To London

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Title: To London, Casanova, v22

Author: Jacques Casanova de Seingalt

Release Date: December, 2001 [Etext #2972] [Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule] [Most recently updated: December 10, 2001]

Edition: 11

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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MEMOIRS OF JACQUES CASANOVA de SEINGALT 1725-1798 IN

LONDON AND MOSCOW, Volume 5b—TO LONDON

THE MEMOIRS OF JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT

THE RARE UNABRIDGED LONDON EDITION OF 1894 TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR MACHEN TO WHICH HAS BEEN ADDED THE CHAPTERS DISCOVERED BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

TO LONDON

CHAPTER V

I Meet the Venetian Ambassadors at Lyons, and also Marcoline's Uncle —I Part from Marcoline and Set Out for Paris—An Amorous Journey

Thus freed from the cares which the dreadful slanders of Possano had caused me, I gave myself up to the enjoyment of my fair Venetian, doing all in my power to increase her happiness, as if I had had a premonition that we should soon be separated from one another.

The day after the supper I gave to Madame Pernon and M. Bono, we went to the theatre together, and in the box opposite to us I saw M. Querini, the procurator, Morosini, M. Memmo, and Count Stratico, a Professor of the University of Padua. I knew all these gentlemen; they had been in London, and were passing through Lyons on their return to Venice.

"Farewell, fair Marcoline!" I said to myself, feeling quite broken-hearted, but I remained calm, and said nothing to her. She did not notice them as she was absorbed in her conversation with M. Bono, and besides, she did not know them by sight. I saw that M. Memmo had seen me and was telling the procurator of my presence, and as I knew the latter very well I felt bound to pay them my respects then and there.

Querini received me very politely for a devotee, as also did Morosini, while Memmo seemed moved; but no doubt he remembered that it was chiefly due to his mother that I had been imprisoned eight years ago. I congratulated the gentlemen on their embassy to England, on their return to their native land, and for form's sake commended myself to their good offices to enable me to return also. M. Morosini, noticing the richness of my dress and my general appearance of prosperity, said that while I had to stay away he had to return, and that he considered me the luckier man.

"Your excellency is well aware," said I, "that nothing is sweeter than forbidden fruit."

He smiled, and asked me whither I went and whence I came.

“I come from Rome,” I answered, “where I had some converse with the Holy Father, whom I knew before, and I am going through Paris on my way to London.

“Call on me here, if you have time, I have a little commission to give you.”

“I shall always have time to serve your excellency in. Are you stopping here for long?”

“Three or four days.”

When I ‘got back to my box Marcoline asked me who were the gentlemen to whom I had been speaking. I answered coolly and indifferently, but watching her as I spoke, that they were the Venetian ambassadors on their way from London. The flush of her cheek died away and was replaced by pallor; she raised her eyes to heaven, lowered them, and said not a word. My heart was broken. A few minutes afterwards she asked me which was M. Querini, and after I had pointed him out to her she watched him furtively for the rest of the evening.

The curtain fell, we left our box, and at the door of the theatre we found the ambassadors waiting for their carriage. Mine was in the same line as theirs. The ambassador Querini said,—

“You have a very pretty young lady with you.”

Marcoline stepped forward, seized his hand, and kissed it before I could answer.

Querini, who was greatly astonished, thanked her and said,—

“What have I done to deserve this honour?”

“Because,” said Marcoline, speaking in the Venetian dialect, “I have the honour of knowing his excellency M. Querini.”

“What are you doing with M. Casanova?”

“He is my uncle.”

My carriage came up. I made a profound bow to the ambassadors, and called out to the coachman, “To the ‘Hotel du Parc’.” It was the best hotel in Lyons, and I

was not sorry for the Venetians to hear where I was staying.

Marcoline was in despair, for she saw that the time for parting was near at hand.

“We have three or four days before us,” said I, “in which we can contrive how to communicate with your uncle Mattio. I must commend you highly for kissing M. Querini’s hand. That was a masterstroke indeed. All will go off well; but I hope you will be merry, for sadness I abhor.”

We were still at table when I heard the voice of M. Memmo in the antechamber; he was a young man, intelligent and good-natured. I warned Marcoline not to say a word about our private affairs, but to display a moderate gaiety. The servant announced the young nobleman, and we rose to welcome him; but he made us sit down again, and sat beside us, and drank a glass of wine with the utmost cordiality. He told me how he had been supping with the old devotee Querini, who had had his hand kissed by a young and fair Venetian. The ambassadors were much amused at the circumstance, and Querini himself, in spite of his scrupulous conscience, was greatly flattered.

“May I ask you, mademoiselle,” he added, “how you came to know M. Querini?”

“It’s a mystery, sir.”

“A mystery, is it? What fun we shall have tomorrow! I have come,” he said, addressing himself to me, “to ask you to dine with us tomorrow, and you must bring your charming niece.”

“Would you like to go, Marcoline?”

“‘Con grandissimo piacere’! We shall speak Venetian, shall we not?”

“Certainly.”

“‘E viva’! I cannot learn French.”

“M. Querini is in the same position,” said M. Memmo.

After half an hour’s agreeable conversation he left us, and Marcoline embraced me with delight at having made such a good impression on these gentlemen.

“Put on your best dress tomorrow,” said I, “and do not forget your jewels. Be agreeable to everybody, but pretend not to see your Uncle Mattio, who will be sure to wait at table.”

“You may be sure I shall follow your advice to the letter.”

“And I mean to make the recognition a scene worthy of the drama. I intend that you shall be taken back to Venice by M. Querini himself, while your uncle will take care of you by his special orders.”

“I shall be delighted with this arrangement, provided it succeeds.”

“You may trust to me for that.”

At nine o’clock the next day I called on Morosini concerning the commissions he had for me. He gave me a little box and a letter for Lady Harrington, and another letter with the words,—

“The Procurator Morosini is very sorry not to have been able to take a last leave of Mdlle. Charpillon.”

“Where shall I find her?”

“I really don’t know. If you find her, give her the letter; if not, it doesn’t matter. That’s a dazzling beauty you have with you, Casanova.”

“Well, she has dazzled me.”

“But how did she know Querini?”

“She has seen him at Venice, but she has never spoken to him.”

“I thought so; we have been laughing over it, but Querini is hugely pleased. But how did you get hold of her? She must be very young, as Memmo says she cannot speak French.”

