an extensive view of the whole lake. We got down from our mules beneath the shade of some lofty oaks, which were interspersed here and there with a few patches of heath. It was a lonely place at that time, but since then a rich planter, on his return to his native land, has built himself a country house, and planted a garden in these, his paternal acres. Our mules were turned loose, and left to graze in the wood under the care of the children who acted as our guides. We walked on alone from tree to tree, from one glade to another on the narrow neck of land, until we reached the extreme point, where we saw the shining lake, and heard its splashing waters. This wood of Saint Innocent is a promontory that stretches out into the lake at the wildest and most lonely part of its shores; it ends in some rocks of gray granite, which are sometimes washed by the foam of the wind-tossed waves, but are dry and shining when the waters subside into repose. We sat down on two stones close to each other. Before us, the dark pile of the Abbey of Haute-Combe rose on the opposite shore of the lake. Our eyes were fixed on a little white speck that seemed to shine at the foot of the gloomy terraces of the monastery. It was the fisherman's house, where we had been thrown together by the waves, and united forever by that chance meeting; it was the room where we had spent that heavenly and yet funereal night which had

decided the fate of both our lives. "It was there!" she said, stretching out her arm, and pointing to the bright speck, which was scarcely visible in the distance and darkness of the opposite shore. "Will there come a day and a place," she added mournfully, "in which the memory of all we felt there during those deathless hours will appear to you, in the remoteness of the past, but as that little speck on the dark background of yonder shore?"

I could not reply to these words; her tone, her doubts, the prospect of death, inconstancy, and frailty, and the possibility of forgetfulness, had struck me to the heart, and filled me with sad forebodings. I burst into tears. I hid my face in my hands, and turned towards the evening breeze, that it might dry my tears in my eyes; but she had seen them.

"Raphael," she resumed with greater tenderness, "no, you will never forget me. I know it, I feel it; but love is short, and life is slow. You will live many years beyond me. You will drain all that is sweet, or powerful, or bitter in the cup that Nature offers to the lips of man. You will be a man! I know it by your sensibility, which is at once manly and feminine. You will be a man to the full extent of all the wretchedness and dignity of that name by which God has called one of his strangest creatures! In one of your aspirations there is breath for a thousand lives! You will live with all the energy and in the full meaning of the word—life! I ..." she stopped for an instant, and raised her eyes and arms to Heaven as if in thankfulness: "I—I have lived!—I have lived enough," she resumed in a contented tone, "since I have inhaled, to bear it forever within me, the spirit of the soul that I waited for on earth, and which would vivify me even in death, from whence you once recalled me.... I shall die young, and without regret now, for I have drained at a single draught the life that you will not exhaust before your dark hair has become as white as the spray that dashes over your feet.

"This sky, this lake, these shores, these mountains, have been the scene of my only real life here below. Swear to me to blend so completely in your remembrance this sky, this lake, these shores, these mountains, with my memory, that their image and mine may henceforward be inseparable for you; that this landscape in your eyes, and I in your heart, may make but one ... so that," she added, "when you return after long days, to see once more this lonely spot, to wander beneath these trees, on the margin of these waves, to listen to the breeze and murmuring winds, you may see me once more, as living, as present, and as loving as I am here!..."

She could say no more and burst into tears. Oh, how we wept! how long we wept! The sound of our stifled sobs mingled with the sobbing of the water on the sand. Our tears fell trickling in the water at our feet. After a lapse of fifteen years, I cannot write it without tears, even now.

O man! fear not for thy affections, and feel no dread lest time should efface them. There is neither to-day nor yesterday in the powerful echoes of memory; there is only always. He who no longer feels has never felt. There are two memories,—the memory of the senses, which wears out with the senses, and in which perishable things decay; and the memory of the soul, for which time does not exist, and which lives over at the same instant every moment of its past and present existence; it is a faculty of the soul, which, like the soul, enjoys ubiquity, universality, and immortality of spirit. Fear not, ye who love! Time has power over hours, none over the soul.

XL.

I strove to speak, but could not. My sobs spoke, and my tears promised. We got up to join the muleteers, and returned at sunset by the long avenue of leafless poplars, where we had passed before, when she held my hand so long in the palanquin. As we went through the straggling faubourg of cottages, at the entrance of the town, and crossed the Place to enter the steep street of Aix, sad faces were seen greeting us at the windows and at the doors; as kind souls watch the departure of two belated swallows, who are the last to leave the walls which have sheltered them. Poor women rose from the stone bench where they were spinning before their houses; children left the goats and donkeys which they were driving home; all came to address a word, a look, or even a silent bow of recognition to the young lady, and the one they supposed to be her brother. She was so beautiful, so gracious to all, so loved, it seemed as though the last ray of the year was retiring from the valley.

When we had reached the top of the town, we got down from our mules and dismissed the children. As we did not wish to lose an hour of this last day that still shone on the rose-tinted snows of the Alps, we climbed slowly, and alone, up a narrow path which leads to the garden terrace of a house called the Maison Chevalier. From this terrace, which seems like a platform erected in the centre of a panorama, the eye embraces the town, the lake, the passes of the Rhône, and all the peaks of the Alpine landscape. We sat down on the fallen trunk of a tree, and leaned on the parapet wall of the terrace; we remained mute and motionless, looking by turns at all the different spots, that for the last six weeks had witnessed our looks and steps, our twofold dreams, and our sighs. When all these had one by one faded away in the dim shade of twilight; when there was only one corner of the horizon, to westward, where a faint light remained,—we started up with one accord, and fled precipitately, casting vain and sorrowing looks behind as if some invisible hand had driven us out of this Eden, and pitilessly effaced on our steps all the scene of our happiness and love.

XLI.

We returned home and spent a sad evening, although I was to accompany Julie as far as Lyons on the box of her carriage. When the hand of her little portable clock marked midnight, I retired, to let her take some rest before morning. She accompanied me to the door; I opened it, and said as I kissed her hand in the passage, "Good-bye, till the morrow!" She did not answer, but I heard her murmur, with a sob, behind the closing door, "There is no morrow for us!"

There were a few days more, but they were short and bitter, as the last dregs of a drained cup. We started for Chambery very early in the morning, not to show our pale cheeks and swollen eyelids in broad daylight, and passed the day there in a small inn of the Italian faubourg. The wooden galleries of the inn overlooked a garden with a stream running through it, and for a few hours we cheated ourselves into the belief that we were once more in our home at Aix, with its galleries, its silence, and its solitude.

XLII.

We wished before we left Chambéry and the valley we so much loved to visit together the humble dwelling of Jean Jacques Rousseau and Madame de Warens, at Les Charmettes. A landscape is but a man or a woman. What is Vacluse without Petrarch? Sorrento without Tasso? What is Sicily without Theocritus, or the Paraclet without Heloise? What is Annecy without Madame de Warens? What is Chambéry without Jean Jacques Rousseau? A sky without rays, a voice without echo, a landscape without life! Man does not only animate his fellow-men, he animates all nature. He carries his own immortality with him into heaven, but bequeaths another to the spots that he has consecrated by his presence; it is only there we can trace his course, and really converse with his memory. We took with us the volume of the "Confessions" in which the poet of Les Charmettes describes this rustic retreat. Rousseau was wrecked there by the first storms of his fate, and was rescued by a woman, young, lovely, and adventurous, wrecked and lost like himself. This woman seems to have been a compound of virtues and weaknesses, sensibility and license, piety and independence of thought, formed expressly by Nature to cherish and develop the strange youth, whose mind comprehended that of a sage, a lover, a philosopher, a legislator, and a madman. Another woman might perhaps have produced another life. In a man we can always trace the woman whom he first loved. Happy would he have been who had met Madame de Warens before her profanation! She was an idol to be adored, but the idol had been polluted. She herself debased the worship that a young and loving heart tendered her. The amours of this woman and Rousseau appear like a leaf torn from the loves of Daphnis and Chloe, and found soiled and defiled on the bed of a courtesan. It matters not; it was the first love, or the first delirium, if you will, of the young man. The birthplace of that love, the arbor where Rousseau made his first avowal, the room where he blushed at his first emotions, the yard where he gloried in the most humble offices to serve his beloved protectress, the spreading chestnut-trees beneath which they sat together to speak of God, and intermingled their sportive

theology with bursts of merriment and childish caresses, the landscape, mysterious and wild as they, which seems so well adapted to them,—have all, for the lover, the poet, or the philosopher, a deep and hidden attraction. They yield to it without knowing why. For poets this was the first page of that life which was a poem; for philosophers it was the cradle of a revolution; for lovers it is the birthplace of first love.

XLIII.

We followed the stony path at the bottom of the ravine which leads to Les Charmettes, still talking of this love. We were alone. The goat-herds even had forsaken the dried-up pastures and the leafless hedges. The sun shone now and then between the passing clouds, and its concentrated rays were warmer within the sheltered sides of the ravine. The redbreasts hopped about the bushes almost within our reach. Every now and then we would sit on the southern bank of the road to read a page or two of the "Confessions," and identify ourselves with the place.

We fancied we saw the young vagrant in his tattered clothes, knocking at the gate and delivering, with a blush, his letter of recommendation to the fair recluse, in the lonely path that leads from the house to the church. They were so present to our fancy, that it seemed as though they were expecting us, and that we should see them at the window or in the garden walks of Les Charmettes. We would walk on, then stop again; the spot seemed to attract and to repel us by turns, as a place where love had been revealed, but where love had been profaned also. It presented no such perils to us. We were destined to carry away our love from thence as pure and as divine as we had brought it there within us.

"Oh," I inwardly exclaimed, "were I a Rousseau, what might not this other Madame de Warens have made me; she who is as superior to her of Les Charmettes as I am inferior to Rousseau, not in feeling, but in genius."

Absorbed in these thoughts, we walked up a shelving greensward upon which a few walnut-trees were scattered here and there. These trees had seen the lovers beneath their shade. To the right, where the pass narrows so as to appear to form a barrier to the traveller, stands the house of Madame de Warens on a high terrace of rough and ill-cemented stones. It is a little square building of gray stone, with two windows and a door opening on the terrace, and the same on the garden side; there are three low rooms on the upper story, and a large room on

the ground floor with no other furniture than a portrait of Madame de Warens in her youth. Her lovely face beams forth from the dust-covered and dingy canvas with beauty, sportiveness, and pensive grace. Poor charming woman! Had she not met that wandering boy on the highway; had she not opened to him her house and heart, his sensitive and suffering genius might have been extinguished in the mire. The meeting seemed like the effect of chance, but it was predestination meeting the great man under the form of his first love. That woman saved him; she cultivated him; she excited him in solitude, in liberty, and in love, as the houris of the East through pleasure raise up martyrs in their young votaries. She gave him his dreamy imagination, his almost feminine soul, his tender accents, his passion for nature. Her pensive fancy imparted to him enthusiasm,—the enthusiasm of women, of young men, of lovers, of all the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy of his day. She gave him the world, and he proved ungrateful.... She gave him fame, and he bequeathed opprobrium.... But posterity should be grateful to them, and forgive a weakness that gave us the prophet of liberty. When Rousseau wrote those odious pages against his benefactress, he was no longer Rousseau, he was a poor madman. Who knows if his morbid and disordered imagination, which made him at that time see an insult in every benefit and hatred in all friendship, did not show him likewise the courtesan in the loving woman, and wantonness instead of love? I have always suspected it. I defy any rational man to recompose, with a semblance of probability, the character Rousseau gives to the woman he loved, from the contradictory elements which he describes in her. Those elements exclude each other: if she had soul enough to adore Rousseau, she did not at the same time love Claude Anet; if she grieved for Claude Anet and Rousseau, she did not love the young hair-dresser. If she was pious she did not glory in her weakness, but must have deplored it; if engaging, handsome, and frail, as Rousseau depicts her, she could not be reduced to look for admirers among the vagrants of the streets, or on the highways. If she affected devotion with such a life, she was a calculating hypocrite; and if a hypocrite, she was not the frank, open, and unreserved creature of the "Confessions." The likeness cannot be true; it is a fancy head and a fancy heart. There is some hidden mystery here, which must be attributed rather to the misguided hand of the artist than to the nature of the woman whom he wished to represent. We must neither accuse the painter whose discernment was at that time impaired, nor believe in the portrait which has disfigured the sketch he at first made of an adorable creature.

For my part I never could believe that Madame de Warens would have recognized herself in the questionable pages of Rousseau's old age. In my fancy,

I have always restored her to what she was, or what she appeared at Annecy to the young poet,—lovely, feeling, tender, frail though really pious, prodigal of kindness, thirsting after love, and desirous of blending the tender names of mother and of mistress in her affection for the youth that Providence had confided to her, and whom her love had adopted. This is the true portrait, such as the old men of Chambéry and Annecy have told me that their fathers had transmitted to them. Rousseau's mind itself bears witness against his own accusations. Whence would he have derived his sublime and tender piety, his feminine melancholy, his exquisite and delicate touches of feeling, if a woman had not bestowed them with her heart. No, the woman who called into existence such a man was not a cynical courtesan, but rather a fallen Héloïse—an Héloïse fallen by love and not by vice or depravity. I appeal from Rousseau the morose old man, calumniating human nature, to Rousseau, the young and ardent lover; and when I go, as I often do, to muse at Les Charmettes, I seek a Madame de Warens far more touching and attractive in my imagination than in his.

XLIV.

A poor woman made us some fire in Madame de Warens' room; accustomed to the visit of strangers, and to their long conversations on the scene of the early days of a celebrated man, she attended to her usual work in the kitchen and in the yard, and left us at liberty to warm ourselves, or to saunter backwards and forwards from the house to the garden. This little sunny garden, surrounded by a wall which separated it from the vineyards, and overrun with nettles, mallows, and weeds of all kinds, resembled one of those village churchyards where the peasants assemble to bask in the rays of the sun, leaning against the church-walls, with their feet on the graves of the dead. The walks, so neatly gravelled once, were now covered with damp earth and yellow moss, and showed the neglect that had followed on absence. How we would have wished to discover the print of the footsteps of Madame de Warens, when she used to go, basket in hand, from tree to tree, from vine to vine, gathering the pears of the orchard or the grapes of the vineyard, and indulging in merry frolic with, the pupil or the confessor. But there is no trace of them in their house, save their memory. That is enough; their name, their remembrance, their image, the sun they saw, the air they breathed, which seems still beaming with their youth, warm with their breath, and filled with their voices, give one back the light, the dreams, the sounds, which shed enchantment round their spring of life.

I saw by Julie's pensive countenance, and her silent thoughtfulness, that the sight of this sanctuary of love and genius impressed her as deeply as myself. At times she shunned me, and remained wrapped in her own thoughts as if she feared to communicate them; she would go into the house to warm herself when I was in the garden, and return to sit on the stone bench in the arbor when I joined her at the fireside. At length I went to her in the arbor; the last yellow leaves hung loosely from the vine, and allowed the sun to penetrate and envelop her with its rays.

"What is it you wish to think of without me?" I said in a tone of tender reproach.

"Do I ever think alone?" "Alas!" she answered, "you will not believe me, but I was thinking, that I could wish to be Madame de Warens for you, during one single season, even though I were to be forsaken for the remainder of my days, and though shame were to attach to my memory like hers; even though you proved yourself as ungrateful and calumniating as Rousseau!.... How happy she was," she continued, gazing up at the sky as though she sought the image of the strange creature she envied,— "how happy she was! she sacrificed herself for him she loved."

"What ingratitude and what profanation of yourself and of our happiness!" I answered, walking slowly back with her towards the house, upon the dry leaves, that rustled beneath our feet.

"Have I then ever, by a single word, or look, or by a single sigh, shown that aught was wanting to my bitter but complete felicity? Cannot you, in your angelic fancy, imagine for another Rousseau (if Nature could have produced two) another Madame de Warens?—a Madame de Warens, young and pure, angel, lover, sister, all at once, bestowing her whole soul, her immaculate and immortal soul, instead of her perishable charms; bestowing it on a brother who was lost and is found, who was young, misled, and wandering too in this world, like the son of the watch-maker; throwing open to that brother, instead of her house and garden, the bright treasures of her affection, purifying him in her rays, cleansing him from his first pollutions by her tears, deterring him forever from any grosser pleasure than that of inward possession and contemplation, teaching him to value his very privations far above the sensual enjoyment that man shares with brutes, pointing out to him his course through life, inciting him to glory and to virtue, and rewarding his sacrifices by this one thought,—that fame, virtue, and sacrifices were all taken into account in the heart of his beloved, all accumulate in her love, are multiplied by her gratitude, and are added to that treasure of tenderness which is ever increasing here below, to be expended only in heaven?"

XLV.

Nevertheless, as I spoke thus, I fell quite overcome, with my face hidden in my hands, on a chair that was near the wall far from hers. I remained there without speaking a word. "Let us begone," she said; "I am cold; this place is not good for us!" We gave some money to the good woman, and we returned slowly to Chambéry.

The next day Julie was to start for Lyons. In the evening Louis came to see us at the inn, and I induced him to go with me to spend a few weeks at my father's house, which was situated on the road from Paris to Lyons. We then went out together to inquire at the coachmaker's in Chambéry for a light calèche, in which we could follow Julie's carriage as far as the town where we were to separate. We soon found what we sought.

Before daylight we were off, travelling in silence through the winding defiles of Savoy, which at Pont-de-Beauvoisin open into the monotonous and stony plains of Dauphiny. At every stage we got down and went to the first carriage to inquire about the poor invalid. Alas! every turn of the carriage-wheel which took her further from that spring of life which she had found in Savoy seemed to rob her of her bloom, and to bring back the look of languor and the slow fever which had struck me as being the beauty of death the first time I saw her. As the time for our leaving her drew near, she was visibly oppressed with grief. Between La-Tour-du-Pin and Lyons, we got into her carriage for a few leagues to try and cheer her. I begged her to sing the ballad of Auld Robin Gray for my friend; she did so, to please me, but at the second verse, which relates the parting of the two lovers the analogy between our situation and the hopeless sadness of the ballad, as she sung it, struck her so forcibly that she burst into tears. She took up a black shawl that she wore that day, and threw it as a veil over her face, and I saw her sobbing a long while beneath the shawl. At the last stage she fell into a fainting fit, which lasted till we reached the hotel where we were to get down at Lyons. With the assistance of her maid, we carried her upstairs, and laid her on her bed.