“It would be a long story to tell, and after all we met through a mere chance.”

“She is not your niece.”

“Nay, she is more—she is my queen.”

“You will have to teach her French, as when you get to London.”

“I am not going to take her there; she wants to return to Venice.”

“I pity you if you are in love with her! I hope she will dine with us?”

“Oh, yes! she is delighted with the honour.”

“And we are delighted to have our poor repast animated by such a charming person.”

“You will find her worthy of your company; she is full of wit.”

When I got back to the inn I told Marcoline that if anything was said at dinner about her return to Venice, she was to reply that no one could make her return except M. Querini, but that if she could have his protection she would gladly go back with him.

“I will draw you out of the difficulty,” said I; and she promised to carry out my instructions.

Marcoline followed my advice with regard to her toilette, and looked brilliant in all respects; and I, wishing to shine in the eyes of the proud Venetian nobles, had dressed myself with the utmost richness. I wore a suit of grey velvet, trimmed with gold and silver lace; my point lace shirt was worth at least fifty louis; and my diamonds, my watches, my chains, my sword of the finest English steel, my snuff-box set with brilliants, my cross set with diamonds, my buckles set with the same stones, were altogether worth more than fifty thousand crowns. This ostentation, though puerile in itself, yet had a purpose, for I wished M. de Bragadin to know that I did not cut a bad figure in the world; and I wished the proud magistrates who had made me quit my native land to learn that I had lost nothing, and could laugh at their severity.

In this gorgeous style we drove to the ambassador’s dinner at half-past one.

All present were Venetians, and they welcomed Marcoline enthusiastically. She who was born with the instinct of good manners behaved with the grace of a nymph and the dignity of a French princess; and as soon as she was seated between two grave and reverend signors, she began by saying that she was delighted to find herself the only representative of her sex in this distinguished

company, and also that there were no Frenchmen present.

“Then you don’t like the French,” said M. Memmo.

“I like them well enough so far as I know them, but I am only acquainted with their exterior, as I don’t speak or understand the language.”

After this everybody knew how to take her, and the gaiety became general.

She answered all questions to the point, and entertained the company with her remarks on French manners, so different to Venetian customs.

In the course of dinner M. Querini asked how she had known him, and she replied that she had often seen him at Divine service, whereat the devotee seemed greatly flattered. M. Morosini, pretending not to know that she was to return to Venice, told her that unless she made haste to acquire French, the universal language, she would find London very tedious, as the Italian language was very little known there.

“I hope,” she replied, “that M. de Seingalt will not bring me into the society of people with whom I cannot exchange ideas. I know I shall never be able to learn French.”

When we had left the table the ambassadors begged me to tell the story of my escape from The Leads, and I was glad to oblige them. My story lasted for two whole hours; and as it was noticed that Marcoline’s eyes became wet with tears when I came to speak of my great danger. She was rallied upon the circumstance, and told that nieces were not usually so emotional.

“That may be, gentlemen,” she replied, “though I do not see why a niece should not love her uncle. But I have never loved anyone else but the hero of the tale, and I cannot see what difference there can be between one kind of love and another.”

“There are five kinds of love known to man,” said M. Querini. “The love of one’s neighbour, the love of God, which is beyond compare, the highest of all, love matrimonial, the love of house and home, and the love of self, which ought to come last of all, though many place it in the first rank.”

The nobleman commented briefly on these diverse kinds of love, but when he

came to the love of God he began to soar, and I was greatly astonished to see Marcoline shedding tears, which she wiped away hastily as if to hide them from the sight of the worthy old man whom wine had made more theological than usual. Feigning to be enthusiastic, Marcoline took his hand and kissed it, while he in his vain exaltation drew her towards him and kissed her on the brow, saying, “Poveretta, you are an angel!”

At this incident, in which there was more love of our neighbour than love of God, we all bit our lips to prevent ourselves bursting out laughing, and the sly little puss pretended to be extremely moved.

I never knew Marcoline’s capacities till then, for she confessed that her emotion was wholly fictitious, and designed to win the old man’s good graces; and that if she had followed her own inclinations she would have laughed heartily. She was designed to act a part either upon the stage or on a throne. Chance had ordained that she should be born of the people, and her education had been neglected; but if she had been properly tutored she would have been fit for anything.

Before returning home we were warmly invited to dinner the next day.

As we wanted to be together, we did not go to the theatre that day and when we got home I did not wait for Marcoline to undress to cover her with kisses.

“Dear heart,” said I, “you have not shewn me all your perfections till now, when we are about to part; you make me regret you are going back to Venice. Today you won all hearts.”

“Keep me then, with you, and I will ever be as I have been to-day. By the way, did you see my uncle?”

“I think so. Was it not he who was in continual attendance?”

“Yes. I recognized him by his ring. Did he look, at me?”

“All the time, and with an air of the greatest astonishment. I avoided catching his eye, which roved from you to me continually.”

“I should like to know what the good man thinks! You will see him again tomorrow. I am sure he will have told M. Querini that, I am his niece, and consequently not yours.

“I expect so, too.”

“And if M. Querini says as much to me tomorrow, I, expect I shall have to, admit the fact. What do you think?”

“You must undoubtedly tell him the truth, but frankly and openly, and so as not to let him think that you have need of him to return to Venice. He is not your father, and has no right over your liberty.”

“Certainly not.”

“Very good. You must also agree that I am not your uncle, and that the bond between us is, of the most tender description. Will, there be any difficulty is that?”

“How can you ask me such a question? The link between us makes me feel proud, and will ever do so.”

“Well, well, I say no more. I trust entirely in your tact. Remember that Querini and no other must take you back to Venice; he must treat you as if you were his daughter. If he will not consent, you shall not return at all.”

“Would to God it were so!”

Early the next morning I got a note from M. Querini requesting me to call on him, as he wanted to speak to me on a matter of importance.

“We are getting on,” said Marcoline. “I am very glad that things have taken this turn, for when you come back you can tell me the whole story, and I can regulate my conduct accordingly.”

I found Querini and Morosini together. They gave me their hands when I came in, and Querini asked me to sit down, saying that there would be nothing in our discussion which M. Morosini might not hear.

“I have a confidence to make to you, M. Casanova,” he began; “but first I want you to do me the same favor.”

“I can have no secrets from your excellency.”

“I am obliged to you, and will try to deserve your good opinion. I beg that you will tell me sincerely whether you know the young person who is with you, for no one believes that she is your niece.”