In the evening she rallied, and the next day we pursued our journey towards Macon.

XLVI.

It was there we were to separate definitively. We gave our directions to her courier, and hurried over the adieux for fear of increasing her illness by prolonging such painful emotions, as one who with an unflinching hand hastily bares a wound to spare the sufferer. My friend left for my father's country house, whither I was to follow the next day.

Louis was no sooner gone than I felt quite unable to keep my word. I could not rest under the idea of leaving Julie in tears, to prosecute her long winter journey with only the care of servants, and the thought that she might fall ill in some lonely inn, and die while calling for me in vain, was unbearable. I had no money left; a good old man who had once lent me twenty-five louis had died during my absence. I took my watch, a gold chain that one of my mother's friends had given me three years before, some trinkets, my epaulets, my sword, and the gold lace off my uniform, wrapped them all in my cloak, and went to my mother's jeweller, who gave me thirty-five louis for the whole. From thence, I hurried to the inn where Julie slept, and called her courier; I told him I should follow the carriage at a distance to the gates of Paris, but that I did not wish his mistress to know it, for fear she should object to it, out of consideration to me. I inquired the names of the towns and the hotels where he intended to stay on the road, in order that I might stop in the same towns, but stay at other hotels. I rewarded him by anticipation and liberally for his secrecy, then ran to the post house, ordered horses, and set off half an hour after the departure of the carriage I wished to follow.

XLVII.

[Illustration: *RAPHAEL SEES JULIE IN PARIS.*]

No unforeseen obstacles counteracted the mysterious watchfulness which I exercised, though still invisible. The courier gave notice secretly to the postilions of the approach of another calèche, and, as he ordered horses for me, I always found the relays ready. I accelerated or slackened my speed according as I wished to keep at a distance, or to come nearer to the first carriage, and always questioned the postilions respecting the health of the young lady they had just driven. From the top of the hills I could see, far down in the plain, the carriage speeding through fog or sunshine, and bearing away my happiness. My thoughts outstripped the horses; in fancy I entered the carriage and saw Julie asleep, dreaming perhaps of me, or awake, and weeping over our bright days forever flown. When I closed my eyes, to see her better, I fancied I heard her breathe. I can scarcely now comprehend that I had strength of mind and self-denial enough to resist during a journey of one hundred and twenty leagues the impulse that unceasingly impelled me towards that carriage which I followed without attempting to overtake; my whole soul went with it, and my body alone, insensible to the snow and sleet, followed, and was jolted, tossed and swung about, without the least consciousness of its own sufferings. But the fear of causing Julie an unexpected shock which might prove fatal or of renewing a heartrending scene of separation, repelled me, and the idea of watching over her safety like a loving Providence, and with angel-like disinterestedness, nailed me to my resolution.

The first time, she got down at the great Hotel of Autun, and I, in a little inn of the faubourg close by. Before daylight the two carriages, within sight of each other, were once more running along the white and winding road, through the gray plains and druidical oak forests of Upper Burgundy. We stopped in the little town of Avalon,—she in the centre, and I at the extremity of the town. The next

day we were rolling on towards Sens. The snow which the north wind had accumulated on the barren heights of Lucy-le-Bois and of Vermanton, fell in half-melted flakes on the road, and smothered the sound of the wheels. One could scarcely distinguish the misty horizon at the distance of a few feet, through the whirling cloud of snow that the wind drifted from the adjoining fields. It was no longer possible, by sight or sound, to judge of the distance between the two carriages. Suddenly I perceived in front, almost touching my horses' heads, Julie's carriage, which was drawn up in the middle of the road. The courier had alighted, and was standing on the steps calling out for help and making signs of distress. I leaped out and flew to the carriage, by a first impulse stronger than prudence; I jumped inside, and saw the maid striving to recall her mistress from a fainting fit brought on by the weather and fatigue, and perhaps by the storms of the heart. The courier ran to fetch warm water from the distant cottages, and the maid rubbed her mistress's cold feet in her hands, or pressed them to her bosom to warm them. Oh, what I felt, as I held that adored form in my arms during one long hour of insensibility, desiring that she should hear, and dreading lest she should recognize, my voice, which recalled her to life, none can conceive or describe, unless they, too, have felt life and death thus struggling in their hearts.

At last our tender care, the application of the hot-water bottles which had been brought by the courier, and the warmth of my hands on hers, recalled heat to the extremities. The color which began to appear in her cheeks, and a long and feeble sigh which escaped her lips, indicated her return to life. I jumped out on the road, so that she might not see me when she opened her eyes, and remained there, behind the carriage, my face muffled up in my cloak. I desired the servants to make no mention of my sudden appearance. They soon made a sign to me that she was recovering consciousness, and I heard her voice stammer forth these words, as if in a dream: "Oh, if Raphael were here! I thought it was Raphael!" I hastily returned to my own carriage; the horses started afresh, and a wide distance soon lay between us. In the evening I went to inquire after her at the inn where she had alighted at Sens. I was told that she was quite well, and was sleeping soundly.

I followed in her track as far as Fossard, a stage near the little town of Montereau; there the road from Sens to Paris branches off in two directions,—one branch passing through Fontainebleau, the other through Melun. This latter being shorter by several leagues, I followed it in order to precede Julie by a few hours in Paris, and see her get down at her own door. I paid the postilions double, and arrived long before dark at the hotel where I was accustomed to put

up in Paris. At nightfall I stationed myself on the quay opposite to Julie's house, that she had so often described to me; I knew it as if I had lived there all my life. I observed through the windows that hurrying to and fro of shadows within, which one sees in a house where some new guest is expected. I could see on the ceiling of her room the reflection of the fire which had been lighted on the hearth. An old man's face showed itself several times at the window, and appeared to watch and listen to the noises of the quay. It was her husband,—her second father. The concierge held the door open, and stepped out from time to time, to watch and listen likewise. Now and then a pale and rapid gleam of light from the street lamp, which swung backwards and forwards with the gusty wind of December, shot athwart the pavement before the house, and then left it in darkness. At last a travelling carriage swept around the corner of one of the streets which lead to the quay, and stopped before the house. I darted forward and half-concealed myself in the shade of a column at the next door to that at which the carriage stopped. I saw the servants rush to the door. I saw Julie alight, and saw the old man embrace her, as a father embraces his child after a long absence; he then walked heavily upstairs, leaning on the arm of the concierge. The carriage was unpacked, the postilion drove it round to another street to put it up, the door was closed. I returned to my post near the parapet on the river side.

XLVIII.

I stood a long while contemplating from thence the lighted windows of Julie's house, and sought to discover what was going on inside. I saw the usual stir of an arrival, busy people carrying trunks, unpacking parcels, and setting all things in order; when this bustle had a little subsided, when the lights no longer ran backwards and forwards from room to room, and that the old man's room alone was lighted by the pale rays of a night lamp, I could distinguish, through the closed windows of the *entresol* beneath, the motionless shadow of Julie's tall and drooping form on the white curtains. She remained some time in the same attitude; then I saw her open the window spite of the cold, look towards the Seine in my direction, as if her eye had rested upon me from some preternatural revelation of love, then turn towards the north, and gaze at a star that we used to contemplate together, and which we had both agreed to look at in absence, as a meeting-place for our souls in the inaccessible solitude of the firmament. I felt that look fall on my heart like living coals of fire. I knew that our hearts were united in one thought and my resolution vanished. I darted forward to rush across the quay, to go beneath her windows, and say one word that might make her recognize her brother at her feet. At the same instant she closed her window. The rolling of carriages covered the sound of my voice; the light was extinguished at the *entresol*, and I remained motionless on the quay. The clock of a neighboring edifice struck slowly twelve; I approached the door, and kissed it convulsively without daring to knock. I knelt on the threshold, and prayed to the stones to preserve to me the supreme treasure which I had brought back to confide to these walls, and then slowly withdrew.

XLIX.

I left Paris the next day without having seen a single one of the friends I had there. I inwardly rejoiced at not having bestowed one look, one word, or a single step on any one but her. The rest of the world no longer existed for me. Before I left, however, I put into the post a note dated Paris, and addressed to Julie, which she would receive on waking. The note only contained these words: "I have followed you, I have watched over you though invisible. I would not leave you without knowing that you were under the care of those who love you. Last night, at midnight, when you opened the window, and looked at the star, and sighed, I was there! You might have heard my voice. When you read these lines I shall be far away!"

L.

I travelled day and night in such complete dizziness of thought that I felt neither cold, hunger nor distance, and arrived at M—— as if awaking from a dream, and scarcely remembered that I had been to Paris. I found my friend Louis awaiting me at my father's house in the country. His presence was soothing to me; I could at least speak to him of her whom he admired as much as I did. We slept in the same room, and part of our nights were spent in talking of the heavenly vision, by which he had been as dazzled as myself. He considered her as one of those delusions of fancy, one of those women above mortal height, like Tasso's Eleanora, Dante's Beatrice, Petrarch's Laura, or Vittoria Colonna, the lover, the poet, and the heroine at once,—forms that flit across the earth, scarcely touching it, and without tarrying, only to fascinate the eyes of some men, the privileged few of love, to lead on their souls to immortal aspirations, and to be the *sursum corda* of superior imaginations. As to Louis, he dared not raise his love as high as his enthusiasm. His sensitive and tender heart, which had been early wounded, was at that time filled with the image of a poor and pious orphan, one of his own family. His happiness would have been to have married her, and to live in obscurity and peace in a cottage among the hills of Chambéry. Want of fortune restricted the two poor lovers to a hopeless and tender friendship, from the fear of lowering the name of their family in poverty, or of bequeathing indigence to children. The young girl died some years after, of solitude and hopelessness. I have never seen a sweeter face droop and die for the want of a few of fortune's rays. Her countenance, where might be traced the remains of blooming youth, equally ready to revive or to fade forever, bore in the highest degree the sublime and touching impress of that virtue of the unhappy, called resignation. She became blind in consequence of the secret tears she shed during her long years of expectation and uncertainty. I met her once, on my return from one of my journeys to Italy. She was led by the hand through the streets of Chambéry, by one of her little sisters. When she heard my voice, she turned pale, and felt for some support with her poor hesitating hand: "Pardon me," she said;

"but when I used formerly to hear that voice, I always heard with it another."
Poor girl! she now listens to her lover's voice in heaven.

LI.

How long were the two months that I had to pass away from Julie in my father's house, before the time came that I could join her in Paris! During the last three or four months, I had exhausted the allowance I received from my father, the secret resources of my mother's indulgence, and the purse of my friends, to pay the debts that dissipation, play, and my travels had made me contract. I had no means of obtaining the small sum I required to go to Paris, and to live there even in seclusion and penury, and was obliged to wait till the month of January, when my quarter's allowance from my father became due. At that time of the year, too, I was in the habit of receiving some little presents from a rich but severe old uncle, and from some good and prudent old aunts. By means of all these resources, I hoped to collect a sum of six or eight hundred francs, which would be sufficient to keep me in Paris for a few months. Privations would be no trial to my vanity, for my life consisted only in my love. All the riches of this world could, in my eyes, only have served to purchase for me the portion of the day that I was to pass with her.

The weary days of expectation were filled with thoughts of her. We devoted to each other every hour of our time. In the morning, on waking, she retired to her room to write to me, and at the same instant I, too, was writing to her; our pages and our thoughts crossed on the road by every post, questioning, answering, and mingling without a day's interruption. There were thus in reality for us only a few hours' absence; in the evening and at night. But even these I consecrated to her: I was surrounded with her letters,—they lay open upon the table, my bed was strewn with them; I learned them by heart. I often repeated to myself the most affecting and impassioned passages, adding in fancy her voice, her gesture, her tone, her look; I would answer her, and thus succeed in producing such a complete delusion of her real presence, that I felt impatient and annoyed when I was summoned to meals, or interrupted by visitors; at these times it seemed as though she were torn from me, or driven away from my room. In my long

rambles on the mountains, or in those misty plains without an horizon which border the Saône, I always took her last letter with me, and would sit on the rocks, or on the edge of the water, amid the ice and snow, to read it over and over again. Each time I fancied I discovered some word or expression that had escaped my notice before. I remember that I always instinctively directed my course towards the north, as if each step I took in the direction of Paris brought me nearer to her, and diminished the cruel distance that separated us. Sometimes I went very far on the Paris road under this impression, and when it was time to return, I had always a severe struggle with myself. I felt sorrowful, and would often look back towards that point of the horizon where she dwelt, and walk slowly and heavily home. Oh, how I envied the snow-laden wings of the crows that flew northward through the mist! What a pang I felt as I saw the carriages rolling towards Paris! How many of my useless days of youth would I not have given to be in the place of one of those listless old men who glanced unconcernedly through their carriage windows at the solitary youth by the wayside, whose steps travelled in the contrary direction to his heart. Oh, how interminably long did the short days of December and January appear! There was one bright hour for me, among all my hours,—it was when I heard from my room the step, the voice, and the rattle of the postman, who was distributing the letters in the neighborhood. As soon as I heard him I opened my window; I saw him coming up the street, with his hands full of letters, which he distributed to all the maid-servants, and waited at each door till he received the postage. How I cursed the slowness of the good women, who seemed never to have done reckoning the change into his hand! Before the postman rang at my father's door I had already flown downstairs, crossed the vestibule, and stood panting at the door. While the old man fumbled among his letters, I strove to discover the envelope of fine post paper, and the pretty English handwriting that distinguished my treasure among all the coarse papers and clumsy superscriptions of commercial or vulgar letters. I seized it with a trembling hand; my eyes swam, my heart beat, and my legs refused their office. I hid the letter in my bosom for fear of meeting some one on the stairs; and lest so frequent a correspondence should appear suspicious to my mother, I would run into my room and bolt my door, so as to devour the pages at leisure, without fear of interruption. How many tears and kisses I impressed on the paper! Alas, when many years afterwards I opened the volume of these letters, how many words effaced by my lips, and that my tears or my transports had washed or torn out, were wanting to the sense of many sentences!

LII.

After breakfast I used to retire to my upper room, to read my letter over again and to answer it. These were the most feverish and delightful hours in the day. I would take four sheets of the largest and thinnest paper that Julie had sent me on purpose from Paris, and whose every page, commencing very high up, ending very low down, crossed, and written on the margin, contained thousands of words. These sheets I covered every morning, and found them too scanty and too soon filled for the passionate and tumultuous overflow of my thoughts. In these letters there was no beginning, no middle, no end, and no grammar; nothing, in short, of what is generally understood by the word style. It was my soul laid bare before another soul expressing, or rather stammering forth, as well as it could, the conflicting emotions that filled it, with the help of the inadequate language of men. But such language was not made to express unutterable things; its imperfect signs and empty terms, its hollow speeches and its icy words, were melted, like refractory ore, by the concentrated fire of our souls, and cast into an indescribable language, vague, ethereal, flaming and caressing, like the licking tongues of fire that had no meaning for others, but which we alone understood, as it was part of ourselves. These effusions of my heart never ended and never slackened. If the firmament had been a single page, and God had bid me fill it with my love, it could not have contained one-half of what spoke within me! I never stopped till the four sheets were filled; yet I always seemed to have said nothing, and in truth I had said nothing,—for who could ever tell what is infinite?

LIII.

These letters, which were without any pitiful pretensions to talent on my part, and were a delight and not a labor, might have been of marvellous service to me at a later period, if fate had destined me to address my fellow men, or to depict the shades, the transports, or the pains of passion, in works of imagination. Unknown to myself, I struggled desperately as Jacob wrestled with the angel, against the poorness, the rigidity, and the resistance of the language I was forced to use, as I knew not the language of the skies. The efforts that I made to conquer, bend, smooth, extend, spiritualize, color, inflame, or moderate expressions; the wish to render by words the nicest shades of feeling the most ethereal aspirations of thought, the most irresistible impulses, and the most chaste reserve of passion; to express looks, attitudes, sighs, silence, and even the annihilation of the heart adoring the invisible object of its love,—all these efforts, I repeat, which seemed to bend my pen beneath my fingers like a rebellious instrument, made me sometimes find the very word, expression, or cry that I required to give a voice to the unutterable. I had used no language, but I had cried forth the cry of my soul; and I was heard. When I rose from my chair, after this desperate but delightful struggle against words, pen, and paper, I remembered that, spite of the winter cold in my room, the perspiration stood upon my forehead, and I used to open the window to cool my fevered brow.

LIV.

My letters were not only a cry of love, they were more frequently full of invocations, contemplation, dreams of the future, prospects of heaven, consolations, and prayers.