“It is true that she is—not my niece, but not being acquainted with her relations or family I cannot be said to know her in the sense which your excellency gives to the word. Nevertheless, I am proud to confess that I love her with an affection which will not end save with my life.”

“I am delighted to hear you say so. How long have you had her?”

“Nearly two months.”

“Very good! How did she fall into your hands?”

“That is a point which only concerns her, and you will allow me not to answer that question.”

“Good! we will go on. Though you are in love with her, it is very possible that you have never made any enquiries respecting her family.”

“She has told me that she has a father and a mother, poor but honest, but I confess I have never been curious enough to enquire her name. I only know her baptismal name, which is possibly not her true one, but it does quite well for me.”

“She has given you her true name.”

“Your excellency surprises me! You know her, then?”

“Yes; I did not know her yesterday, but I do now. Two months … Marcoline … yes, it must be she. I am now certain that my man is not mad.”

“Your man?”

“Yes, she is his niece. When we were at London he heard that she had left the paternal roof about the middle of Lent. Marcoline’s mother, who is his sister, wrote to him. He was afraid to speak to her yesterday, because she looked so grand. He even thought he must be mistaken, and he would have been afraid of offending me by speaking to a grand lady at my table. She must have seen him,

too.”

“I don’t think so, she has said nothing about it to me.”

“It is true that he was standing behind her all the time. But let us come to the point. Is Marcoline your wife, or have you any intention of marrying her?”

“I love her as tenderly as any man can love a woman, but I cannot make her a wife; the reasons are known only to herself and me.”

“I respect your secret; but tell me if you would object to my begging her to return to Venice with her uncle?”

“I think Marcoline is happy, but if she has succeeded in gaining the favour of your excellency, she is happier still; and I feel sure that if she were to go back to Venice under the exalted patronage of your excellency, she would efface all stains on her reputation. As to permitting her to go, I can put no stumblingblock in the way, for I am not her master. As her lover I would defend her to the last drop of my blood, but if she wants to leave me I can only assent, though with sorrow.”

“You speak with much sense, and I hope you will not be displeased at my undertaking this good work. Of course I shall do nothing without your consent.”

“I respect the decrees of fate when they are promulgated by such a man as you. If your excellency can induce Marcoline to leave me, I will make no objection; but I warn you that she must be won mildly. She is intelligent, she loves me, and she knows that she is independent; besides she reckons on me, and she has cause to do so. Speak to her to-day by herself; my presence would only be in your way. Wait till dinner is over; the interview might last some time.”

“My dear Casanova, you are an honest man. I am delighted to have made your acquaintance.”

“You do me too much honour. I may say that Marcoline will hear nothing of all this.”

When I got back to the inn, I gave Marcoline an exact account of the whole conversation, warning her that she would be supposed to know nothing about it.

“You must execute a masterly stroke, dearest,” said I, “to persuade M. Querini that I did not lie in saying that you had not seen your uncle. As soon as you see him, you must give a shout of surprise, exclaim, ‘My dear uncle!’ and rush to his arms. This would be a splendid and dramatic situation, which would do you honour in the eyes of all the company.”

“You may be sure that I shall play the part very well, although my heart be sad.”

At the time appointed we waited on the ambassadors, and found that all the other guests had assembled. Marcoline, as blithe and smiling as before, first accosted M. Querini, and then did the polite to all the company. A few minutes before dinner Mattio brought in his master’s spectacles on a silver tray. Marcoline, who was sitting next to M. Querini, stopped short in something she was saying, and staring at the man, exclaimed in a questioning voice,—

“My uncle?”

“Yes, my dear niece.”

Marcoline flung herself into his arms, and there was a moving scene, which excited the admiration of all.

“I knew you had left Venice, dear uncle, but I did not know you were in his excellency’s service. I am so glad to see you again! You will tell my father and mother about me? You see I am happy. Where were you yesterday?”

“Here.”

“And you didn’t see me?”

“Yes; but your uncle there …”

“Well,” said I, laughing, “let us know each other, cousin, and be good friends. Marcoline, I congratulate you on having such an honest man for an uncle.”

“That is really very fine,” said M. Querini; and everybody exclaimed, “Very affecting, very affecting indeed!”

The newly-found uncle departed, and we sat down to dinner, but in spirits which differed from those of yesterday. Marcoline bore traces of those mingled

emotions of happiness and regret which move loyal hearts when they call to mind ther native land. M. Querini looked at her admiringly, and seemed to have all the confidence of success which a good action gives to the mind. M. Morosini sat a pleased spectator. The others were attentive and curious as to what would come next. They listened to what was said, and hung on Marcoline's lips.

After the first course there was greater unison in the company, and M. Morosini told Marcoline that if she would return to Venice she would be sure of finding a husband worthy of her.

"I must be the judge of that," said she.

"Yes, but it is a good thing to have recourse to the advice of discreet persons who are interested in the happiness of both parties."

"Excuse me, but I do not think so. If I ever marry, my husband will have to please me first."

"Who has taught you this maxim?" said Querini.

"My uncle, Casanova, who has, I verily believe, taught me everything that can be learnt in the two months I have been happy enough to live with him."

"I congratulate the master and the pupil, but you are both too young to have learnt all the range of science. Moral science cannot be learnt in two months."

"What his excellency has just said," said I, turning to Marcoline, "is perfectly correct. In affairs of marriage both parties should rely to a great extent on the advice of friends, for mere marriages of inclination are often unhappy."

"That is a really philosophical remark, my dear Marcoline," said Querini; "but tell me the qualities which in your opinion are desirable in a husband."

"I should be puzzled to name them, but they would all become manifest in the man that pleased me."

"And supposing he were a worthless fellow?"

"He would certainly not please me, and that's the reason why I have made up my mind never to marry a man whom I have not studied."

“Supposing you made a mistake?”

“Then I would weep in secret.”

“How if you were poor?”

“She need never fear poverty, my lord,” said I. “She has an income of fifty crowns a month for the remainder of her life.”

“Oh, that’s a different matter. If that is so, sweetheart, you are privileged. You will be able to live at Venice in perfect independence.”

“I think that to live honourably there I only need the protection of a lord like your excellency.”

“As to that, Marcoline, I give you my word that I will do all in my power for you if you come to Venice. But let me ask you one question, how are you sure of your income of fifty crowns a month? You are laughing.”