My love, which by its nature was debarred from all those enjoyments which relax the heart by satisfying the senses, had opened afresh within me all the springs of piety that had been dried up or polluted by vile pleasures. I felt in my heart all the purity and elevation of divine love. I strove to bear away with me to heaven, on the wings of my excited and almost mystical imagination, that other suffering and discouraged soul. I spoke of God, who alone was perfect enough to have created her superhuman perfection of beauty, genius, and tenderness; great enough to contain our boundless aspirations; infinite and inexhaustible enough to absorb and whelm in himself the love he had lighted in us, so that his flame, in consuming us one by the other, might make us both exhale ourselves in him. I comforted Julie under the sacrifice that necessity obliged us to make of complete happiness here below; I pointed out to her the merit of this self-denial of an instant in the eyes of the Eternal Remunerator of our actions. I blessed the mournful and sublime purity of such sacrifices, since they would one day obtain for us a more immaterial and angelic union in the eternal atmosphere of pure spirits. I went so far as to speak of myself as happy in my abnegation, and to sing the hymns of the martyrdom of love to which we were by love, by greater love, condemned. I entreated Julie not to think of my grief and not to give way to sorrow herself. I showed a courage and a contempt for terrestrial happiness that I possessed, alas! very often only in words. I offered up to her, as a holocaust, all that was human in me. I elevated myself to the immateriality of angels, so that she might not suspect a suffering or a desire in my adoration. I besought her to seek in a tender and sustaining religion, in the shelter of the church, in the mysterious faith of Christ, the God of tears, in kneeling and in invocation,—the hopes, the consolations, and the delights that I had tasted in my childhood. She

had renewed in me all my early feelings of piety. I composed prayers for her,— calm, yet ardent prayers, that ascend like flames to Heaven, but like flames that no wind can cause to vacillate. I begged her to pronounce these prayers at certain hours of the day and night, when I would repeat them also, so that our two minds, united by the same words, might be elevated at the same hour in one invocation.... All these were wet with my tears, that left their traces on my words, and were doubtless more powerful and more eloquent than they. I used to go and throw into the post by stealth these letters, the very marrow of my bones; and felt relieved on my return, as if I had thrown off a part of the weight of my own heart.

LV.

Spite of my continual efforts and of the perpetual application of my young and ardent imagination to communicate to my letters the fire that consumed me, to create a language for my sighs, to pour my burning soul upon the paper and make it overleap the distance that divided us,—in this combat against the impotence of words, I was always surpassed by Julie. Her letters had more expression in one phrase than mine in their eight pages,—her heart breathed in the words; one saw her looks in the lines; the expressions seemed still warm from her lips. In her, nothing evaporated during that slow and dull transition of the feeling to the word which lets the lava of the heart cool and pale beneath the pen of man. Woman has no style, that is why all she says is so well said. Style is a garment, but the unveiled soul stands forth upon the lips or beneath the hand of woman. Like the Venus of speech, it rises from the depths of feeling in its naked beauty, wakes of itself to life, wonders at its own existence, and is adored ere it knows that it has spoken.

LVI.

What letters and what ardor! What tones and accents! What fire and purity combined, like light and transparency in a diamond, like passion and bashfulness on the brow of the young girl who loves! What powerful simplicity! What inexhaustible effusions! What sudden revivals in the midst of languor! What sounds and songs! Then there would be sadness, recurring like the unexpected notes at the end of an air; caressing words, which seemed to fan the brow like the breath of a fond mother bending over her smiling child; a voluptuous lulling of half-whispered words, and hushed and dreamy sentences, which wrapped one in rays and murmurs, stillness and perfume, and led one gently by the soft and soothing syllables to the repose of love, the still sleep of the soul, unto the kiss upon the page which said farewell! The farewell and the kiss both silently received, as the lips silently impressed them. I have seen those letters all again; I have read over, page by page, this correspondence, bound up and classed, after death, by the pious hand of friendship; one letter answering the other from the first note down to the last word written by the death-struck hand, to which love still imparted strength. I have read them o'er, and burned them with tears, in secret, as if I committed a crime, and snatching twenty times the half-consumed page from the flames to read it once again. Why did I thus destroy? Because their very ashes would have been too burning for this world, and I have scattered them to the winds of heaven.

LVII.

At length the day came when I could reckon the hours that still separated me from Julie. All the resources that I could command did not amount to a sufficient sum to keep me three or four months in Paris. My mother, who noticed my distress without guessing its cause, drew from the casket which her fondness had already nearly emptied a large diamond, mounted as a ring. Alas, it was the last remaining jewel of her youth! She slipped it secretly into my hand, with tears. "I suffer as much as you can, Raphael," she said with a mournful look, "to see your unprofitable youth wasted in the idleness of a small town, or in the reveries of a country life. I had always hoped that the gifts of God, that from your infancy I rejoiced to see in you, would attract the notice of the world, and open to you a career of fortune and honor. The poverty against which we have to struggle does not allow us to bring you forward. Hitherto such has been the will of God, and we must submit with resignation to his ways, which are always the best. Yet it is with grief I see you sinking into that moral languor which always follows fruitless endeavors. Let us try Fate once more. Go, since the earth here seems to burn beneath your feet,—go and live for awhile in Paris. Call, with reserve and dignity, on those old friends of your family who are now in power. Show the talents with which Nature and study have endowed you. It is impossible that those at the head of the Government should not strive to attract young men able, as you would be, to serve, support, and adorn the reign of the princes whom God has restored to us. Your poor father has much to do to bring up his six children, and not to fall below his rank in the distresses of our rustic life. Your other relations are good and kind, but they will not understand that breathing-space and action are necessary to the devouring activity of the mind at twenty. Here is my last jewel; I had promised my mother never to part with it save from dire necessity. Take it, and sell it; it will serve to maintain you in Paris a few weeks longer. It is the last token of my love, which I stake for you in the lottery of Providence. It must bring you good luck; for my solicitude, my prayers, my tenderness for you go with it." I took the ring, and kissed my mother's hand; a

tear fell upon the diamond. Alas, it served not to allow me to seek or to await the favor of great men or princes who turned away from my obscurity, but to live three months of that divine life of the heart worth centuries of greatness. This sacred diamond was to me as Cleopatra's pearl dissolved in my cup of life, from which I drank happiness and love for a short time.

LVIII.

I completely altered my habits from that day, from respect for my poor mother's repeated sacrifices, and the concentration of all my thoughts in this one desire,—to see once more my love, and to prolong, as much as possible, by the strictest economy, the allotted time I was to spend with Julie. I became as calculating and as sparing of the little gold I took with me as an old miser. It seemed as though the most trifling sum I spent was an hour of my happiness, or a drop of my felicity that I wasted. I resolved to live like Jean Jacques Rousseau, on little or nothing, and to retrench from my vanity, my dress, or my food, all that I wished to bestow on the rapture of my soul. I was not, however, without an undefined hope of making some use of my talents in the cause of my love. These were as yet made known to a few friends only by some verses; but in the last three months I had written during my sleepless nights a little volume of poetry, amatory, melancholy, or pious, according as my imagination spoke to me in tender or in serious notes. The whole had been copied out with care in my best handwriting, and shown to my father, who was an excellent critic, though somewhat severe; a few friends, too, had favorably judged some fragments. I had bound up my poetical treasure in green, a color of good omen for my hopes of fame; but I had not shown it to my mother, whose chaste and pious purity of mind might have taken alarm at the more antique than Christian voluptuousness of some of my elegies. I hoped that the simple grace and the winged enthusiasm of my poetry might please some intelligent publisher, who would buy my volume, or at least consent to print it at his own expense; and that the public taste, attracted by the novelty of a style springing from the heart, and nursed in the woods, would, perhaps, confer on me a humble fortune and a name.

LIX.

I had no need to look for a lodging in Paris. One of my friends, the young Count de V——, who had just returned from his travels, was to spend the winter and the following spring there, and had offered to share with me a little *entresol* that he occupied, over the rooms of the concierge in the magnificent hotel (since pulled down) of the Maréchal de Richelieu, in the Rue Neuve St. Augustin. The Count de V——, with whom I was in almost daily correspondence, knew all. I had given him a letter of introduction to Julie, that he might know the soul of my soul, and that he might understand, if not my delirium, at least my adoration for that woman. At first sight, he comprehended and almost shared my enthusiasm. In his letters, he always alluded, with tender pity and respect, to that fair vision of melancholy, which seemed hovering between life and death, and only detained on earth, he said, by the ineffable love she bore to me. He always spoke to me of her as of a heavenly gift, sent to my eyes and heart, and which would raise me above human nature as long as I remained enveloped in her radiance. V——, who was persuaded of the holy and superhuman nature of our attachment, considered it as a virtue, and felt no repugnance to being the mediator and confidant of our love. Julie, on her part, spoke of V—— as the only friend she considered worthy of me, and for whom she would have wished to increase my friendship, instead of detracting from it by a mean jealousy of the heart. Both urged me to come to Paris, but V——, alone, knew the secret motives, and the strictly material impossibility, which had detained me till then. Spite of his devoted friendship, of which he gave me, until his death, so many proofs during the troubles of my life, it was not in his power at that time to remove the obstacles that arrested me. His mother had exhausted her means to give him an education befitting his rank, and to allow him to travel through Europe. He was himself deep in debt, and could only offer me a corner in the apartment that his family provided for him. As to all the rest, he was, at that time of his life, as poor and as much enslaved as myself by the want so cruelly defined by Horace—*Res angustæ domi*.

I left M—— in a little one-horse jaunting car, consisting of a wooden seat on an axle-tree, and four poles which supported a tarpaulin to shelter us against the rain. These cars changed horses every four or five miles, and served to convey to Paris the masons from the Bourbonnais and from Auvergne, the weary pedestrians they met on the road, and soldiers lamed by their long marches who were glad to spare a day's fatigue for a few sous. I felt no shame or annoyance at this vulgar mode of conveyance; I would have travelled barefooted through the snow, and not have felt less proud or less happy, for I was thus saving one or two louis with which I could purchase some days of happiness. I reached the barrier of Paris without having felt a pebble of the road. The night was dark, and it was raining hard; I took up my portmanteau, and soon after knocked at the door of the humble lodging of the Count de V——.

He was waiting for me; he embraced me, and spoke of her. I was never wearied of questioning and listening to him. That same evening I was to see Julie. V—— was to announce my arrival, and prepare her for joy. When every visitor had retired from Julie's drawing-room, V—— was to leave last of all to join me at a little *café* of the neighborhood where I was to wait for him, and give me notice that she was alone, and that I might throw myself at her feet. It was only after I had learned all these particulars that I thought of drying my clothes and taking some refreshment. I then took possession of the dark alcove of his ante-room, which was lighted by one round window, and heated by a stove. I dressed myself neatly and simply, so that she I loved might not blush for me before her friends.

At eleven o'clock V—— and I went out on foot; we proceeded together as far as the window which I knew so well. There were three carriages at the door. V—— went up, and I retired to wait for him at the appointed place. How long that hour seemed while I waited for him! How I execrated those visitors who, involuntarily importunate, came in their indifference to dispose of some idle hours, and delayed the reunion of two fond hearts who counted each second of their martyrdom by their palpitations! At last V—— appeared; I followed rapidly on his steps, he left me at the door, and I went up.

LX.

If I were to live a thousand times a thousand years, I should never forget that instant and that sight. She was standing up in the light, her elbow resting carelessly on the white marble of the chimney; her tall and slender figure, her shoulders, and her profile, were reflected in the glass; her face was turned towards the door, her eyes fixed on a little dark passage leading to the drawing-room, and her head was bent forward, and slightly inclined on one side, in the attitude of one listening for the sound of approaching footsteps. She was dressed in mourning, in a black silk dress trimmed with black lace round the neck and the skirt. This profusion of lace, ruffled by the cushions of the sofa to which her indolent and languid life confined her, hung around her like the black and clustering bunches of the elder, shedding its berries in the autumnal wind. The dark color of her gown left only her shoulders, neck, and face in light, and the mourning of her dress seemed completed by the natural mourning of her dark hair, which was gathered up at the back of her head. This uniformity of color added to her height, and showed to advantage her graceful and flexible figure. The reflection of the fire in the glass, the light of the lamp on the chimney-piece striking on her cheek, and the animation of impatient expectation and love, shed on her countenance a splendor of youth, bloom, and life, which seemed a transfiguration effected by love.

My first exclamation was one of joy and delighted surprise at seeing her thus, more living, lovely, and immortal, in my eyes, than I had ever seen her in the brightest days of Savoy. A feeling of deceitful security and eternal possession entered into my heart, as my eyes fell on her. She tried to stammer forth a few words on seeing me, but could not. Her lips trembled with emotion. I fell at her feet, and pressed my lips to the carpet upon which she trod. I then looked up to assure myself that her presence was not a dream. She laid one of her hands upon my hair, which thrilled beneath her touch, and holding by the other to the marble of the chimney-piece, she too fell on her knees before me. We gazed at each

other at a distance. We sought words, and found none for our excess of joy. We remained silent, but that very silence and our kneeling posture was a language; I knelt full of adoration, she full of happiness, and our attitude seemed to say, They adore one another, but a phantom of Death stands between, and though their eyes drink rapture, they will never be clasped in each other's arms.

LXI.

I know not how many minutes we remained thus, nor how many thousand interrogations and answers, what floods of tears, and oceans of joy passed unexpressed between our mute and closed lips, between our moistened eyes, between her countenance and mine. Happiness had struck us motionless, and time had ceased to be. It was eternity in an instant.

There was a knock at the street door; a sound of feet on the stairs. I rose, and she resumed, with a faltering step, her place on the sofa. I sat down on the other side, in the shade, to hide my flushed cheeks and tearful eyes. A man of already advanced age, of imposing stature, with a benignant, noble, and beaming countenance, slowly entered the room. He approached the sofa without speaking, and imprinted a paternal kiss on Julie's trembling hand. It was Monsieur de Bonald. Spite of the painful awakening from ecstasy that the knock and arrival of a stranger had produced in me, I inwardly blessed him for having interrupted that first look in which reason might have been overpowered by rapture. There are times when the cold voice of reason is required to still with its icy tones the fever of the senses, and to strengthen anew the soul in its holy and energetic resolves.

LXII.

Julie introduced me to M. de Bonald as the young man whose verses he had read; he was surprised at my youth, and addressed me with indulgence. He conversed with Julie with the paternal familiarity of a man whose genius had rendered him illustrious; he had all the serenity of age, and sought in the company of a young and lovely woman merely a passing ray of beauty to enchant his eyes, and the charm of her society during the calm and conversational hours at the close of day. His voice was deep, as though it came from the heart, and his conversation flowed with the graceful, yet serious, ease of a mind which seeks to unbend in repose. Honesty was stamped on his brow, and spoke in the accents of his voice. As the conversation seemed likely to be prolonged, and the clock was on the point of striking twelve, I thought it right to take my leave first, so as to create no suspicion of too great familiarity in the mind of a friend and visitor of older standing than myself in the house. Silence and one single look were the only reward I received for my long and ardent expectation and my weary journey; but I bore away with me her image and the certainty of seeing her every day,—that was enough; it was too much. I wandered a long while on the quays, baring my breast to the night air, and inhaling it with my lips, to allay the fever of happiness which possessed me. On my return home, I found that V—— had been asleep many hours; as for me, it was daylight, and I had heard the cries of the venders in the streets of Paris before I closed my eyes.

* * * * *

My days were filled with one single thought, which I treasured up in my heart, and would not even allow my countenance to reveal, as a precious perfume of which one would fear to let a particle evaporate by exposing the vase that contains it to the outward air. I used to rise with the first rays of light, which always penetrated tardily into the dark alcove of the little ante-room where my friend gave me shelter like a mendicant of love. I always began the day by a long

letter to Julie, which was but a calmer continuation of the conversation of the day before; in it I poured forth all the thoughts that had suggested themselves since I had left her. Love feels delightful remorse at its tender omissions; accuses, reproaches itself, and feels no rest till they have been repaired. They are gems fallen from the heart or the lips of the loved one, which cause the lover's thoughts to travel back over the past, to gather them up, and to increase the treasure of his feelings. Julie, when she awoke, received my letter, which made it appear to her as though the conversation of the preceding evening had not been interrupted, but had been kept up in whispered tones during her sleep. I always received her answer before noon.

My heart being thus appeased, after the agitation of the night, my next thought was to calm the impatience for the evening's interview, which began to take possession of me. I strove not to divert my heart from its one thought, but to interest my eyes and mind, and had laid down as a law to myself to spend several hours in reading and study, to occupy the interval between the time when I left Julie till we met again. I wished to improve myself not for others, but for her,—in order that he whom she loved should not disgrace her preference; and that those superior men who composed her society, and who sometimes saw me in her drawing-room standing at a corner of the fireplace, like a statue of contemplation, should discover in me, if by chance they spoke to me, a soul, an intelligence, a hope, or a promise, beneath my timid and silent appearance. Then I had vague dreams of shining exploits, of a stirring destiny, which Julie would watch from afar, and rejoice to see me struggling with men, rising in strength, in greatness, and in power; I thought she might one day glory secretly in having appreciated me before the crowd, and in having loved me before posterity.

LXIII.

All this, and still more, my forced leisure, the obsession of one besetting thought, my contempt for all besides, the want of money to procure other amusement, and the almost claustral seclusion in which I lived, disposed me to a life of more intense and eager study than I had yet led. I passed my whole day seated at a little writing-table, which was placed beneath the small round window opening on the yard of the Hôtel Richelieu. The room was heated by a Dutch stove; a screen enclosed my table and chair, and hid me from the observation of the young men of fashion who often came to see my friend. In the spacious yard below there were sounds of carriages, then silence, and now and then bright rays of winter sun struggling against the grovelling fog of the streets of Paris, which reminded me a little of the play of light, the sounds of the wind, and the transparent mists of our mountains. Sometimes I would see a sweet little boy six or eight years old playing there; he was the son of the concierge. There was something in his face which seemed that of a suffering angel; in his fair hair curled on his forehead, and in his intelligent and ingenuous countenance, that reminded me of the innocent faces of the children of my own province. Indeed, I discovered that his family had come originally from a village near that in which my father resided, had fallen into want, and had been transplanted to Paris. This child had conceived a fondness for me, from seeing me always at the window above the rooms his mother inhabited, and had of his own accord and gratuitously devoted himself to my service. He executed all my messages; brought me my bread, some cheese, or the fruit for my breakfast; and went every morning to purchase my little provisions at the grocer's. I used to take my frugal repast on my writing-table, in the midst of my open books or interrupted pages. The child had a black dog, which had been forgotten at the house by some visitor; this dog had ended like the child by attaching itself to me, and they could not be made to go down the little wooden stairs when once they had ascended them. During the greater part of the day, they lay and played together on the mat at my feet beneath my table. At a later period I took away the dog with me from

Paris, and kept it many years, as a loving and faithful memento of those days of solitude. I lost him in 1820, not without tears, in traversing the forests of the Pontine Marshes between Rome and Terracina. The poor child is become a man, and has learned the art of engraving, which he practices ably at Lyons. My name having resounded since, even in his shop, he came to see me, and wept with joy at beholding me, and with grief at hearing of the loss of the dog. Poor heart of man! that ever requires what it has once loved, and that sheds tears of the same water, for the loss of an empire, or for the loss of an animal.

LXIV.

During the thousands of hours in which I was thus confined between the stove, the screen, the window, the child, and the dog, I read over all that antiquity has written and bequeathed to us, except the poets, with whom we had been surfeited at school, and in whose verses our wearied eyes saw but the caesura, and the long or short syllables. Sad effect of premature satiety, which withers in the mind of a child the most brightly tinted and perfumed flowers of human thought. But I read over every philosopher, orator, and historian, in his own language. I loved especially those who united the three great faculties of intelligence,—narration, eloquence, and reflection; the fact, the discourse, and the moral. Thucydides and Tacitus above all others; then Machiavelli, the sublime practitioner of the diseases of empires; then Cicero, the sonorous vessel which contains all, from the individual tears of the man, the husband, the father, and the friend, up to the catastrophes of Rome and of the world, even to his gloomy forebodings of his own fate. There is in Cicero a stratum of divine philosophy and serenity, through which all waters seem to be filtrated and clarified, and through which his great mind flows in torrents of eloquence, wisdom, piety, and harmony. I had, till then, thought him a great but empty speaker, with little sense contained in his long periods; I was mistaken. Next to Plato, he is the word of antiquity made man; his style is the grandest of any language. We suppose him meagre, because his drapery is so magnificent; but strip him of his purple and you will still find a vast mind, which has felt, understood, and said, all that there was to comprehend, to feel, or to say, in his day in Rome.

LXV.

As to Tacitus, I did not even attempt to combat my partiality for him. I preferred him even to Thucydides, the Demosthenes of history. Thucydides relates, but does not give life and being. Tacitus is not the historian, but a compendium of mankind. His narration is the counter-blow of the fact in the heart of a free, virtuous, and feeling man. The shudder that one feels as one reads not only passes over the flesh, but is a shudder of the heart. His sensibility is more than emotion,—it is pity; his judgments are more than vengeance,—they are justice; his indignation is more than anger,—it is virtue. Our hearts mingle with that of Tacitus, and we feel proud of our kindred with him. Would you make crime impossible to your sons? Would you inspire them with the love of virtue? Rear them in the love of Tacitus. If they do not become heroes at such a school, Nature must have created them base or vile. A people who adopted Tacitus as their political gospel would rise above the common stature of nations; such a people would enact before God the tragical drama of mankind in all its grandeur and in all its majesty. As to me, I owe to his writings more than the fibres of the flesh, I owe all the metallic fibres of my being. Should our vulgar and commonplace days ever rise to the tragic grandeur of his time, and I become the worthy victim of a worthy cause, I might exclaim in dying, "Give the honor of my life and of my death to the master, and not to the disciple, for it is Tacitus that lived, and dies in me."

LXVI.

I was also a passionate admirer of orators. I studied them with the presentiment of a man who would one day have to speak to the deaf multitude, and who would strike the chords of human auditors. I studied Demosthenes, Cicero, Mirabeau, and especially Lord Chatham,—more striking to my mind than all the rest, because his inspired and lyrical eloquence seems more like a cry than like a voice. It soars above his limited audience and the passions of the day, on the loftiest wings of poetry, to the immutable regions of eternal truth and of eternal feeling. Chatham receives truth from the hand of God; and with him it becomes, not only the light, but also the thunder of the debate. Unfortunately, as in the case of Phidias at the Parthenon, we have only fragments, heads, arms, and mutilated trunks left of him. But when in thought we reassemble these remains, we produce marvels and divinities of eloquence. I pictured to myself times, events, and passions, like those which upraised these great men, a forum such as that they filled; and like Demosthenes addressing the billows of the sea, I spoke inwardly to the phantoms of my imagination.

LXVII.

About this period I read for the first time the speeches of Fox and Pitt. I thought Fox declamatory, though prosaic; one of those cavilling minds, born to gainsay, rather than to say,—lawyers without gowns, with mere lip-conscience, who plead above all for their own popularity. I saw in Pitt a statesman whose words were deeds, and who in the crash of Europe maintained his country, almost alone, on the foundation of his good sense, and the consistency of his character. Pitt was Mirabeau, with less impulse and more integrity. Mirabeau and Pitt became, and have ever continued to be, my favorite statesmen of modern days. Compared to them, I saw in Montesquieu only erudite, ingenious, and systematical dissertations; Fénelon seemed to me divine, but chimerical; Rousseau, more impassioned than inspired, greater by instinct than by truth; while Bossuet, with his golden eloquence and fawning soul, united, in his conduct and his language before Louis XIV., doctoral despotism with the complaisance of a courtier. From these studies of history and oratory I naturally passed on to politics. The remembrance of the imperial yoke which had just been shaken off, and my abhorrence of the military rule to which we had been subjected, impelled me towards liberty. On the other hand, family recollections; the influence of daily associations; the touching situation of a royal family, passing from a throne to a scaffold or to exile, and brought back from exile to a throne; the orphan princess in the palace of her fathers; those old men, crowned by misfortune as much as by their ancestry; those young princes, schooled by stern adversity, from whom so much might be expected,—all made me hope that new-born liberty might be made to accord with the ancient monarchy of our forefathers. The government would thus have possessed the two most potent spells in all human affairs,—antiquity and novelty; memory and hope. It was a fair dream, and most natural at my age. Each succeeding day, however, dispelled a portion of that dream. I perceived with grief that old forms but ill contain new ideas; that monarchy and liberty would never hold together in one bond without a perpetual struggle; that in that struggle the strength of the state would be

exhausted, that monarchy would be constantly suspected, liberty constantly betrayed.

LXVIII.

From these general studies I turned to another that perhaps engrossed my mind the more from the very aridity and dryness of its nature, so far removed from the intoxication of love and fancy in which I lived. I mean political economy, or the science of the Wealth of Nations.

V—— had applied his mind to it with more curiosity than ardor. All the Italian, English, or French books that had been written on the science lined his shelves and covered his table. We read and discussed them together, noting down the remarks that they suggested. The science of political economy, which at that time laid down, as it still does in the present day, more axioms than truths, and proposed more problems than it can solve, had for us precisely the charm of mystery. It became, moreover, between us an endless theme for those conversations which exercise the intelligence without engrossing the mind, and suffer us to feel, even while conversing, the presence of the one secret and continuous thought concealed in the inmost recesses of our hearts. It was an enigma of which we sought the answer without any great desire to find it. After having read, examined, and noted all that constituted the science at that time, I fancied I could discern a few theoretical principles true in their generality, doubtful in their application, ambitiously aspiring to be classed among absolute truths, often hollow or false in their formula. I had no objection to make, but my instinctive desire of demonstration was not thoroughly satisfied. I threw down the books and awaited the light. Political economy at that time did not exist; being an entirely experimental science, it had neither sufficient maturity nor long standing to affirm so positively. Since then it has progressed and promises to statesmen a few dogmas which may be applied cautiously to society, a few sources of general comfort, and some new ties of fraternity, to be strengthened between nations.

LXIX.

I varied these serious pursuits with the study of diplomacy or the laws of intercourse between governments, which had always attracted me from my early youth. Chance directed me to the fountain-head. At the time that I applied myself to political economy I had written a pamphlet of about a hundred pages, on a subject which at that period attracted a great share of public attention. The title of the pamphlet was: "What place can the nobility occupy in France under a constitutional government?" I treated this question, which was a most delicate one at the time, with the instinctive good sense that Nature had allotted to me, and with the impartiality of a youthful mind, soaring without effort above the vanities from on high, the envy from below, and the prejudices of his day. I spoke with love of the people, with intelligence of our institutions, and with respect of that historic nobility whose names were long the name of France herself, on her battlefields, in her magistracy, and in foreign lands. I was for the suppression of all privileges of nobility, save the memory of nations, which cannot be suppressed, and proposed an elective peerage, showing that in a free country there could be no other nobility than that of election, which is a perpetual stimulus to public duty, and a temporary reward of the merit or virtues of its citizens.

Julie, to whom I had lent the manuscript in order to initiate her in the labors of my life, had shown it to Monsieur M——, a clever man of her intimate acquaintance, for whose judgment she entertained the greatest deference. M. M—— was the worthy son of an illustrious member of the Constituent Assembly, had been the Emperor's private secretary, and was now a constitutional royalist. He was one of those whose minds are never youthful, who enter mature into the world, and die young, leaving a void in their epoch. M. M——, after reading my work, asked Julie who was the political man who had written those pages. She smiled, and confessed that they were the production of a very young man, who had neither name nor experience, and was quite unknown in the political world.

M. M—— required to see me to believe. I was introduced to him, and he received me with kindness which afterwards ripened into a friendship, that remained unchanged until his death. My work was never printed; but M. M——, in his turn, introduced me to his friend, M. de Reyneval, a man of luminous understanding, open-hearted, and of an attractive and cheerful though grave and laborious mind, who was at that time the life of our foreign policy. He died, not long ago, while ambassador at Madrid. M. de Reyneval, who had read my work, received me with that encouraging grace and cordial smile which seems to overleap distance, and always wins at first sight the heart of a young man. He was one of those men from whom it is pleasant to learn, because they seem, so to speak, to diffuse themselves in teaching, and to give rather than prescribe. One learned more of Europe in a few mornings by conversing with this most agreeable man, than in a whole diplomatic library. He possessed tact, the innate genius of negotiations. I owe to him my taste for those high political affairs which he handled with full consciousness of their importance, but without seeming to feel their weight. His strength made everything easy, and his ready condescension seemed to infuse grace and heart into business. He encouraged my desire to enter on the diplomatic career, presented me himself to the Director of the Archives, M. d'Hauterive, and authorized him to allow me access to the collection of our treaties and negotiations. M. d'Hauterive, who had grown old over despatches, might be said to be the unalterable tradition and the living dogma of our diplomacy. With his commanding figure, hollow voice, his thick and powdered hair, his long, bushy eyebrows overshadowing a deep-set and dim eye, he seemed a living, speaking century. He received me like a father, and appeared happy to transmit to me the inheritance of all his hoarded knowledge; he made me read, and take notes under his own eye, and twice a week I used to study for a few hours under his direction. I love the memory of his green old age, which so prodigally bestowed its experience on a young man whose name he scarcely knew. M. d'Hauterive died during the battle of July, 1830, amid the roar of the cannon which annihilated the policy of the Bourbons and the treaties of 1815.

LXX.

Such were my studious and retired habits in my little room. I wished for nothing more; my desire to enter on some career was in truth but my mother's ambition for me, and the regret of expending the price of her diamond, without some compensation in my bettered condition. If at that time I had been offered an embassy to quit Paris, and a palace to leave my truckle-bed in the ante-room, I would have closed my eyes not to see, and my ears not to listen to Fortune. I was too happy in my obscurity, thanks to the ray, invisible to others, which warmed and illumined my darkness.

My happiness dawned as the day declined. I habitually dined at home alone in my cell, and my repast generally consisted of a slice of boiled meat, some salad, and bread. I drank water only, to save the expense of even a little wine, so necessary to correct the insipid and often unwholesome water of Paris. By this means, twenty sous a day paid for my dinner, and this meal was sufficient not only for myself but to feed the dog who had adopted me. After dinner, I used to throw myself on my bed, overcome by the application and solitude of the day, and strove thus to abridge by sleep the long, dark hours which yet divided me from the moment when time commenced for me. These were hours which young men of my age spend in theatres, public places, or the expensive amusements of a capital, as I had done before my transformation. I generally awaked about eleven, and then dressed with the simplicity of a young man whose good looks and figure set off his plain attire. I was always neatly shod, besides having white linen and a black coat, carefully brushed by my own hands, which I buttoned up to the throat, after the fashion of the young disciples of the schools of the Middle Ages. A military cloak, whose ample folds were thrown over my left shoulder, preserved my dress from being splashed in the streets, and, on the whole, my plain and unpretending costume, which neither aspired to elegance nor betrayed my distress, admitted of my passing from my solitude to a drawing-room without either attracting or offending the eye of the indifferent. I always went on

foot; for the price of one evening's coach-hire would have cost me a day of my life of love. I walked on the pavement, keeping close along the walls to avoid the contact of carriage-wheels, and proceeded slowly on tip-toe for fear of the mud, which in a well-lighted drawing-room would have betrayed the humble pedestrian. I was in no hurry, for I knew that Julie received every evening some of her husband's friends, and I preferred waiting till the last carriage had driven away before I knocked. This reserve on my part arose not only from the fear of the remarks which might be made concerning my constant presence in the house of so young and lovely a woman, but, above all, from my dislike to share with others her looks and words. It seemed to me that each of those with whom she was obliged to keep up a conversation robbed me of some part of her presence or her mind. To see her, to hear her, and not to possess her alone, were often a harder trial to me than not to see her at all.

LXXI.

To pass away the time I used to walk from one end to the other of a bridge which crossed the Seine nearly opposite to the house where Julie lived. How many thousand times I have reckoned the boards of that bridge, which resounded beneath my feet! How many copper coins I have thrown, as I passed and repassed, into the tin cup of the poor blind man, who was seated through rain or snow on the parapet of that bridge! I prayed that my mite which rung in the heart of the poor, and from thence in the ear of God, might purchase for me in return a long and secure evening, and the departure of some intruder who delayed my happiness.

Julie, who knew my dislike to meeting strangers at her house, had devised with me a signal which should inform me from afar of the presence or absence of visitors in her little drawing-room. When they were numerous, the two inside shutters of the window were closed, and I could only see a faint streak of light glimmering between the two leaves; when there were one or two familiar friends, on the point of leaving, one shutter was opened; and at last, when all were gone, the two shutters were thrown open, the curtains withdrawn, and I could see from the opposite quay the light of the lamp which stood on the little table, where she read or worked while expecting me. I never lost sight of that distant ray, which was visible and intelligible for me alone, amid the thousand lights of windows, lamps, shops, carriages, and *cafés*, and among all those avenues of fixed or wandering fires which illumine at night the buildings and the horizon of Paris. All other illuminations no longer existed for me,—there was no other light on earth, no other star in the firmament but that small window, which seemed like an open eye seeking me out in darkness, and on which my eyes, my thoughts, my soul, were ever and solely bent. O incomprehensible power of the infinite nature of man, which can fill the universal space and think it too confined; or can be concentrated in one bright speck shining through the river mists, amid the ocean of fires of a vast city, and feel its desires, feelings,

intelligence, and love bounded by that small spark which scarce outshines the glowworm of a summer's evening! How often have I thus thought as I paced the bridge, muffled in my cloak! How often have I exclaimed, as I gazed at that oval window shining in the distance: Let all the fires of earth be quenched, let all the luminous globes of the firmament be extinguished, but may that feeble light—the mysterious star of our two lives—shine on forever; its glimmering would illumine countless worlds, and suffice my eyes through all eternity!

Alas, since then I have seen this star of my youth expire, this burning focus of my eyes and heart extinguished! I have seen the shutters of the window closed for many a long year on the funereal darkness of that little room. One year, one day, I saw them once more opened. I looked to see who dared to live where she had lived before; and then I saw, in summer time, at that same window, bathed in sunshine and adorned with flowers, a young woman whom I did not know playing and smiling with a new-born child, unconscious that she played upon a grave, that her smiles were turned to tears in the eyes of a passer-by, and that so much life seemed as a mockery of death.... Since then, at night, I have returned; and every year I still return, approach that wall with faltering steps, and touch that door; and then I sit on the stone bench, and watch the lights, and listen to the voices from above. I sometimes fancy that I see the light reflected from her lamp; that I hear the tones of her voice; that I can knock at that door; that she expects me; that I can go in—...O Memory, art thou a gift from Heaven, or pain of Hell!...But I resume my story, since you, my friend, desire it.

LXXII.

The day after my arrival, Julie had introduced me to the old man, who was to her a father, and whose latter days she brightened with the radiance of her mind, her tenderness, and her beauty. He received me as a son. He had learned from her our meeting in Savoy, our fraternal attachment, our daily correspondence, and the affinity of our minds, as shown by the conformity of our tastes, ages, and feelings. He knew the entire purity of our attachment, and felt no jealousy, or any anxiety, save for the life, the happiness, and reputation of his ward. He only feared she might have been attracted and deceived by that first look, which is sometimes a revelation, and sometimes a delusion of the young, and that she might have bestowed her heart on a man of the creation of her fancy. My letters, from which she had read him several passages, had somewhat reassured him, but it was only from my countenance he could learn whether they were an artful or natural expression of my feelings; for style may deceive, but the countenance never can.

The old man surveyed me with that anxious attention which is often concealed under an appearance of momentary abstraction. But as he saw me more, and questioned me, I could see his searching look clear up, betray an inward satisfaction, soften gradually into one of confidence and good-will, and rest upon me with that security and caress of the eye, which though a mute is perhaps the best reception at a first interview. My ardent desire to please him; the timidity so natural to a young man, who feels that the fate of his heart depends on the judgment passed upon him; the fear that it might not be favorable; the presence of Julie, which disconcerted though it encouraged me; and all the shades of thought so plainly legible in my modest attitude and my flushed cheeks,—spoke in my favor better than I could have done myself. The old man took my hand with a paternal gesture, and said, "Compose yourself; and consider that you have two friends in this house, instead of one. Julie could not have better chosen a brother, and I would not choose another son." He embraced me, and we talked

together as if he had known me from my childhood, until an old servant came at ten o'clock, according to his invariable custom, to give him the help of his arm on the stair, and lead him back to his own apartment.