“I laugh because I am such a silly little thing. I don’t have any heed for my own business. My friend there will tell you all about it.”

“You have not been joking, have you?” said the worthy old man to me.

“Marcoline,” said I, “has not only capital which will produce a larger sum than that which I have named, but she has also valuable possessions. Your excellency will note her wisdom in saying that she would need your lordship’s protection at Venice, for she will require someone to look after the investment of her capital. The whole amount is in my hands, and if she likes Marcoline can have it all in less than two hours.”

“Very good; then you must start for Venice the day after tomorrow. Mattio is quite ready to receive you.”

“I have the greatest respect and love for my uncle, but it is not to his care that your excellency must commend me if I resolve to go.”

“Then to whom?”

“To your own care, my lord. Your excellency has called me dear daughter two or

three times, lead me, then, to Venice, like a good father, and I will come willingly; otherwise I protest I will not leave the man to whom I owe all I have. I will start for London with him the day after tomorrow."

At these words which delighted me silence fell on all. They waited for M. Querini to speak, and the general opinion seemed to be that he had gone too far to be able to draw back. Nevertheless, the old man kept silence; perhaps in his character of devotee he was afraid of being led into temptation, or of giving occasion to scandal, and the other guests were silent like him, and ate to keep each other in countenance. Mattio's hand trembled as he waited; Marcoline alone was calm and collected. Dessert was served, and still no one dared to say a word. All at once this wonderful girl said, in an inspired voice, as if speaking to herself,—

"We must adore the decrees of Divine Providence, but after the issue, since mortals are not able to discern the future, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

"What does that reflection relate to, my dear daughter?" said M. Querini, "and why do you kiss my hand now?"

"I kiss your hand because you have called me your dear daughter for the fourth time."

This judicious remark elicited a smile of approval from all, and restored the general gaiety; but M. Querini asked Marcoline to explain her observation on Providence.

"It was an inspiration, and the result of self-examination. I am well; I have learned something of life; I am only seventeen, and in the course of two months I have become rich by honest means. I am all happy, and yet I owe my happiness to the greatest error a maiden can commit. Thus I humble myself before the decrees, of Providence and adore its wisdom."

"You are right, but, none the less you ought to repent of what you have done."

"That's where I am puzzled; for before I can repent; I must think of it, and when I think of it I find nothing for which to repent. I suppose I shall have to consult some great theologian on the point."

“That will not be necessary; you are, intelligent, and your heart is good, and I will give you the necessary instruction on the way. When one repents there is no need to think of the pleasure which our sins have given us.”

In his character of apostle the good M. Querini was becoming piously amorous of his fair proselyte. He left the table for a few moments, and when he returned he, told Marcoline that if he had a young lady to take to, Venice he should be obliged to leave her in the care of his housekeeper, Dame Veneranda, in whom he had every confidence.

“I have just been speaking to her; and if you would like to come, all is arranged. You shall sleep with her, and dine with us till we get to Venice, and then I will deliver, you into your mother’s keeping, in the presence of your uncle. What do you say?”

“I will come with pleasure:”

“Come and see Dame Veneranda.”

“Willingly.”

“Come with us, Casanova.”

Dame Veneranda looked a perfect cannoness, and I did not think that Marcoline would fall, in love with her, but she seemed sensible and trustworthy. M. Querini told her in our presence what he had just told Marcoline, and the duenna assured him that she would take, the utmost care of the young lady. Marcoline kissed her and called her mother, thus gaining the old lady’s, good graces. We rejoined, the company, who expressed to Marcoline their intense pleasure at having her for a companion on their journey.

“I shall have to put my steward in another carriage,” said M. Querini, “as the calash only holds two.”

“That will not be necessary,” I remarked, “for Marcoline has her carriage, and Mistress Veneranda will find it a very comfortable one. It will hold her luggage as well.”

“You, want to give me your carriage,” said Marcoline. “You are too good to me”

I could made no reply, my emotion was so great. I turned aside and wiped, away my tears. Returning to the company, I found that Marcoline had vanished and M. Morosini, who, was also much affected told me she had gome, to speak to Mistress Veneranda. Everybody was melancholy, and seeing that I was the cause I began to talk about England, where I hoped to make my fortune with a project of mine, the success of which only depended on Lord Egremont. M. de Morosini said he would give me a letter for Lord Egremont and another for M. Zuccata, the Venetian ambassador.

“Are you not afraid,” said M. Querini, “of getting into, trouble with the State Inquisitors for recommending M. Casanova?”

Morosini replied coldly that as the Inquisitors had, not told him for what crime I was condemned, he did not feel himself bound to share their judgment. Old Querini, who was extremely particular, shook his head and said nothing.

Just then Marcoline came back to the room, and everybody could see that she had been weeping. I confess that this mark of her affection was as pleasing to my vanity as to my love; but such is man, and such, doubtless, is the reader who may be censuring my conduct. This charming girl, who still, after all these years, dwells in my old heart, asked me to take her back to the inn, as she wanted to pack up her trunks. We left directly, after having promised to come to dinner on the following day.

I wept bitterly when I got to my room. I told Clairmont to see that the carriage was in good order, and then, hastily undressing, I flung myself on the bed in my dressing-gown, and wept as if some blessing was being taken from me against my will. Marcoline, who was much more sensible, did what she could to console me, but I liked to torment myself, and her words did but increase my despair.

“Reflect,” said she, “that it is not I who am leaving you, but you who are sending me away; that I long to spend the rest of my days with you, and that you have only got to say a word to keep me.”

I knew that she was right; but still a fatal fear which has always swayed me, the fear of being bound to anyone, and the hypocrisy of a libertine ever longing for change, both these feelings made me persist in my resolution and my sadness.

About six o’clock MM. Morosini and Querini came into the courtyard and looked at the carriage, which was being inspected by the wheelwright. They

spoke to Clairmont, and then came to see us.

“Good heavens!” said M. Querini, seeing the numerous boxes which she was going to place on her carriage; and when he had heard that her carriage was the one he had just looked at, he seemed surprised; it was indeed a very good vehicle.

M. Morosini told Marcoline that if she liked to sell it when she got to Venice he would give her a thousand Venetian ducats, or three thousand francs for it.

“You might give her double that amount,” said I, “for it is worth three thousand ducats.”