LXXIII.

His was a beautiful and attractive old age, to which nothing was wanting but the security of a morrow. It was so disinterested and parental, that it in no wise offended the eye, though associated with a young and lovely woman. It was as an evening shade upon the bloom of morning; but one felt that it was a protecting shade, sheltering but not withering her youth, beauty, and innocence. The features of this celebrated man were regular as the pure outline of antique profiles which time emaciates slightly, but cannot impair. His blue eyes had that softened but penetrating expression of worn-out sight, as if they looked through a slight haze. There was an arch expression of implied meaning in his mouth; and his smile was playful as that of a father to his little children. His hair, which age and study had thinned, was soft and fine, like the down of a swan. His hands were white and taper as the marble hands of the statue of Seneca taking his dying leave of Paulina. There were no wrinkles on his face, which had become thin and pale from the long labor of the mind, for it had never been plump. A few blue and bloodless veins might be traced on the depressed temples; the light of the fire was reflected on the forehead,—that latest beauty of man, which thought chisels and polishes unceasingly. There was in the cheek that delicacy of skin,—that transparency of a face which has grown old within the shade of walls, and which neither wind nor sun have ever tanned; the complexion of woman, which gives an effeminacy to the countenance of old men, and the ethereal, fragile, and impalpable appearance of a vision, that the slightest breath might dispel. His calm and well-weighed expressions, naturally set in clear, concise, and lucid phrase, had all the precision of one who has been used to careful selection in clothing his thoughts for writing or dictation. His sentences were interrupted by long pauses, as if to allow time for them to penetrate the ear, and to be appreciated by the mind of the listener; he relieved them, every now and then, by graceful pleasantry, never degenerating into coarseness, as though he purposely upheld the conversation on these light and sportive wings, to prevent its being borne down by the weight of too continuous ideas.

LXXIV.

I soon learned to love this charming and talented old man. If I am destined to attain old age, I should wish to grow old like him. There was but one thing grieved me as I looked at him,—it was to see him advancing towards death, without believing in Immortality. The natural sciences that he had so deeply studied had accustomed his mind to trust exclusively to the evidence of his senses. Nothing existed for him that was not palpable; what could not be calculated contained no element of certitude in his eyes; matter and figures composed his universe; numbers were his god; the phenomena of Nature were his revelations, Nature herself his Bible and his gospel; his virtue was instinct, not seeing that numbers, phenomena, Nature, and virtue are but hieroglyphs inscribed on the veil of the temple, whose unanimous meaning is—Deity. Sublime but stubborn minds, who wonderfully ascend the steps of science, one by one,—but will never pass the last, which leads to God.

LXXV.

This second father very soon became so fond of me, that he proposed to give me occasionally, in his library, some lessons in those elevated sciences which had rendered him illustrious, and now constituted his chief relaxation. I went to him sometimes in the morning; Julie would come at the same hours. It was a rare and touching spectacle to see that old man seated in the midst of his books,—a monument of human learning and philosophy, of which he had exhausted all the pages during his long life,—discovering the mysteries of Nature and of thought to a youth who stood beside him; while a woman, young and lovely as that ideal philosophy, that loving wisdom,—the Beatrice of the poet of Florence,—attended as his first disciple, and was the fellow-learner of that younger brother. She brought the books, turned over the page, and marked the chapters with her extended rosy finger; she moved amid the spheres, the globes, the instruments, and the heaps of volumes, in the dust of human knowledge; and seemed the soul of Nature disengaging itself from matter, to kindle it and teach it to burn and love.

I learned and understood more in a few days than in years of dry and solitary study; but the frequent infirmities of age in the master too often interrupted these morning lessons.

LXXVI.

I invariably spent a part of my night in the company of her who was to me both night and day, time and eternity. As I have already said, I always arrived when importunate visitors had left the drawing-room. Sometimes I remained long hours on the quay or on the bridge, walking or standing still by turns, and waiting in vain for the inside shutter to open and to give the mute signal on which we had agreed. How have I watched the sluggish waters of the Seine beneath the arches of the bridge, bearing away in their course the trembling rays of the moon, or the reflected light of the windows of the city. How many hours and half hours have I not reckoned as they sounded from the near or distant churches, and cursed their slowness or accused their speed! I knew the tones of every brazen voice in the towers of Paris. There were lucky and unlucky days. Sometimes I went in, without waiting an instant, and only found her husband with her, who spent in lively talk, or friendly conversation, the hours that unbent and prepared him for sleep. At other times I only met one or two friends; they dropped in for a short time, bringing the news or the excitement of the day, and devoted to friendship the first hours of their evening, which they generally concluded in some political drawing-room. These were in general parliamentary men, eminent orators of the two chambers,—Suard, Bonald, Mounier, Reyneval, Lally-Tolendal, the old man with the youthful mind, and Lainé. This latter was the most perfect copy of ancient eloquence and virtue that I have seen to venerate in modern times; he was a Roman in heart, in eloquence, and in appearance, and wanted but the toga to be the Cicero or the Cato of his day. I felt peculiar admiration and tender respect for this personification of a good citizen; he, in his turn, took notice of me, and often distinguished me by some look and word of preference. He has since been my master; and if one day I had to serve my country, or to ascend a tribune, the remembrance of his patriotism and his eloquence would be ever present to me as a model that I could not hope to equal, but might imitate at a distance.

These men came round the little work-table in turn, while Julie sat half reclined upon the sofa. I remained silent and respectful in one corner of the room, far from her, listening, reflecting, admiring, or disapproving inwardly, but scarcely opening my lips unless questioned, and only joining in the conversation by a few timid and cautious words said in a low tone. With a strong conviction on most subjects, I have always felt an extreme shyness in expressing it before such men; they appeared to me infinitely my superiors from age and in authority. Respect for time, for genius, and for fame is part of my nature,—a ray of glory dazzles me; white hairs awe me; an illustrious name bows me voluntarily before it. I have often lost something of my real value by this timidity, but nevertheless I have never regretted it. The consciousness of the superiority of others is a good feeling in youth, as at all ages, for it elevates the ideal standard to which we aspire. Self-confidence in youth is an overweening insolence towards time and Nature. If the feeling of the superiority of others is a delusion, it is at least a delusion which raises human nature, and is better than that which lowers it. Alas, we but too soon reduce it to its true but sad proportions.

These visitors at first paid little attention to me. I used to see them stoop towards Julie, and ask, in a low tone, who I was. My thoughtful countenance and my immovable and modest attitude seemed to surprise and please them; insensibly they drew towards me, or seemed by a gracious and encouraging gesture to address some of their remarks to me. It was an indirect invitation to take my share in the conversation. I said a few words in grateful recognition, but I soon relapsed into my silence and obscurity, for fear of prolonging the conversation by keeping it up. I considered them merely as the frame of a picture; the only real interest I felt was in the face, the speech, and the mind of her from whom I was shut out by their presence.

LXXVII.

What inward joy, what throbbing of the heart, when they retired, and when I heard beneath the gateway the rolling of the carriage which bore away the last of them! We were then alone; the night was far advanced; our security increased at every move of the minute hand as it approached the figure that marked midnight on the dial. Nothing was to be heard but the sound of a few carriages, which, at rare intervals, rattled over the stones of the quay, or the deep breathing of the old concierge, who was stretched sleeping on a bench in the vestibule at the foot of the stairs.

We would first look at each other, as if surprised at our happiness. I would draw nearer to the table where Julie worked by the light of the lamp. The work soon fell from her unheeding hands; our looks expanded, our lips were unsealed, our hearts overflowed. Our choked and hurried words, like the flow of water impeded by too narrow an opening, were at first slowly poured forth, and the torrent of our thoughts trickled out drop by drop. We could not select, among the many things we had to say, those we most wished to impart to each other. Sometimes there was a long silence, caused by the confusion and excess of crowded thoughts which accumulated in our hearts and could not escape. Then they began to flow slowly, like those first drops which show that the cloud is about to dissolve or burst; these words called forth others in response; one voice led on the other, as a falling child draws his companion with him. Our words mingled without order, without answer, and without connection; neither of us would yield the happiness of outstripping the other in the expression of one common feeling. We fancied that we had first felt what we disclosed of our thoughts since the evening's conversation, or the morning's letter. At last this tumultuous overflow, at which we laughed and blushed, after a time subsided, and gave place to a calm effusion of the lips, which poured forth together, or alternately, the plenitude of their expressions. It was a continuous and murmuring transfusion of one soul into another,—an unreserved interchange of

our two natures,—a complete transmutation of one into another, by the reciprocal communication of all that breathed, or lived, or burned within us. Never, perhaps, did two beings as irreproachable in their looks, or in their very thoughts, bare their hearts to one another more unreservedly, and reveal the mysterious depths of their feelings. The innocent nudity of our souls was chaste, though unveiled, as light that discovers all, yet sullies nothing. We had nought to reveal but the spotless love which purified as it consumed us.

Our love, by its very purity, was incessantly renewed, with the same light of soul, the same unsullied transports of its first bloom. Each day was like the first; every instant was as that ineffable moment when we felt it dawn within us, and saw it reflected in the heart and looks of another self. Our love would always preserve its flower and its perfume, for the fruit could never be culled.

LXXVIII.

Of all the different means by which God has allowed soul to communicate with soul, through the transparent barrier of the senses, there was not one that our love did not employ to manifest itself,—from the look which conveys most of ourselves, in an almost ethereal ray, to the closed lids, which seem to enfold within us the image we have received, that it may not evaporate; from languor to delirium, from the sigh to the loud cry; from the long silence to those exhaustless words which flow from the lips without pause and without end, which stop the breath, weary the tongue, which we pronounce without hearing them, and which have no other meaning than an impotent effort to say, again and again, what can never be said enough....

Many a time did we talk thus for hours, in whispered tones, leaning on the little table close to each other, without perceiving that our conversation had lasted more than the space of a single aspiration; quite surprised to find that the minutes had flown as swiftly as our words, and that the clock struck the inexorable hour of parting.

Sometimes there would be interrogations and answers as to our most fugitive shades of thought and nature, dialogues in almost unheard whispers, articulate sighs rather than audible words, blushing confessions of our most secret inward repinings, joyful exclamations of surprise at discovering in us both the same impressions reflected from one another, as light in reverberations, the blow in the counterblow, the form in the image. We would exclaim, rising by a simultaneous impulse, "We are not two; we are one single being under two illusive natures! Which will say you unto the other; which will say I? There is no *I*; there is no *you*; but only *we*." ... We would then sink down, overcome with admiration at this wonderful conformity, weeping with delight at this twofold existence, and at having doubled our lives by consecrating them to each other.

LXXIX.

Most generally we used to travel back over the past, step by step, and recall with scrupulous minuteness every place, circumstance, and hour which had brought on, or marked the beginning of our love,—like some young girl who has scattered by the way the unstrung pearls of her precious necklace, and returns upon her steps, her eyes bent upon the ground, to find and gather them up, one by one. We would not lose the recollection of one of those places, or one of those hours, for fear of losing at the same time the hoarded memory of a single joy. We remembered the mountains of Savoy; the valley of Chambéry; the torrents and the lake; the mossy ground, sometimes in shade and sometimes dappled with light, beneath the outstretched arms of the chestnut-trees; the rays between the branches, the glimpse of sky through the leafy dome above our heads, the blue expanse and the white sails at our feet; our first unsought meetings in the mountain paths; our mutual conjectures; our encounters on the lake before we knew each other, sailing in our boats in contrary directions, her dark hair waving in the wind, my indifferent attitude; our looks averted from the crowd; the double enigma that we were to each other, of which the answer was to be eternal love; then the fatal day of the tempest, and her fainting; the mournful night of prayers and tears; the waking in heaven; our return together by moonlight through the avenue of poplars, her hand in mine; her warm tears which my lips had drunk, the first words in which our souls had spoken; our joys, our parting,—we remembered all.

We never wearied of these details. It was as though we had related some story which was not our own. But what was there henceforth in the universe save ourselves? O inexhaustible curiosity of love, thou art not only a childish delight of the hour, thou art love itself, which never tires of contemplating what it possesses, treasures up every impression, each hair, each thrill, each blush, each sigh of the loved one, as a reason for loving more, as a means of feeding anew with each memory the flame of enthusiasm, in which it joys to be consumed!

LXXX.

Julie's tears would sometimes suddenly flow from a strange sadness. She knew me condemned, by this concealed though to us ever-present death, to behold in her but a phantom of happiness, which would vanish ere I could press it to my heart. She grieved and accused herself for having inspired me with a passion which could never bring me joy. "Oh, that I could die, die soon, die young, and still beloved!" would she say. "Yes, die, as I can be to you but the bitter delusion of love and joy; at once your rapture and your woe. Ah, the divinest joys and the most cruel anguish are mingled in my destiny! Oh, that love would kill me; and that you might survive to love after me, as your nature and your heart should love! In dying, I shall be less wretched than I am while feeling that I live by your sacrifices, and doom your youth and your love to a perpetual death!"

"Oh, blaspheme not against such ineffable joy!" I exclaimed, placing my trembling hands beneath her eyes to receive her fast dropping tears. "What base idea have you conceived of him whom God has thought worthy to meet, to understand, and to love you? Are there not more oceans of tenderness and love in this tear which falls warm from your heart, and which I carry to my lips as the life's blood of our tortured love, than in the thousand sated desires and guilty pleasures in which are engulfed such vile attachments as you regret for me? Have I ever seemed to you to desire aught else than this twofold suffering? Does it not make of us both voluntary and pure victims? Is it not an eternal holocaust of love, such as, from Heloise to us, the angels can scarce have witnessed? Have I ever once reproached the Almighty, even in the madness of my solitary nights, for having raised me by you, and for you, above the condition of man? He has given me in you, not a woman to be polluted by the embrace of these mortal arms, but an impalpable and sacred incarnation of immaterial beauty. Does not

the celestial fire, which night and day burns so rapturously within me, consume all dross of vulgar desire? Am I aught but flame? A flame as pure and holy as the rays of your soul which first kindled it, and now feed it unceasingly through your beaming eye! Ah, Julie, estimate yourself more worthily, and weep not over sorrows which you imagine you inflict on me! I do not suffer. My life is one perpetual overflow of happiness, filled by you alone,—a repose of sense, a sleep of which you are the dream. You have transformed my nature. I suffer? Oh, would that I could sometimes suffer, that I might have somewhat to offer unto God, were it but the consciousness of a privation, the bitterness of a tear, in return for all he has given me in you! To suffer for you, might, perchance, be the only thing which could add one drop to that cup of happiness which it is given me to quaff. To suffer thus, is it to suffer, or to enjoy? No; thus to live, is, in truth, to die, but it is to die some years earlier to this wretched life, to live beforehand of the life of heaven."

LXXXI.

She believed it, and I myself believed it, as I spoke and raised my hands imploringly towards her. We would part after such converse as this, each preserving, to feed on it separately till the morrow, the impression of the last look, the echo of the last tone, that were to give us patience to live through the long, tedious day. When I had crossed the threshold, I would see her open her window, lean forth amid her flowers on the iron bar of the balcony, and follow my receding figure as long as the misty vapors of the Seine allowed her to discern it on the bridge. Again and again would I turn to send back a sigh and a lingering look, and strive to tear away my soul, which would not be parted from her. It seemed as if my very being were riven asunder,—my spirit to return and dwell with her, while my body alone, as a mere machine, slowly wended its way through the dark and deserted streets to the door of the hotel where I dwelt.

LXXXII.

Thus passed away, without other change than that afforded by my studies, and our ever-varying impressions, the delightful months of winter. They were drawing to a close. The early splendors of spring already began to glance fitfully from the roofs upon the damp and gloomy wilderness of the streets of Paris. My friend V——, recalled by his mother, was gone, and had left me alone in the little room where he had harbored me during my stay. He was to return in the autumn, and had paid for the lodging for a whole year, so that, though absent, he still extended to me his brotherly hospitality. It was with sorrow I saw him depart; none remained to whom I could speak of Julie. The burden of my feelings would now be doubly heavy, when I could no longer relieve myself by resting it on the heart of another; but it was a weight of happiness,—I could still uphold it. It was soon to become a load of anguish, which I could confide to no living being, and least of all to her whom I loved.

My mother wrote me, that straightened means, caused by unexpected reverses of fortune, which had fallen on my father in quick and harsh succession, had reduced to comparative indigence our once open and hospitable paternal home, obliging my poor father to withhold the half of my allowance, to enable him to meet, and that only with much difficulty, the expense of maintaining and educating six other children. It was therefore incumbent upon me, she said, either by my own unaided efforts to maintain myself honorably in Paris, or to return home and live with resignation in the country, sharing the common pittance of all. My mother's tenderness sought beforehand to comfort me under this sad necessity; she dwelt on the joy it would be to her to see me again, and placed before me, in most attractive colors, the prospect of the labors and simple pleasures of a rural life. On the other hand, some of the associates of my early years of gambling and dissipation, who had now fallen into poverty, having met me in Paris, reminded me of sundry trifling obligations which I had contracted towards them, and begged me to come to their assistance. They stripped me thus,

by degrees, of the greater part of that little hoard which I had saved by strict economy, to enable me to live longer in Paris. My purse was well-nigh empty, and I began to think of courting fortune through fame. One morning, after a desperate struggle between timidity and love, love triumphed. I concealed beneath my coat my small manuscript, bound in green, containing my verses, my last hope; and though wavering and uncertain in my design, I turned my steps towards the house of a celebrated publisher whose name is associated with the progress of literature and typography in France, Monsieur Didot. I was first attracted to this name because M. Didot, independently of his celebrity as a publisher, enjoyed at that time some reputation as an author. He had published his own verses with all the elegance, pomp and circumstance of a poet who could himself control the approving voice of Fame.