“We will arrange all that,” said he; and Querini added,—

“It will be a considerable addition to the capital she proposes to invest.”

After some agreeable conversation I told M. Querini that I would give him a bill of exchange for five thousand ducats, which, with the three or four thousand ducats the sale of her jewellery would realize, and the thousand for the carriage, would give her a capital of nine or ten thousand ducats, the interest of which would bring her in a handsome income.

Next morning I got M. Bono to give me a bill of exchange on M. Querini’s order, and at dinnertime Marcoline handed it over to her new protector, who wrote her a formal receipt. M. Morosini gave me the letters he had promised, and their departure was fixed for eleven o’clock the next day. The reader may imagine that our dinner-party was not over gay. Marcoline was depressed, I as gloomy as a splenetic Englishman, and between us we made the feast more like a funeral than a meeting of friends.

I will not attempt to describe the night I passed with my charmer. She asked me again and again how I could be my own executioner; but I could not answer, for I did not know. But how often have I done things which caused me pain, but to which I was impelled by some occult force it was my whim not to resist.

In the morning, when I had put on my boots and spurs, and told Clairmont not to be uneasy if I did not return that night, Marcoline and I drove to the ambassadors’ residence. We breakfasted together, silently enough, for Marcoline had tears in her eyes, and everyone knowing my noble conduct towards her

respected her natural grief. After breakfast we set out, I sitting in the forepart of the carriage, facing Marcoline and Dame Veneranda, who would have made me laugh under any other circumstances, her astonishment at finding herself in a more gorgeous carriage than the ambassador's was so great. She expatiated on the elegance and comfort of the equipage, and amused us by saying that her master was quite right in saying that the people would take her for the ambassadress. But in spite of this piece of comedy, Marcoline and I were sad all the way. M. Querini, who did not like night travelling, made us stop at Pont-Boivoisin, at nine o'clock, and after a bad supper everyone went to bed to be ready to start at daybreak. Marcoline was to sleep with Veneranda, so I accompanied her, and the worthy old woman went to bed without any ceremony, lying so close to the wall that there was room for two more; but after Marcoline had got into bed I sat down on a chair, and placing my head beside hers on the pillow we mingled our sobs and tears all night.

When Veneranda, who had slept soundly, awoke, she was much astonished to see me still in the same position. She was a great devotee, but women's piety easily gives place to pity, and she had moved to the furthest extremity of the bed with the intention of giving me another night of love. But my melancholy prevented my profiting by her kindness.

I had ordered a saddle horse to be ready for me in the morning. We took a hasty cup of coffee and bade each other mutual farewells. I placed Marcoline in the carriage, gave her a last embrace, and waited for the crack of the postillion's whip to gallop back to Lyons. I tore along like a madman, for I felt as if I should like to send the horse to the ground and kill myself. But death never comes to him that desires it, save in the fable of the worthy Lafontaine. In six hours I had accomplished the eighteen leagues between Pont-Boivoisin and Lyons, only stopping to change horses. I tore off my clothes and threw myself on the bed, where thirty hours before I had enjoyed all the delights of love. I hoped that the bliss I had lost would return to me in my dreams. However, I slept profoundly, and did not wake till eight o'clock. I had been asleep about nineteen hours.

I rang for Clairmont, and told him to bring up my breakfast, which I devoured eagerly. When my stomach was restored in this manner I fell asleep again, and did not get up till the next morning, feeling quite well, and as if I could support life a little longer.

Three days after Marcoline's departure I bought a comfortable two-wheeled

carriage with patent springs, and sent my trunks to Paris by the diligence. I kept a portmanteau containing the merest necessaries, for I meant to travel in a dressing-gown and night-cap, and keep to myself all the way to Paris. I intended this as a sort of homage to Marcoline, but I reckoned without my host.

I was putting my jewellery together in a casket when Clairmont announced a tradesman and his daughter, a pretty girl whom I had remarked at dinner, for since the departure of my fair Venetian I had dined at the table-d'hote by way of distraction.

I shut up my jewels and asked them to come in, and the father addressed me politely, saying,—

"Sir, I have come to ask you to do me a favour which will cost you but little, while it will be of immense service to my daughter and myself."

"What can I do for you? I am leaving Lyons at daybreak tomorrow."

"I know it, for you said so at dinner; but we shall be ready at any hour. Be kind enough to give my daughter a seat in your carriage. I will, of course, pay for a third horse, and will ride post."

"You cannot have seen the carriage."

"Excuse me, I have done so. It is, I know, only meant for one, but she could easily squeeze into it. I know I am troubling you, but if you were aware of the convenience it would be to me I am sure you would not refuse. All the places in the diligence are taken up to next week, and if I don't get to Paris in six days I might as well stay away altogether. If I were a rich man I would post, but that would cost four hundred francs, and I cannot afford to spend so much. The only course open to me is to leave by the diligence tomorrow, and to have myself and my daughter bound to the roof. You see, sir, the idea makes her weep, and I don't like it much better myself."

I looked attentively at the girl, and found her too pretty for me to keep within bounds if I travelled alone with her. I was sad, and the torment I had endured in parting from Marcoline had made me resolve to avoid all occasions which might have similar results. I thought this resolve necessary for my peace of mind.

"This girl," I said to myself, "may be so charming that I should fall in love with

her if I yield to the father's request, and I do not wish for any such result."

I turned to the father and said,—

"I sympathize with you sincerely; but I really don't see what I can do for you without causing myself the greatest inconvenience."

"Perhaps you think that I shall not be able to ride so many posts in succession, but you needn't be afraid on that score:"

"The horse might give in; you might have a fall, and I know that I should feel obliged to stop, and I am in a hurry. If that reason does not strike you as a cogent one, I am sorry, for to me it appears unanswerable."

"Let us run the risk, sir, at all events."

"There is a still greater risk of which I can tell you nothing. In brief, sir, you ask what is impossible."

"In Heaven's name, sir," said the girl, with a voice and a look that would have pierced a heart of stone, "rescue me from that dreadful journey on the roof of the diligence! The very idea makes me shudder; I should be afraid of falling off all the way; besides, there is something mean in travelling that way. Do but grant me this favour, and I will sit at your feet so as not to discomfort you."