When before M. Didot's door in the Rue Jacob, a door all papered with illustrious names, a redoubled effort on my part was required to cross the threshold, another to ascend the stairs, another still more violent to ring at his door. But I saw the adored image of Julie encouraging me, and her hand impelled me. I dared do anything.

I was politely received by M. Didot, a middle-aged man with a precise and commercial air, whose speech was brief and plain as that of a man who knows the value of minutes. He desired to know what I had to say to him. I stammered for some time, and became embarrassed in one of those labyrinths of ambiguous phrases under which one conceals thoughts that will and will not come to the point. I thought to gain courage by gaining time; at last I unbuttoned my coat, drew out the little volume, and presented it humbly with a trembling hand to M. Didot. I told him that I had written these verses, and wished to have them published,—not indeed to bring me fame (I had not that absurd delusion), but in the hope of attracting the notice and good-will of influential literary men; that my poverty would not permit of my going to the expense of printing; and, therefore, I came to submit my work to him, and request him to publish it, should he, after looking over it, deem it worthy of the indulgence or favor of cultivated minds. M. Didot nodded, smiled kindly, but somewhat ironically, took my manuscript between two fingers, which seemed accustomed to crumple paper contemptuously, and putting down my verses on the table, appointed me to return in a week for an answer as to the object of my visit. I took my leave. The next seven days appeared to me seven centuries. My future prospects, my favor, my mother's consolation or despair, my love,—in a word, my life or death, were in the hands of M. Didot. At times, I pictured him to myself reading my verses

with the same rapture that had inspired me on my mountains, or on the brink of my native torrents; I fancied he saw in them the dew of my heart, the tears of my eyes, the blood of my young veins; that he called together his literary friends to listen to them, and that I heard from my alcove the sound of their applause. At others, I blushed to think I had exposed to the inspection of a stranger a work so unworthy of seeing the light; that I had discovered my weakness and my impotence in a vain hope of success, which would be changed into humiliation, instead of being converted into gold and joy within my grasp. Hope, however, as persevering as my distress, often got the upper hand in my dreams, and led me on from hour to hour until the day appointed by M. Didot.

LXXXIII.

My heart failed as, on the eighth day, I ascended his stairs. I remained a long while standing on the landing-place at his door without daring to ring. At last some one came out, the door was opened, and I was obliged to go in. M. Didot's face was as unexpressive and as ambiguous as an oracle. He requested me to be seated, and while looking for my manuscript, which was buried beneath heaps of papers, "I have read your verses, sir," he said; "there is some talent in them, but no study. They are unlike all that is received and appreciated in our poets. It is difficult to see whence you have derived the language, ideas and imagery of your poetry, which cannot be classed in any definite style. It is a pity, for there is no want of harmony. You must renounce these novelties which would lead astray our national genius. Read our masters,—Delille, Parny, Michaud, Reynouard, Luce de Lancival, Fontanes; these are the poets that the public loves. You must resemble some one, if you wish to be recognized, and to be read. I should advise you ill if I induced you to publish this volume, and I should be doing you a sorry service in publishing it at my expense." So saying, he rose, and gave me back my manuscript. I did not attempt to contest the point with Fate, which spoke in the voice of the oracle. I took up the volume, thanked M. Didot, and, offering some excuse for having trespassed on his time, I went downstairs, my legs trembling beneath me, and my eyes moistened with tears.

Ah, if M. Didot, who was a kind and feeling man, a patron of letters, could have read in my heart, and have understood that it was neither fame nor fortune that the unknown youth came to beg, with his book in his hand; that it was life and love I sued for—I am sure he would have printed my volume. He would have been repaid in heaven, at least.

LXXXIV.

I returned to my room in despair. The child and the dog wondered, for the first time, at my sullen silence, and at the gloom that overspread my countenance. I lighted the stove, and threw in, sheet by sheet, my whole volume, without sparing a single page. "Since thou canst not purchase for me a single day of life and love," I exclaimed, as I watched it burning, "what care I if the immortality of my name be consumed with thee? Love, not fame, is my immortality."

That same evening, I went out at nightfall. I sold my poor mother's diamond. Till then I had kept it, in the hope that my verses might have redeemed its value, and that I might preserve it untouched. As I handed it to the jeweller, I kissed it by stealth, and wet it with my tears. He seemed affected himself, and felt convinced that the diamond was honestly mine by the grief I testified in disposing of it. The thirty louis he gave me for it fell from my hands as I reckoned them, as if the gold had been the price of a sacrilege. Oh, how many diamonds, twenty times superior in price, would I not often have given since, to repurchase that same diamond, unique in my eyes!—a fragment of my mother's heart, one of the last teardrops from her eye, the light of her love!... On what hand does it sparkle now?...

LXXXV.

Spring had returned. The Tuileries cast each morning upon their idlers the green shade of their leaves, and showered down the fragrant snow of their horse-chestnut trees. From the bridges I could perceive beyond the stony horizon of Chaillot and Passy the long line of verdant and undulating hills of Fleury, Meudon, and St. Cloud. These hills seemed to rise as cool and solitary islands in the midst of a chalky ocean. They raised in my heart feelings of remorse and poignant reproach, and were images and remembrances which awakened the craving after Nature that had lain dormant for six months. The broken rays of moonlight floated at night upon the tepid waters of the river, and the dreamy orb opened, as far as the Seine could be traced, luminous and fantastic vistas where the eye lost itself in landscapes of shade and vapor. Involuntarily the soul followed the eye. The front of the shops, the balconies, and the windows of the quays were covered with vases of flowers which shed forth their perfume even on the passers-by. At the corners of the streets, or the ends of the bridges, the flower-girls, seated behind screens of flowering plants, waved branches of lilac, as if to embalm the town. In Julie's room the hearth was converted into a mossy grotto; the consoles and tables had each their vases of primroses, violets, lilies of the valley, and roses. Poor flowers, exiles from the fields! Thus swallows who have heedlessly flown into a room bruise their own wings against the walls, while announcing to the poor inhabitants of dismal garrets the approach of April and its sunny days. The perfume of the flowers penetrated to our hearts, and our thoughts were brought back, under the impression of their fragrance and the images it evoked, to that Nature in the midst of which we had been so isolated and so happy. We had forgotten her while the days were dark, the sky gloomy, and the horizon bounded. Shut up in a small room where we were all in all to each other, we never thought that there was another sky, another sun, another nature beyond our own. These fine, sunny days, glimpses of which we caught from among the roofs of an immense city, recalled them to our minds. They agitated and saddened us; they inspired us with an invincible desire to

contemplate and to enjoy them in the forests and solitudes which surround Paris. It seemed to us while indulging these irresistible longings, and projecting distant walks together in the woods of Fontainebleau, Vincennes, St. Germain, and Versailles, that we should be again, as it were, amid the woods and waters of our Alpine valleys, that at least we should see the same sun and the same shade and recognize the harmonious sighing of the same winds in the branches.

Spring, which was restoring to the sky its transparency and to the plants their sap, seemed also to give new youth and pulsation to Julie's heart. The tint upon her cheeks was brighter; her eyes more blue, their rays more penetrating. There was more emotion in the tone of her voice; the languor of her frame was relieved by more frequent sighs; there was more elasticity in her walk, more youthfulness in her attitudes; even in the stillness of her chamber, a pleasant though feverish agitation produced a petulant movement of her feet, and sent the words more hurriedly to her lips. In the evening Julie would undraw the curtains, and frequently lean forth from her window to take in the freshness of the water, the rays of the moon, and the breath of the fragrant breeze which swept along the valley of Meudon, and was wafted even into the apartments on the quay.

"Oh, let us give," said I, "a joyous holiday to our hearts amid all our happiness! Of all God's creatures for whom he reanimates his earth and his heavens, let not us, the most feeling and the most grateful, be the only beings for whom they shall have been reanimated in vain! Let us together dive into that air, that light, that verdure; amid those sprouting branches, in that flood of life and vegetation, which is even now inundating the whole earth! Let us go, let us see if naught in the works of his creation has grown old by the weight of an added day; if naught in that enthusiasm, which sang and groaned, loved and lamented within us, on the mountains and on the waters of Savoy, has been lowered by one ripple or one note!" "Yes, let us go," said she. "We shall neither feel more, nor love better, nor bless otherwise; but we shall have made another sky and another spot of earth witness the happiness of two poor mortals. That temple of our love which was in our loved mountains only will then be wherever I shall have wandered and breathed with you." The old man encouraged these excursions to the fine forests around Paris. He hoped, and the doctors led him to expect, that the air laden with life, the influence of the sun, which strengthens all things, with moderate exercise in the open fields, might invigorate the too sensitive delicacy of Julie's nerves and give elasticity to her heart. Every sunny day, during the five weeks of early spring, I came at noon to fetch her. We entered a close carriage in order to avoid the inquisitive looks and light observations of any of her acquaintances

whom we might chance to meet, or the remarks that even strangers might have made on seeing so young and lovely a woman alone with a man of my age; for we were not sufficiently alike to pass for brother and sister. We left the carriage on the skirts of the woods, at the foot of the hills, or at the gates of the parks in the environs of Paris, and sought out at Fleury, at Meudon, at Sèvres, at Satory, and at Vincennes the longest and most solitary paths, carpeted with turf and flowers, untrodden by horses' hoofs, except perhaps on the day of a royal hunt. We never met any one, save a few children or poor women busy with their knives digging up endive. Occasionally a startled doe would rustle through the leaves, and springing across the path, after a glance at us, dive into the thicket. We walked in silence, sometimes preceding each other, sometimes arm in arm, or we talked of the future, of the delight it would be to possess one out of all these untenanted acres, with a keeper's lodge under one of the old oaks. We dreamed aloud. We picked violets and the wild periwinkle, which we interchanged as hieroglyphics and preserved in the smooth leaves of the hellebore. To each of these flowery letters we linked a meaning, a remembrance, a look, a sigh, a prayer. We kept them to reperuse when parted; they were destined to recall each precious moment of these blissful hours.

We often sat in the shade by the side of the path, and opened a book which we tried to read; but we could never turn the first leaf, and ever preferred reading in ourselves the inexhaustible pages of our own feelings. I went to fetch milk and brown bread from some neighboring farm; we ate, seated on the grass, throwing the remains of the cup to the ants, and the crumbs of bread to the birds. At sunset we returned to the tumultuous ocean of Paris, the noise and crowd of which jarred upon our hearts. I left Julie, excited by the enjoyment of the day, at her own door, and then went back, overcome with happiness, to my solitary room, the walls of which I would strike and bid them crumble, that I might be restored to the light, Nature, and love which they shut out. I dined without relish, read without understanding; I lighted my lamp and waited, reckoning the hours as they passed, till the evening was far enough advanced for me to venture again to her door, and renew the enjoyment of the morning.

LXXXVI.

The next day we recommenced our wanderings. Ah, in those forests, how many trees, marked by my knife, bear on their roots or bark a sign by which I shall ever recognize them! They are those whose shade she enjoyed; those beneath which she breathed new life, basked in the warmth of the sun, or inhaled the sweet vernal scent of the trees. The stranger sees, but dreams not that they are to another the pillars of a temple, whose worshipper is on earth though its divinity is in heaven. I still visit them once or twice each spring, on the anniversaries of these walks; and when the axe lays one low, it seems to me as though it falls upon myself, and carries away a portion of my heart.

LXXXVII.

On one of the highest and most generally solitary summits of the park of St. Cloud, where the rounded hill descends in two separate slopes, one towards the valley of Sèvres, and the other towards the hollow where the Château stands, there is an open space where three long avenues meet. From thence the eye discovers from afar the rare passengers that intrude on the solitude of the place. The hill, like a promontory, overlooks the plain of Issy, the course of the Seine, and the road to Versailles; its summit, clothed and overshadowed by the forest which fills up the triangular intervals between the three avenues, appears like the rounded basin of a lake of which grass and foliage are the billows. If one looks towards Sèvres, one sees only a long and sloping meadow stretching down towards the river like a verdant and undulating cascade, which, after a rapid descent, loses itself at the bottom of the valley in dark masses of thickets stocked with deer. Beyond these thickets, on the other side of the Seine, the blue slated roofs of Meudon, and the waving tops of the majestic trees of its park, stand out in the blue summer sky. We often came to sit on this hill, which has all the elevation of a promontory, the silence and shade of a valley, and the solitude of a desert. The lungs play freer there; the ear is less disturbed by the sounds of earth; the soul can better wing its flight beyond the horizon of this life.

We went there one morning early in May, at the hour when the forest is peopled only by the deer, which bound and skip in its lonely paths. Now and then a gamekeeper crosses the extremity of one of the avenues, like a black speck on the horizon. We sat down under the seventh tree of the semi-circle round the open space, looking towards the meadows of Sèvres. Centuries have been required to frame that sturdy oak, and to bend its gnarled branches; its roots, swelling with sap to nourish and support its trunk, have burst through the sod at its feet, and form a moss-covered seat, of which the oak is the back, and its lower leaves the natural canopy. The morning was as serene and transparent as the waters of the sea at sunrise under the green headlands of the islands of the

Archipelago. The ardent rays of an almost summer sun fell from the clear sky on the wooded hill, and then rose again from out of the thickets in exhalations warm as the waves which expire in the shade after having imbibed the sunshine. There was no other sound than that of the fall of some dry leaves of the preceding winter, which, as the sap rose and throbbed, fell at the foot of the tree, to make room for the new and tender foliage. Whole flights of birds dashed against the branches round their nests, and there was one vague, universal hum of insects that revelled in the light, and rose and fell, like a living dust, at the least undulation of the flowering grass.

LXXXVIII.

There was so much sympathy between our youth and the youthful year and day; such entire harmony between the light, the heat, the splendor, the silence, the gentle sounds, the pensive delights of Nature and our own sensations; we felt so delightfully mingled with the surrounding air and sky, life and repose; we were so completely all to each other in this solitude,—that our exuberant but satisfied thoughts and sensations sufficed us. We did not even seek for words to express them; but were as the full vase, whose very plenitude renders its contents motionless. Our hearts could hold no more; but they were capacious enough to contain all, and nothing sought to escape from them. Our breathing was scarcely audible.

I know not how long we remained thus seated at the foot of the oak, mute and motionless beside one another, our faces buried in our hands, our feet in sunshine on the grass, our heads in shade; but when I raised my eyes the shadows had retreated before us on the grass, beyond the folds of Julie's dress. I looked at her, she raised her face as if by the same impulse which had made me raise mine; and gazing at me without saying a word, she burst into tears. "Why do you weep?" I asked with anxious emotion, but in a low tone for fear of disturbing or diverting the course of her silent thoughts. "From happiness," she answered. Her lips smiled, while big tears rolled down her cheeks in shining drops, like the dew of spring. "Yes, from happiness," she resumed. "This day, this hour, this sky, this spot, this peace, this silence, this solitude with you, this complete assimilation of our two souls, which no longer require to converse to comprehend each other, which breathe in the same aspiration is too much,—too much for mortal nature that excess of joy may kill, as excess of grief, and which, when it can draw no cry from the heart, grieves that it cannot sigh, and mourns that it cannot praise sufficiently."

She stopped for an instant; her cheeks were flushed. I trembled lest death should seize her in her joy; but her voice soon reassured me. "Raphael! Raphael!" she

exclaimed in a solemn tone, which surprised me, as if she had been announcing some good tidings, long and anxiously expected,—"Raphael, there is a God!" "How has he been revealed to you to-day more clearly than any other day?" I asked. "By love," she answered, raising slowly to heaven the orbs of her bright, glistening eyes; "yes, by love, whose torrents have flowed in my heart just now with a murmuring, gushing fulness that I had never felt before with the same force, nor yet the same repose. No, I no longer doubt," she continued in a tone where certitude mingled with joy; "the spring whence such felicity is poured upon the soul cannot be here below, nor can it lose itself in this earth after having once gushed forth! There is a God; there is an eternal love, of which ours is but a drop. We will together mingle it one day with the divine ocean whence we drew it! That ocean is God! I see it; feel it; understand it in this instant by my happiness! Raphael, it is no longer you I love; it is no longer I you love,—it is God we henceforth adore in one another; you in me, and I in you, both, in these tears of bliss which reveal to us, and yet conceal, the immortal fountain of our hearts! Away," she added, with a still more ardent tone and look,—"away with all the vain names by which we have hitherto called our attraction towards each other. I know but one to express it; it is the one which has just been revealed to me in your eyes: God! God! God!" she exclaimed once more, as though she had wished to teach her lips a new language. "God is in you; God is in me for you! God is us; and henceforward the feelings which oppressed us will no longer be love, but a holy and rapturous adoration! Raphael, do you understand me? You will no longer be Raphael, you will be my worship of God!"

We rose in a transport of enthusiasm; we embraced the tree, and blessed it for the inspiration which had descended from its boughs; we gave it a name, and called it the tree of adoration.

We then slowly descended the hill of St. Cloud to return to the noise and turmoil of Paris; but she returned with new-found faith and the knowledge of God in her heart, and I with the joy of knowing that she now possessed a bright and inward source of consolation, hope and peace.

LXXXIX.

In a very short time, the expense I was obliged to incur but which I concealed from Julie, in order to accompany her on our daily country excursions, had so far exhausted the proceeds of the sale of my mother's last diamond that I had only ten louis left. When each night I reckoned over the limited number of happy days represented by that small sum, I was seized with fits of despondency, but I should have blushed to confess my excessive poverty to her I loved. Though far from wealthy she would have wished to share with me all she possessed, and that would have degraded our intercourse in my eyes. I valued my love more than life, but I would rather have died than have debased my love.

The sedentary life I had led all the winter in my dismal room, my intense application to study all day, the tension of my thoughts towards one object, the want of sleep at night, but, above all, the moral exhaustion of a heart too weak to bear a continuous ecstasy of ten months, had undermined my constitution. A consuming flame, which burned unfed, shone through my wan and pale face. Julie implored me to leave Paris, to try the effect of my native air, and to preserve my life, even at the expense of her happiness. She sent me her doctor, to add the authority of science to the entreaties of her love. Her doctor, or rather her friend, Dr. Alain, was one of those men who carry a blessing with them, and whose countenance seems to reflect Heaven by the bedside of the sick poor they visit. He was himself suffering from a complaint of the heart brought on by a pure and mysterious passion for one of the loveliest women in Paris.

He was active, humane, pious, and tolerant, and possessing a small fortune sufficient for his simple wants and charities, practiced only for a few friends or for the poor. His physic was friendship or charity in action. The medical career is so admirable when divested of all cupidity, it brings so much into play the better feelings of our nature, that it often ends by being a virtue after commencing as a profession, With Dr. Alain it was more than a virtue; it had become a passion for relieving the woes of the body and of the soul, which are often so closely linked!

Where Alain brought life, he also took God with him, and made even Death resplendent with serenity and immortality.

I saw him, too, die, some years later, the death of the righteous and the just. He had learned how to die at many deathbeds; and when stretched motionless on his, during six months of agony, his eye counted on a little clock, which stood at the foot of his bed, the hours that divided him from eternity. He pressed upon his bosom, with his crossed hands, a crucifix, emblem of patience, and his look never quitted that celestial friend, as though he had conversed at the foot of the cross. When he suffered beyond his powers of endurance he requested that the crucifix might be approached to his lips, and his prayers were then mingled with thanksgiving. At last he slept, supported to the end by his hopes and the memory of the good he had done. He had given the poor and the sick an accumulated treasure of good works to carry before him into the presence of the God of the merciful. He died on a wretched bed in a garret, leaving no inheritance. The poor bore his body to the grave, and, in their turn, gave him the burial of charity in the common earth. O blessed soul, that in memory, I still see smiling on that kind countenance, lighted with inward joy, can so much virtue have been to thee but a deception? Hast thou vanished like the reflection of my lamp upon thy portrait, when my hand withdraws the light that allowed me to contemplate it? No, no; God is faithful, and cannot have deceived thee, who wouldst not have deceived a child!

XC.

The doctor took a deep and friendly interest in me. It seemed as if Julie had imparted to him a portion of her tenderness. He understood my complaint, though he concealed his knowledge from me, and was too deeply read in human passion not to recognize its symptoms in us. He ordered me to depart under penalty of death, and induced Julie herself to enforce his commands by communicating to her his fears. He invoked the tender authority of love to tear me from love. He tried to mitigate the pang of separation by the allurements of hope, and ordered me to breathe some time my native air, and then return to the baths of Savoy, where Julie should join me, by his advice, in the beginning of autumn. His principles did not seem startled by the symptoms of mutual passion which he had not failed to perceive between us. Our pure flame was in his eyes a fault, but it was also its own purification. His countenance only expressed the indulgence of man, and the compassion of God. He thus endeavored to save us by loosening the tie which threatened to draw us to one common death. I at length consented to be the first to depart, and Julie swore to follow me soon. Alas, her tears, her pale face, and trembling lips said more than any vows! It was settled that I should leave Paris as soon as my strength permitted me to travel. The eighteenth of May was the day fixed for my departure.

When once we had resolved on our approaching separation we began to reckon the minutes as hours, the hours as days. We would have amassed and concentrated years into the short space of a second, to wrest from time the happiness from which we were to be debarred during so many months. These days were days of rapture, but they had their anguish and their agony; the approaching morrow cast its gloom upon each interview, each look and word, each pressure of the hand. Joys such as these are not joys, but disguised pangs of love and tortures of the heart. We devoted the whole day preceding my departure to our adieus. We wished not to say our last farewell within the shadow of walls, which weigh down the soul, or beneath the eyes of the indifferent, which throw

back the feelings on the heart, but beneath the sky, in the open air, in the light, in solitude, and in silence. Nature sympathizes with all the emotions of man; she understands, and, as an invisible confidant, seems to share them. She garners them in heaven, and renders them divine.

XCI.

In the morning, a carriage, which I had hired for the day, conveyed us to Monceau. The windows were down, the blinds closed. We traversed the almost deserted streets of the more elevated parts of Paris, leading to the high walls of the park. This garden was at that time almost exclusively reserved for their own use by the princes to whom it belonged, and could only be entered on presenting tickets of admission, which were very parsimoniously distributed to a few foreigners or travellers desirous of admiring its wonderful vegetation. I had obtained some of these tickets, through one of my mother's early friends who was attached to the prince's household. I had selected this solitude because I knew its owners were absent, that no admissions were then given, and that the very gardeners would be away enjoying the leisure of a holiday.

This magnificent desert, studded with groves of trees, interspersed with meadows, and traversed by limpid streams, is also embellished by monuments, columns, and ivy-covered ruins, imitations of time in which art has copied the old age of stone. That day we knew it would be visited only by the bright sunbeams, the insects, the birds, and us. Alas, never were its leaves and its green turf to be watered by so many tears!

The warm and glowing sky, the light and shade dancing fitfully on the grass driven by the summer breeze, as the shadow of the wings of one bird pursuing another; the clear note of the nightingale ringing through the sonorous air; the distinctness with which the lilies of the valley, the daisies, and the blue periwinkles which carpeted the sloping banks of the clear waters, were reflected in their polished mirror,—all this gladness of Nature saddened us, and this luminous serenity of a spring morning only seemed to contrast the more with the dark cloud which weighed upon our hearts. In vain we sought to deceive ourselves even for a moment by expatiating on the beauty of the landscape, the brilliant tints of the flowers, the perfumes of the air, the depth of the shade, the stillness of those solitudes in which the happiness of a whole world of love

might have been sheltered. We carelessly threw on them an unheeding glance, which quickly fell to the ground; our voices, when answering with their vain formulas of joy and admiration, betrayed the hollowness of words and the absence of our thoughts, which were elsewhere. It was in vain we sought a resting-place to pass the long hours of this our last interview; seating ourselves alternately beneath the most fragrant lilacs, or the green branches of the loftiest cedars, on the fluted fragments of columns half-buried in ivy, or by the side of those waters that lay most still within their grassy banks, for scarcely had we chosen one of these sites when some vague disquietude drove us away in search of another. Here it was the shade, and there the light; further on, the importunate murmur of the cascade, or the persisting song of the nightingale over our heads, —that turned into bitterness all this exuberance of joy, and made it odious in our eyes. When our heart is sad within us, all creation jars upon our feelings, and it could but have added fresh pangs to the grief of two lovers, had the garden of Eden been the scene of their parting.

At last, worn out by wandering for two hours, and finding no shelter against ourselves, we sat down near a small bridge across a stream; a little apart, as if the very sound of each other's breathing had been painful, or as if we had wished instinctively to conceal from one another the suppressed sobs which were bursting from our hearts. We long watched abstractedly the green and slimy water as it was slowly swept beneath the narrow arch of the bridge. It carried along on its surface sometimes the white petals of the lily, and sometimes an empty and downy bird's nest which the wind had blown from a tree. We soon saw the body of a poor little swallow, turned on its back, and with extended wings, floating down. It had, doubtless, been drowned when skimming over the water before its wings were strong enough to bear it on the surface; it reminded us of the swallow which had one day fallen at our feet, from the top of the dismantled tower of the old castle on the borders of the lake, and which had saddened us as an omen. The dead bird passed slowly before us, and the unruffled sheet of water rolled and engulfed it in the deep darkness below the bridge. When the bird had disappeared, we saw another swallow pass and repass a hundred times beneath the bridge, uttering its little sharp cry of distress, and dashing against the wooden beams of the arch. Involuntarily we looked at each other; I cannot tell what our eyes expressed as they met, but the despair of the poor bird found us with our eyelids so overcharged, and our hearts so nearly bursting, that we both turned away at the same moment, and throwing ourselves with our faces to the ground, sobbed aloud. One tear called forth another tear, one thought another thought, one foreboding another foreboding, each sob

another sob. We often strove to speak, but the broken voice of the one only made that of the other still more inaudible, and we ended by yielding to nature, and pouring forth in silence, during hours marked by the shadows alone, all the tears that rose from their hidden springs. They fell on the grass, sank into the earth, were dried by the winds of heaven, absorbed by the rays of the sun,—God took them into account! No drop of anguish remained in our hearts when we rose face to face though almost hidden from each other by the tearful veil of our eyes. Such was our farewell,—a funereal image, an ocean of tears, an eternal silence. Thus we parted without another look, lest that look should strike us to the earth. Never will the mark of my footsteps be again traced in that desert scene of our love and of our parting.

XCII.

The next morning I was rolling along, sad and silent, wrapped in my cloak, among the barren hills on the road that leads from Paris towards the south. I was stowed away in a public coach, with five or six unknown fellow-travellers who were gayly discussing the quality of the wine and the price of the last dinner at the inn. I never once opened my lips during that long, sad journey.

My mother received me with that serene and resigned tenderness which might have made even misfortune happy in her company. Her diamond had been spent in vain to advance my fortunes; and I returned home, with shattered health and broken hopes, consumed with melancholy that she attributed to my unoccupied youth and restless imagination, but of which I carefully concealed the real cause, for fear of adding an irremediable sorrow to all her other griefs.

I spent the summer alone in an almost deserted valley enclosed between barren hills, where my father had a little farm, which was worked by a poor family. My mother had sent me there, and commended me to the care of these good people, that I might have a change of air and the benefit of milk diet. My whole occupation was to reckon the days which must intervene before I could join Julie in our dear Alpine valley. Her letters, received and replied to daily, confirmed me in my security, and dispelled, by their sportive gayety and caressing words, the gloomy and sinister forebodings our last farewell had raised in my heart. Now and then some desponding word or expression of sadness which seemed to have unguardedly escaped, or been involuntarily overlooked among her vistas of happiness, as a dry leaf in the midst of the foliage of spring, struck me as being in contradiction with the calm and blooming health she spoke of. But I attributed these discrepancies to some vision of memory or to her impatience at the slowness of time which might have flitted like shadows across the paper as she wrote.

The bracing mountain air, sleep at night, and exercise by day, the healthy

employment of working in the garden and in the farm, soon restored me to health; but, above all, the approach of autumn, and the certainty of soon seeing her once more who by her looks would give me life. The only remaining trace of my sufferings was a gentle and pensive melancholy which overspread my countenance; it was as the mist of a summer's morning. My silence seemed to conceal some mystery, and my instinctive love of solitude made the superstitious peasants of the mountains believe that I conversed with the Genii of the woods.

All ambition had been extinguished in me by my love. I had made up my mind for life to my hopeless poverty and obscurity, and my mother's serene and pious resignation had entered into my heart with her holy and gentle words. I only indulged the dream of working during ten or eleven months of the year manually, or with my pen to earn sufficiently thereby to spend a month or two with Julie every year. I thought that if the old man's protection were one day to fail, I would devote myself to her service as a slave, like Rousseau to Madame de Warens; we would take shelter in some secluded cottage of these mountains, or in the well-known chalets of our Savoy; I would live for her, as she would live for me, without looking back with regret to the empty world, and asking of love no other reward than the happiness of loving.

XCIII.

I was, however, often recalled harshly from my dreamy region by the cruel penury of my home, which was partly attributable to the unavailing expense incurred for me. Crops had failed during successive years, and reverses of fortune had changed the humble mediocrity of my parents into comparative want. When on Sundays I went to see my mother, she spoke of her distress, and before me shed tears that she concealed from my father and my sisters. I, too, was reduced to extreme destitution. I lived at the little farm on brown bread, milk, and eggs, and had in secret sold successively in the neighboring town all the books and clothes I had brought from Paris, to procure wherewithal to pay the postage of Julie's letters, for which I would have sold my life's blood.

The month of September was drawing to a close. Julie wrote me that her anxiety on the score of her husband's daily declining health (O pious fraud of love to conceal her own sufferings and lighten my cares) would detain her longer in Paris than she had expected. She pressed me to start at once, and await her in Savoy, where she would join me without fail towards the end of October. The letter was one of tender advice, as that of a sister to a beloved brother. She implored and ordered me, with the sovereign authority of love, to beware of that insidious disease which lurks beneath the flowery surface of youth, and often withers and consumes us at the very moment we think that we have overcome its power. Enclosed, she sent a consultation and a prescription from good Dr. Alain, ordering me in the most imperative terms, and with most alarming threats, to remain during a long season at the baths of Aix. I showed this prescription to my mother, to account for my departure, and she was so disquieted by it that she added her entreaties to the injunctions of the doctor to induce me to go. Alas! I had in vain applied to a few friends as poor as myself, and to some pitiless usurers, to obtain the trifling sum of twelve louis required for my journey. My father had been absent six months, and my mother would on no account have aggravated his distress and anxiety by asking him for money. In borrowing he

would have exposed his poverty, by which he was already too much humbled. I had made up my mind to start with two or three louis only in my purse, in the hope of borrowing the remainder from my friend L——, at Chambéry; when, a few days before my departure, my mother, during a sleepless night, had found in her heart a resource that a mother's heart could alone have furnished.

XCIV.

In one of the comers of the little garden that surrounded our house there stood a cluster of trees, comprising a few evergreen oaks, two or three lime trees, and seven or eight twisted elms, which were the remains of a wood, planted centuries ago, and had, doubtless, been respected as the *local Genius* when the hill had been cleared, the house built, and the garden first walled in. These lofty trees in summer time served as a family saloon, in the open air. Their buds in spring, their tints in autumn, and their dry leaves in winter, which were succeeded by the hoar frost hanging from their branches like white hair, had marked the seasons for us. Their shadows, rolled back upon their very feet, or stretched out to the grassy border around, told us the hours better than a dial. Beneath their foliage our mother had nursed us, lulled us to rest, and taught us our first steps. My father sat there, book in hand, when he returned from shooting; his shining gun suspended from a branch, his panting dogs crouching beneath the bench. I, too, had spent there the fairest hours of my boyhood, with Homer or Telemachus lying open on the grass before me. I loved to lie flat on the warm turf, my elbows resting on the volume, of which a passing fly or lizard would sometimes hide the lines. The nightingales among the branches sang for our home, though we could never find their nest, or even see the branch from which their song burst forth. This grove was the pride, the recollection, the love of all. The idea of converting it into a small bag of money, which would leave no memory in the heart, no perpetual joy and shade, would have occurred to no one, save to a mother, trembling with anxiety for the life of an only son. My mother conceived the thought; and, with the readiness and firmness of resolve that distinguished her, called for the woodcutters as soon as morning came,—fearing lest she should feel remorse, or my entreaties stop her, if she first consulted me. She saw the axe laid to their roots, and wept, and turned away her head not to hear their moan, or witness the fall of these leafy protectors of her youth on the echoing and desolate soil of the garden.

XCV.

When I returned to M—— on the following Sunday, I looked round from the top of the mountain for the clump of trees that stood out so pleasantly on the hillside, screening from the sun a portion of the gray wall of the house; and it seemed as a dream when in their wonted place I perceived only heaps of hewn-down trunks whose barked and bleeding branches strewed the earth around. A sawing-trestle stood there like an instrument of torture, on which the saw with its grinding teeth divided the trees. I hurried on with extended arms towards the outer wall, and trembled as I opened the little garden door.... Alas! the evergreen oak, one lime-tree, and the oldest elm alone were standing, and the bench had been drawn in beneath their shade. "They are sufficient," said my mother, as she advanced towards me, and, to conceal her tears, threw herself into my arms; "the shade of one tree is worth that of a whole forest. Besides, to me what shade can equal yours? Do not be angry. I wrote to your father that the trees were dying from the top, and that they were hurtful to the kitchen-garden. Speak no more of them!"... Then leading me into the house, she opened her desk and drew forth a bag half-filled with money. "Take this," she said, "and go. The trees will have been amply paid me if you return well and happy."

I blushed, and with a stifled sob took the bag. There were six hundred francs in it, which I resolved to bring back untouched to my poor mother.

I started on foot, like a sportsman, with leathern gaiters on my feet, and my gun on my shoulder, and took from the bag only one hundred francs, which I added to the little I had remaining from the proceeds of my last sale. I could not bear to spend the price of the trees, and therefore concealed the remainder of the money at the farm, that on my return I might restore it to her who had so heroically torn it from her heart for me. I ate and slept at the humblest inns in the villages through which I passed, and was taken for a poor Swiss student returning from the University of Strasbourg. I was never charged but the strict value of the bread I ate, of the candle I burned, and of the pallet on which I slept. I had

brought but one book with me, which I read at evening on the bench before the inn door; it was Werther, in German; and the unknown characters confirmed my hosts in the idea that I was a foreign traveller.

I thus wandered through the long and picturesque gorges of Bugey, and crossed the Rhône at the foot of the rock of Pierre-Châtel. The narrowed river eternally rushes past the base of this rock, with a current wearing as the grindstone and cutting as the knife, as if to undermine and overthrow the state-prison, whose gloomy shadow saddens its waters. I slowly ascended the Mont du Chat by the paths of the chamois-hunters; arrived at its summit, I perceived stretched out before me in the distance the valleys of Aix, Chambéry, and Annecy; and at my feet the lake, dappled with rosy tints by the floating rays of the setting sun. One single image filled for me the immensity of this horizon; it rose from the chalets where we had met; from the doctor's garden, the pointed slate roof of whose house I could recognize above the smoke of the town; from the fig-trees of the little castle of Bon-Port at the bottom of the opposite creek; from the chestnut-trees on the hill of Tresserves; from the woods of St. Innocent; from the island of Châtillon; from the boats which were returning to their moorings, from all this earth, from all this sky, from all these waves. I fell on my knees before this horizon filled with one image. I spread out my arms and folded them again, as if I could have embraced her spirit by clasping the air which, had swept over these scenes of our happiness, over all the traces of her footsteps.