"This is too much! You do not know me, mademoiselle. I am neither cruel nor impolite, especially where your sex is concerned, though my refusal must make you feel otherwise. If I give way you may regret it afterwards, and I do not wish that to happen." Then, turning to the father, I said,—

"A post-chaise costs six Louis. Here they are; take them. I will put off my departure for a few hours, if necessary, to answer for the chaise, supposing you are not known here, and an extra horse will cost four Louis take them. As to the rest, you would have spent as much in taking two places in the diligence."

"You are very kind, sir, but I cannot accept your gift. I am not worthy of it, and I should be still less worthy if I accepted the money. Adele, let us go. Forgive us, sir, if we have wasted half an hour of your time. Come, my poor child."

"Wait a moment, father."

Adele begged him to wait, as her sobs almost choked her. I was furious with everything, but having received one look from her beautiful eyes I could not withstand her sorrow any longer, and said,

“Calm yourself, mademoiselle. It shall never be said that I remained unmoved while beauty wept. I yield to your request, for if I did not I should not be able to sleep all night. But I accede on one condition,” I added, turning to her father, “and that is that you sit at the back of the carriage.”

“Certainly; but what is to become of your servant?”

“He will ride on in front. Everything is settled. Go to bed now, and be ready to start at six o’clock.”

“Certainly, but you will allow me to pay for the extra horse?”

“You shall pay nothing at all; it would be a shame if I received any money from you. You have told me you are poor, and poverty is no dishonour; well, I may tell you that I am rich, and riches are no honour save when they are used in doing good. Therefore, as I said, I will pay for all.”

“Very good, but I will pay for the extra horse in the carriage.”

“Certainly not, and let us have no bargaining, please; it is time to go to bed. I will put you down at Paris without the journey costing you a farthing, and then if you like you may thank me; these are the only conditions on which I will take you. Look! Mdlle. Adele is laughing, that’s reward enough for me.”

“I am laughing for joy at having escaped that dreadful diligence roof.”

“I see, but I hope you will not weep in my carriage, for all sadness is an abomination to me.”

I went, to bed, resolved to struggle against my fate no longer. I saw that I could not withstand the tempting charms of this new beauty, and I determined that everything should be over in a couple of days. Adele had beautiful blue eyes, a complexion wherein were mingled the lily and the rose, a small mouth, excellent teeth, a figure still slender but full of promise; here, surely, were enough motives for a fresh fall. I fell asleep, thanking my good genius for thus providing me with amusement on the journey.

Just before we started the father came and asked if it was all the same to me whether we went by Burgundy or the Bourbonnais.

“Certainly. Do you prefer any particular route?”

“If I went through Nevers I might be able to collect a small account.”

“Then we will go by the Bourbonnais.”

Directly after Adele, simply but neatly dressed, came down and wished me good day, telling me that her father was going to put a small trunk containing their belongings at the back of the carriage. Seeing me busy, she asked if she could help me in any way.

“No,” I replied, “you had better take a seat,”

She did so, but in a timid manner, which annoyed me, because it seemed to express that she was a dependent of mine. I told her so gently, and made her take some coffee with me, and her shyness soon wore off.

We were just stepping into the carriage when a man came and told me that the lamps were out of repair and would come off if something were not done to them. He offered to put them into good repair in the course of an hour. I was in a terrible rage, and called Clairmont and began to scold him, but he said that the lamps were all right a short while ago, and that the man must have put them out of order that he might have the task of repairing them.

He had hit it off exactly. I had heard of the trick before, and I called out to the man; and on his answering me rather impudently, I began to kick him, with my pistol in my hand. He ran off swearing, and the noise brought up the landlord and five or six of his people. Everybody said I was in the right, but all the same I had to waste two hours as it would not have been prudent to travel without lamps.

Another lamp-maker was summoned; he looked at the damage, and laughed at the rascally trick his fellow-tradesman had played me.

“Can I imprison the rascal?” I said to the landlord. “I should like to have the satisfaction of doing so, were it to cost me two Louis.”

“Two Louis! Your honour shall be attended to in a moment.”

I was in a dreadful rage, and did not notice Adele, who was quite afraid of me. A police official came up to take my information, and examine witnesses, and to draw up the case.

“How much is your time worth, sir?” he asked me.

“Five louis.”

With these words I slid two louis into his hand, and he immediately wrote down a fine of twenty louis against the lamp-maker, and then went his way, saying,—

“Your man will be in prison in the next ten minutes.” I breathed again at the prospect of vengeance. I then begged Mdlle. Adele’s pardon, who asked mine in her turn, not knowing how I had offended her. This might have led to some affectionate passages, but her father came in saying that the rascal was in prison, and that everyone said I was right.

“I am perfectly ready to swear that he did the damage,” said he.

“You saw him, did you?”

“No, but that’s of no consequence, as everybody is sure he did it.”

This piece of simplicity restored my good temper completely, and I began to ask Moreau, as he called himself, several questions. He told me he was a widower, that Adele was his only child, that he was going to set up in business at Louviers, and so on.

In the course of an hour the farce turned into a tragedy, in the following manner. Two women, one of them with a baby at her breast, and followed by four brats, all of whom might have been put under a bushel measure, came before me, and falling on their knees made me guess the reason of this pitiful sight. They were the wife, the mother, and the children of the delinquent.

My heart was soon moved with pity for them, for my vengeance had been complete, and I did not harbour resentment; but the wife almost put me in a fury again by saying that her husband was an innocent man, and that they who had accused him were rascals.

The mother, seeing the storm ready to burst, attacked me more adroitly, admitting that her son might be guilty, but that he must have been driven to it by misery, as he had got no bread wherewith to feed his children. She added:

“My good sir, take pity on us, for he is our only support. Do a good deed and set him free, for he would stay in prison all his days unless we sold our beds to pay you.”

“My worthy woman, I forgive him completely. Hand this document to the police magistrate and all will be well.”

At the same time I gave her a louis and told her to go, not wishing to be troubled with her thanks. A few moments after, the official came to get my signature for the man’s release, and I had to pay him the legal costs. My lamps cost twelve francs to mend, and at nine o’clock I started, having spent four or five louis for nothing.

Adele was obliged to sit between my legs, but she was ill at ease. I told her to sit further back, but as she would have had to lean on me, I did not urge her; it would have been rather a dangerous situation to begin with. Moreau sat at the back of the carriage, Clairmont went on in front, and we were thus neck and neck, or rather neck and back, the whole way.

We got down to change horses, and as we were getting into the carriage again Adele had to lift her leg, and shewed me a pair of black breeches. I have always had a horror of women with breeches, but above all of black breeches.