I then sat down behind a rock which screened me even from the sight of the goatherds, as they passed along the path. There I remained, sunk in contemplation, and reveling in remembrances, till the sun was almost dipping behind the snow-clad tops of Nivolex. I did not wish to cross the lake, or enter the town by daylight, as the homeliness of my dress, the scantiness of my purse, and the frugality of life to which I was constrained, in order to live some months near Julie, would have seemed strange to the inmates of the old doctor's house. They formed too great a contrast with my elegance in dress and habits of life during the preceding season. I should have made those blush whom I had accosted in the streets, in the garb of one who had not even the means of locating himself in a decent hotel in this abode of luxury. I had, therefore, resolved to slip by night into the humble suburb, bordering a rivulet which runs through the orchards below the town.

I knew there a poor young serving girl, called Fanchette, who had married a boatman the year before. She had reserved some beds in the garret of her

cottage, that she might board and lodge one or two poor invalids at fifteen sous a day. I had engaged one of these rooms, and a place at the humble board of the good creature. My friend L——, to whom I had written naming the day of my arrival on the borders of the lake, had some days previously written to take my lodgings, and warn Fanchette of my arrival, binding her to secrecy. I had also begged him to receive, under cover to himself, at Chambéry, any letters that might be addressed to me from Paris. He was to forward them to me by one of the drivers of the light carts that run continually between the two towns. I intended, during my stay at Aix, to remain in the daytime concealed in my little cottage room, or in the surrounding orchards. I would only, I thought, go out in the evening; I would go up to the doctor's house by the skirts of the town; I would enter the garden by the gate which opened on the country, and pass in delightful intercourse the solitary evening hours. I would bear with pleasure want and humiliation, which would be compensated a thousand fold by those hours of love. I thought thus to conciliate the respect I owed to my poor mother for the sacrifices she had made, with my devotion to the idol I came to worship.

XCVI.

From a pious superstition of love, I had calculated my steps during my long pedestrian journey, so as to arrive at the Abbey of Haute-Combe, on the other side of the Mont du Chat, upon the anniversary of the day that the miracle of our meeting, and the revelation of our two hearts, had taken place in the fisherman's inn on the borders of the lake. It seemed to me that days, like all other mortal things, had their destiny, and that in the conjunction of the same sun, the same month, the same date, and in the same spot, I might find something of her I loved. It would be an augury, at least, of our speedy and lasting reunion.

XCVII.

From the brink of the almost perpendicular sides of the Mont du Chat that descend to the lake, I could see on my left the old ruins and the lengthening shadows of the Abbey, which darkened a vast extent of the waters. In a few minutes I reached the spot. The sun was sinking behind the Alps, and the long twilight of autumn enveloped the mountains, the waves, and the shore. I did not stop at the ruins, and passed rapidly through the orchard where we had sat at the foot of the haystack, near the bee-hives. The hives and the haystack were still there; but there was no glow of fire lighting the windows of the little inn, no smoke ascending from the roof, no nets hung out to dry on the palisades of the garden.

I knocked, no one answered; I shook the wooden latch, and the door opened of itself. I entered the little hall with the smoky walls; the hearth was swept clean, even to the very ashes, and the table and furniture had been removed. The flagstones of the pavement were strewn with straws and feathers that had fallen from five or six empty swallows' nests which hung from the blackened beams of the ceiling. I went up the wooden ladder which was fastened to the wall by an iron hook, and served to ascend into the upper room where Julie had awaked from her swoon, with her hand on my forehead. I entered as one enters a sanctuary or a sepulchre, and looked around; the wooden beds, the presses, the stools were all gone. The sound of my footsteps frightened a nocturnal bird of prey, that heavily flapped its wings, and after beating against the walls, flew out with a shrill cry through the open window into the orchard. I could scarcely distinguish the place where I had knelt during that terrible and yet enchanting night, at the bedside of the sleeper or of the dead. I kissed the floor, and sat for a long while on the edge of the window, trying to evoke again in my memory the room, the furniture, the bed, the lamp, the hours, which had kept their place within me though all had been changed during a single year of absence. There was no one in the lonely neighborhood of the cottage who could furnish any

information as to the cause of its being thus deserted. I conjectured from the heaps of fagots which remained in the yard, from the hens and pigeons which returned of themselves to roost in the room, or on the roof, and from the stacks of hay and straw which stood untouched in the orchard, that the family had gone to gather in a late harvest in the high chalets of the mountain, and had not yet come down again.

The solitude of which I had thus taken possession was sad; not so sad, however, as the presence of the indifferent in a spot that was sacred in my eyes. I must have controlled before them my looks, my voice, my gestures, and the impressions that assailed me. I resolved to pass the night there, and brought up a bundle of fresh straw, which I spread on the floor, on the same spot where Julie had slept her death-like sleep. Resting my gun against the wall, I then took out of my knapsack some bread and a goat cheese that I had bought at Seyssel to support me on the road, and went out to eat my supper on a green platform above the ruins of the Abbey, by the side of the spring which flows and stops alternately, like the intermittent breathing of the mountain.

XCVIII.

From the edge of that platform, and from the dismantled terraces of the old monastery, at evening time, the eye embraces the most enchanting horizon that ever delighted an anchorite, a contemplator, or a lover. Behind is the green and humid shade of the mountain, with the murmur of its source, and the rustling of its foliage; and on one side the ruins, the broken walls, with their garlands of ivy, and the dark arcades replete with night and mystery; the lake, with its expiring waves slowly rolling, one by one, their fringes of spray at the foot of the rocks, as if to spread its couch and lull its sleep on the fine sands. On the opposite shore, the blue mountains clothed with their transparent tints; and on the right, as far as the eye can reach, the luminous track that the sun leaves in crimson light on the sky and on the lake, when it withdraws its splendor. I revelled in this light and shade, in these clouds and waves. I incorporated myself with lovely Nature, and thought thus to incorporate in me the image of her who was all nature for me. I inwardly said I saw her there. I was at that distance from her boat when I saw it struggling against the storm. There is the shore where she landed; there is the orchard where we opened our hearts to each other in the sunshine, and where she returned to life to give me two lives. There in the distance are the tops of the poplars of the great avenue which unrolls its length like a green serpent issuing from the waves. There are the chalets, mossy turf, and woods of chestnut-tree, the sheltered paths upon the highest mountain-planes where I picked flowers, strawberries, and chestnuts to fill her lap. There she said this; there I confessed some secret of my soul; and on that spot we remained a whole evening silent, our hearts flooded with enthusiasm, our lips without language. Upon these waves she wished to die; upon this shore she promised me to live. Beneath yonder group of walnut-trees, then leafless, she bid me farewell, and promised me that I should see her again before the new leaves should have turned yellow. They are about to change; but love is faithful as Nature. In a few days I shall see her once more.... I see her already; for am I not here awaiting her? and thus to wait, is it not as though I saw her again?

XCIX.

Then I pictured to myself the instant when, from the shady orchards that slope down from the mountains behind the old doctor's house, I should see at last that window of the closed room where she was expected,—to see it open for the first time, and a woman's face, half-hidden in its long dark hair, appear between the open curtains, dreaming of that brother whom her eye seeks in the glorious landscape, where she, too, sees but him.... And at that image my heart beat so impetuously in my breast that I was forced to drive away the fancy for an instant, in order to breathe.

In the meantime night had almost entirely descended from the mountain to the lake. One could only see the waters through a mist that glazed and darkened their wide expanse. Amid the profound and universal silence which precedes darkness, the regular sound of oars which seemed to approach land smote upon my ear. I soon saw a little speck moving on the waters, and increasing gradually in size until it slid into the little cove near the fisherman's house, throwing on either side a light fringe of spray. Thinking that it might be the fisherman returning from the Savoy coast to his deserted dwelling, I hurried down from the ruins to the shore, to be there when the boat came in. I waited on the sand till the fisherman landed.

C.

As soon as he saw me, he cried out, "Are you, sir, the young Frenchman who is expected at Fanchette's, and to whom I have been ordered to give these papers?" So saying, he jumped out of the boat, and, wading knee-deep through the water, handed me a thick letter. I felt by its weight that it was an enclosure containing many others. I hastily tore open the first cover, and read indistinctly in the dim moonlight a note from my friend L—, dated that same morning from Chambéry. L—— informed me that my lodging was taken and prepared for me at Fanchette's poor house in the Faubourg, and that no one had yet arrived from Paris at our old friend the doctor's. He added, that, having learned from myself that I should be that same evening at Haute-Combe to spend the night and a part of the following day, he had taken advantage of the departure of a trusty boatman who was to pass beneath the Abbey walls, to send me a packet of letters, which had arrived two days before, and that I was doubtless eagerly expecting. He purposed joining me at Haute-Combe the following day, that we might cross the lake together, and enter the town under the shadow of night.

CI.

While my eye glanced over the note, I held the packet with a trembling hand. It seemed to me heavy as my fate. I hastened to pay and dismiss the boatman, who was impatient to be off so as to leave the lake and enter the waters of the Rhone before dark. I only asked him for a piece of candle, to enable me to read my letters; he gave it, and I soon heard the strokes of his oars, as they once more cut through the deep sheet of water. I returned overjoyed to the upper room, to see once more the sacred characters of that angel in the very place where she had first revealed herself to me in all her splendor and in all her love. I felt sure that one of those letters must inform me that she had left Paris and would soon be with me. I sat down on the bundle of straw which I had brought up for my bed, and lighted my candle by means of the priming of my gun. I hastily tore open the cover, and it was only then that I perceived that the seal of the first envelope was black, and that the address was in the handwriting of Dr. Alain. I shuddered as I saw mourning where I had expected to find joy. The other letters slid from my hands onto my knees. I dared not read on for fear of finding—alas! what neither hand, nor eye, nor blood, nor tears, nor earth, nor Heaven could evermore efface—Death!... Though my very soul trembled so as to make the syllables dance before my eyes, I read at last these words:

"Prove yourself a man! Submit yourself to the will of Him whose ways are not our ways; expect her no longer! ... Look for her no more on earth, she has returned to heaven, calling on your name.... Thursday at sunrise.... She told me all before she died; ... she directed me to send you her last thoughts, which she wrote down till the very instant her hand grew cold while tracing your name.... Love her in Christ, who loved us unto death, and live for your mother!

"ALAIN."

CII.

I fell back senseless on the straw, and only recovered consciousness when the cold air of midnight chilled my brow. The light was still burning, and the doctor's letter was grasped convulsively in my hand. The untouched packet had fallen on the floor; I opened it with my lips, as if I feared to profane the heavenly message by breaking the seal with my fingers. Several long letters from Julie fell out; they were arranged according to dates.

In the-first there was: "Raphael! O my Raphael! O my brother! forgive your sister for having so long deceived you.... I never hoped to see you once more in Savoy.... I knew that my days were numbered, and that I could not live on till that day of happiness.... When I said at the gate of the garden of Monceau, 'We shall meet again,' Raphael, you did not understand me, but God did. I meant to say, 'We shall meet again, once more to love, to bless eternally, in heaven!' I begged Dr. Alain to aid me in deceiving you, and sending you away from Paris. It was my wish, it was my duty, to spare you such a sight of anguish as would have torn your heart asunder, and would have been too much for your strength.... And then again—forgive me, I must tell you all—I did not wish you to see me die.... I wish to spread a veil between us some time before death.... Cold death!—I feel it, see it, and shudder at myself in death! Raphael, I sought to leave an image of beauty in your eyes, that you might ever contemplate and adore! But now, you must not go, ... to await me in Savoy! Yet a little while—two or three days perhaps—and you need seek me nowhere! But I shall be there, Raphael! I shall be everywhere, and always where you are."

This letter had been moistened with tears, which had unglazed and stiffened the paper.

In the other, dated the following night, I read:—

"Midnight.

"Raphael, your prayers have drawn down a blessing from Heaven upon me. I thought yesterday of the tree of adoration at St. Cloud, at whose foot I saw God through your soul. But there is another holier tree,—the Cross!... I have embraced it ... I will cling to it evermore.... Oh, how that divine blood cleanses! how those divine tears purify!... Yesterday I sent for a holy priest of whom Alain had spoken. He is an old man who knows everything; who forgives all! I have discovered my soul to him, and he has shed on it the love and light of God.... How good is God! how indulgent, how full of loving kindness! How little we know of him! He suffers me to love you, to have you for my brother, to be your sister here below, if I live; your guardian angel above, if I die! O Raphael, let us love him, since he permits that we should love each other as we do!" ...

At the end of the letter there was a little cross traced, and, as it were, the impress of a kiss all around.

CIII.

There was another letter written in a totally altered hand, where the characters crossed and mingled on the page, as if traced in the dark, which said:—

"Raphael, I must say one word more—to-morrow, perhaps, I could not. When I am dead, oh, do not die! I shall watch over you from above; I shall be good and powerful, as the loving God, to whom I shall be united, is good and powerful. After me, you must love again.... God will send you another sister, who will be, moreover, the pious helpmate of your life.... I will myself ask it of him.... Fear not to grieve my soul, Raphael!... I—could I be jealous in heaven of your happiness?... I feel better now I have said this. Alain will forward these lines to you, and a lock of my hair.... I am going to sleep."...

One letter more, almost illegible, contained only these interrupted lines:
"Raphael! Raphael! where are you? I have had strength to get out of bed.... I have told the nurse that I wished to be left alone to rest. I have dragged myself along to the table, where I am writing by the light of the lamp.... But I can see no more; ...my eyes swim in darkness; ... black spots flit across the paper; ... Raphael! I can no longer write.... Oh, one word more!"...

Then, in large letters, like those of a child trying to write for the first time, there are two words which occupy a whole line, filling the bottom of the page.

"Farewell, Raphael!"

CIV.

All the letters fell from my hands. I was sobbing without tears, when I perceived another little note in the handwriting of the old man, her husband; it had slid between the pages as I was unsealing the first envelope.

There were only these words: "She breathed her last, her hand in mine, a few hours after writing you her last farewell. I have lost my daughter.... Be my son for the few days I have yet to live. She is there upon her bed, as if asleep, with an expression on her features of one whose last thought smiled at seeing something beyond our world. She never was so lovely; and as I look on her I require to believe in immortality.... I loved you through her; for her sake love me!"

CV.

How strange, and yet how fortunate for human nature, is the impossibility of immediately believing in the complete disappearance of a much-loved being! Though the evidence of her death lay scattered around, I could not believe that I was forever separated from her. Her remembrance, her image, her features, the sound of her voice, the peculiar turn of her expressions, the charm of her countenance, were so present, and, as it were, so incorporate in me, that she seemed more than ever with me; she appeared to envelop me, to converse with me, to call me by my name, as though I could have risen to meet her, and to see her once more. God leaves a space between the certainty of our loss and the consciousness of reality, like the interval which our senses measure between the instant when the eye sees the axe fall on the tree and the sound in our ear of the same blow long after. This distance deadens grief by cheating it. For some time after losing those we love, we have not completely lost them; we live on by the prolongation of their life in us. We feel as when we have been long watching the setting sun,—though its orb has sunk below the horizon, its rays are not set in our eyes; they still shine on our soul. It is only gradually, and as our impressions become more distinct as they cool, that we are made to know the complete and heartfelt separation,—that we can say, she is dead in me! For death is not death, but oblivion.

This phenomenon of grief was shown in its full force in me during that night. God suffered me not to drain at one draught my cup of woe, lest it should overwhelm my very soul. He vouchsafed to me the delusive belief, which I long retained, of her inward presence. In me, before me, and around me, I saw that heavenly being who had been sent to me for one single year, to direct my thoughts and looks forevermore towards the heaven to which she returned in her spring of youth and love.

When the poor boatman's candle was burned out, I took up my letters and hid them in my bosom. I kissed a thousand times the floor of the room which had

been the cradle, and was now the tomb, of our love. I unconsciously took my gun, and rushed wildly through the mountain passes. The night was dark; the wind had risen. The waves of the lake, dashing against the rocks, lashed them with such hollow blows, and sent forth sounds so like to human voices, that many times I stopped breathless, and turned round, as if I had been called by name. Yes, I was called; and I was not mistaken; but the voice came from heaven!...

CVI.

You know, my friend, who found me the next morning, wandering among precipices, in the mists of the Rhône; who raised me up, supported me, and brought me back to my poor mother's arms....

Now fifteen years have rolled by without sweeping away in their course a single memory of that one great year of my youth. According to Julie's promise to send me from above one who should comfort me, God has exchanged his gift for another; he has not withdrawn it. I often return to visit the valley of Chambéry and the lake of Aix, with her who has made my hopes patient and tranquil as felicity. When I sit on the heights of the hill of Tresserves, at the foot of those chestnut-trees that have felt her heart beat against their bark; when I look at the lake, the mountains, snows and meadows, trees and jagged rocks, swimming in a warm atmosphere which seems to bathe all nature in one perfumed liquid; when I hear the sighing breeze, the humming insects, and the quivering leaves, the waves of the lake breaking on the shore, with the gentle rustling sound of silken folds unrolling one by one; when I see the shadow of her whom God has made my companion until my life's end cast beside mine upon the grass or sand; when I feel within me a plenitude that desires nothing before death, and peace, untroubled by a single sigh; methinks I see the blessed soul of her who appeared to me in this spot rise, dazzling and immortal, from every point of the horizon, fill of herself alone the sky and waters, shine in that splendor, float in that ether, burn in all those flames. I see it penetrate those waves, breathe in their murmurs; pray, and laud, and sing in that one hymn of life that streams with these cascades from glacier unto lake, and shed upon the valley and on those who keep her memory a blessing that the eye seems to see, the ear to hear, the heart to feel!...

Here ended Raphael's first manuscript.

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