“Sir,” said I to her father, “your daughter has shewn me her black breeches.”

“It’s uncommonly lucky for her that she didn’t shew you something else.”

I liked the reply, but the cursed breeches had so offended me that I became quite sulky. It seemed to me that such clothes were a kind of rampart or outwork, very natural, no doubt, but I thought a young girl should know nothing of the danger, or, at all events, pretend ignorance if she did not possess it. As I could neither scold her nor overcome my bad temper, I contented myself with being polite, but I did not speak again till we got to St. Simphorien, unless it was to ask her to sit more comfortably.

When we got to St. Simphorien I told Clairmont to go on in front and order us a

good supper at Roanne, and to sleep there. When we were about half-way Adele told me that she must be a trouble to me, as I was not so gay as I had been. I assured her that it was not so, and that I only kept silence that she might be able to rest.

“You are very kind,” she answered, “but it is quite a mistake for you to think that you would disturb me by talking. Allow me to tell you that you are concealing the real cause of your silence.”

“Do you know the real cause?”

“Yes, I think I do.”

“Well, what is it?”

“You have changed since you saw my breeches.”

“You are right, this black attire has clothed my soul with gloom.”

“I am very sorry, but you must allow that in the first place I was not to suppose that you were going to see my breeches, and in the second place that I could not be aware that the colour would be distasteful to you.”

“True again, but as I chanced to see the articles you must forgive my disgust. This black has filled my soul with funereal images, just as white would have cheered me. Do you always wear those dreadful breeches?”

“I am wearing them for the first time to-day.”

“Then you must allow that you have committed an unbecoming action.”

“Unbecoming?”

“Yes, what would you have said if I had come down in petticoats this morning? You would have pronounced them unbecoming. You are laughing.”

“Forgive me, but I never heard anything so amusing. But your comparison will not stand; everyone would have seen your petticoats, whereas no one has any business to see my breeches.”

I assented to her logic, delighted to find her capable of tearing my sophism to pieces, but I still preserved silence.

At Roanne we had a good enough supper, and Moreau, who knew very well that if it had not been for his daughter there would have been no free journey and free supper for him, was delighted when I told him that she kept me good company. I told him about our discussion on breeches, and he pronounced his daughter to be in the wrong, laughing pleasantly. After supper I told him that he and his daughter were to sleep in the room in which we were sitting, while I would pass the night in a neighbouring closet.

Just as we were starting the next morning, Clairmont told me that he would go on in front, to see that our beds were ready, adding that as we had lost one night it would not do much harm if we were to lose another.

This speech let me know that my faithful Clairmont began to feel the need of rest, and his health was dear to me. I told him to stop at St. Pierre le Mortier, and to take care that a good supper was ready for us. When we were in the carriage again, Adele thanked me.

“Then you don’t like night travelling?” I said.

“I shouldn’t mind it if I were not afraid of going to sleep and falling on you.”

“Why, I should like it. A pretty girl like you is an agreeable burden.”

She made no reply, but I saw that she understood; my declaration was made, but something more was wanted before I could rely on her docility. I relapsed into silence again till we got to Varennes, and then I said,—

“If I thought you could eat a roast fowl with as good an appetite as mine, I would dine here.”

“Try me, I will endeavour to match you.”

We ate well and drank better, and by the time we started again we were a little drunk. Adele, who was only accustomed to drink wine two or three times a year, laughed at not being able to stand upright, but seemed to be afraid that something would happen. I comforted her by saying that the fumes of champagne soon evaporated; but though she strove with all her might to keep

awake, nature conquered, and letting her pretty head fall on my breast she fell asleep, and did not rouse herself for two hours. I treated her with the greatest respect, though I could not resist ascertaining that the article of clothing which had displeased me so much had entirely disappeared.

While she slept I enjoyed the pleasure of gazing on the swelling curves of her budding breast, but I restrained my ardour, as the disappearance of the black breeches assured me that I should find her perfectly submissive whenever I chose to make the assault. I wished, however, that she should give herself up to me of her own free will, or at any rate come half-way to meet me, and I knew that I had only to smooth the path to make her do so.

When she awoke and found that she had been sleeping in my arms, her astonishment was extreme. She apologized and begged me to forgive her, while I thought the best way to put her at ease would be to give her an affectionate kiss. The result was satisfactory; who does not know the effect of a kiss given at the proper time?

As her dress was in some disorder she tried to adjust it, but we were rather pushed for space, and by an awkward movement she uncovered her knee. I burst out laughing and she joined me, and had the presence of mind to say:

“I hope the black colour has given you no funereal thoughts this time.”

“The hue of the rose, dear Adele, can only inspire me with delicious fancies.”

I saw that she lowered her eyes, but in a manner that shewed she was pleased.

With this talk—and, so to speak, casting oil on the flames—we reached Moulin, and got down for a few moments. A crowd of women assailed us with knives and edged tools of all sorts, and I bought the father and daughter whatever they fancied. We went on our way, leaving the women quarrelling and fighting because some had sold their wares and others had not.

In the evening we reached St. Pierre; but during the four hours that had elapsed since we left Moulin we had made way, and Adele had become quite familiar with me.

Thanks to Clairmont, who had arrived two hours before, an excellent supper awaited us. We supped in a large room, where two great white beds stood ready

to receive us.

I told Moreau that he and his daughter should sleep in one bed, and I in the other; but he replied that I and Adele could each have a bed to ourselves, as he wanted to start for Nevers directly after supper, so as to be able to catch-his debtor at daybreak, and to rejoin us when we got there the following day.

“If you had told me before, we would have gone on to Nevers and slept there.”

“You are too kind. I mean to ride the three and a half stages. The riding will do me good, and I like it. I leave my daughter in your care. She will not be so near you as in the carriage.”

“Oh, we will be very discreet, you may be sure!”

After his departure I told Adele to go to bed in her clothes, if she were afraid of me.

“I shan’t be offended,” I added.

“It would be very wrong of me,” she answered, “to give you such a proof of my want of confidence.”

She rose, went out a moment, and when she came back she locked the door, and as soon as she was ready to slip off her last article of clothing came and kissed me. I happened to be writing at the time, and as she had come up on tiptoe I was surprised, though in a very agreeable manner. She fled to her bed, saying saucily,

“You are frightened of me, I think?”

“You are wrong, but you surprised me. Come back, I want to see you fall asleep in my arms.”

“Come and see me sleep.”

“Will you sleep all the time?”

“Of course I shall.”

“We will see about that.”

I flung the pen down, and in a moment I held her in my arms, smiling, ardent, submissive to my desires, and only entreating me to spare her. I did my best, and though she helped me to the best of her ability, the first assault was a labour of Hercules. The others were pleasanter, for it is only the first step that is painful, and when the field had been stained with the blood of three successive battles, we abandoned ourselves to repose. At five o'clock in the morning Clairmont knocked, and I told him to get us some coffee. I was obliged to get up without giving fair Adele good day, but I promised that she should have it on the way.

When she was dressed she looked at the altar where she had offered her first sacrifice to love, and viewed the signs of her defeat with a sigh. She was pensive for some time, but when we were in the carriage again her gaiety returned, and in our mutual transports we forgot to grieve over our approaching parting.

We found Moreau at Nevers; he was in a great state because he could not get his money before noon. He dared not ask me to wait for him, but I said that we would have a good dinner and start when the money was paid.

While dinner was being prepared we shut ourselves up in a room to avoid the crowd of women who pestered us to buy a thousand trifles, and at two o'clock we started, Moreau having got his money. We got to Cosne at twilight, and though Clairmont was waiting for us at Briane, I decided on stopping where I was, and this night proved superior to the first. The next day we made a breakfast of the meal which had been prepared for our supper, and we slept at Fontainebleau, where I enjoyed Adele for the last time. In the morning I promised to come and see her at Louviers, when I returned from England, but I could not keep my word.

We took four hours to get from Fontainebleau to Paris, but how quickly the time passed. I stopped the carriage near the Pont St. Michel, opposite to a clockmaker's shop, and after looking at several watches I gave one to Adele, and then dropped her and her father at the corner of the Rue aux Ours. I got down at the "Hotel de Montmorenci," not wanting to stop with Madame d'Urfe, but after dressing I went to dine with her.

CHAPTER VI

I Drive My Brother The Abbe From Paris—Madame du Rumain Recovers Her Voice Through My Cabala—A Bad Joke—The Corticelli—I Take d'Aranda to London My Arrival At Calais

As usual, Madame d'Urfe received me with open arms, but I was surprised at hearing her tell Aranda to fetch the sealed letter she had given him in the morning. I opened it, found it was dated the same day, and contained the following:

"My genius told me at daybreak that Galtinardus was starting from Fontainebleau, and that he will come and dine with me to-day."

She chanced to be right, but I have had many similar experiences in the course of my life-experiences which would have turned any other man's head. I confess they have surprised me, but they have never made me lose my reasoning powers. Men make a guess which turns out to be correct, and they immediately claim prophetic power; but they forgot all about the many cases in which they have been mistaken. Six months ago I was silly enough to bet that a bitch would have a litter of five bitch pups on a certain day, and I won. Everyone thought it a marvel except myself, for if I had chanced to lose I should have been the first to laugh.

I naturally expressed my admiration for Madame d'Urfe's genius, and shared her joy in finding herself so well during her pregnancy. The worthy lunatic had given orders that she was not at home to her usual callers, in expectation of my arrival, and so we spent the rest of the day together, consulting how we could make Aranda go to London of his own free will; and as I did not in the least know how it was to be done, the replies of the oracle were very obscure. Madame d'Urfe had such a strong dislike to bidding him go, that I could not presume on her obedience to that extent, and I had to rack my brains to find out some way of making the little man ask to be taken to London as a favour.

I went to the Comedie Italienne, where I found Madame du Rumain, who seemed glad to see me back in Paris again.

“I want to consult the oracle on a matter of the greatest importance,” said she, “and I hope you will come and see me tomorrow.”

I, of course, promised to do so.

I did not care for the performance, and should have left the theatre if I had not wanted to see the ballet, though I could not guess the peculiar interest it would have for me. What was my surprise to see the Corticelli amongst the dancers. I thought I would like to speak to her, not for any amorous reasons, but because I felt curious to hear her adventures. As I came out I met the worthy Baletti, who told me he had left the stage and was living on an annuity. I asked him about the Corticelli, and he gave me her address, telling me that she was in a poor way.

I went to sup with my brother and his wife, who were delighted to see me, and told me that I had come just in time to use a little gentle persuasion on our friend the abbe, of whom they had got tired.

“Where is he?”

“You will see him before long, for it is near supper-time; and as eating and drinking are the chief concerns of his life, he will not fail to put in an appearance.”

“What has he done?”

“Everything that a good-for-nothing can do; but I hear him coming, and I will tell you all about it in his presence.”

The abbe was astonished to see me, and began a polite speech, although I did not favour him with so much as a look. Then he asked me what I had against him.

“All that an honest man can have against a monster. I have read the letter you wrote to Possano, in which I am styled a cheat, a spy, a coiner, and a poisoner. What does the abbe think of that?”

He sat down to table without a word, and my brother began as follows:

“When this fine gentleman first came here, my wife and I gave him a most cordial welcome. I allowed him a nice room, and told him to look upon my house as his own. Possibly with the idea of interesting us in his favour, he began

by saying that you were the greatest rascal in the world. To prove it he told us how he had carried off a girl from Venice with the idea of marrying her, and went to you at Genoa as he was in great necessity. He confesses that you rescued him from his misery, but he says that you traitorously took possession of the girl, associating her with two other mistresses you had at that time. In fine, he says that you lay with her before his eyes, and that you drove him from Marseilles that you might be able to enjoy her with greater freedom.

"He finished his story by saying that as he could not go back to Venice, he needed our help till he could find some means of living on his talents or through his profession as a priest. I asked him what his talents were, and he said he could teach Italian; but as he speaks it vilely, and doesn't know a word of French, we laughed at him. We were therefore reduced to seeing what we could do for him in his character of priest, and the very next day my wife spoke to M. de Sauci, the ecclesiastical commissioner, begging him to give my brother an introduction to the Archbishop of Paris, who might give him something that might lead to his obtaining a good benefice. He would have to go to our parish church, and I spoke to the rector of St. Sauveur, who promised to let him say mass, for which he would receive the usual sum of twelve sols. This was a very good beginning, and might have led to something worth having; but when we told the worthy abbe of our success, he got into a rage, saying that he was not the man to say mass for twelve sols, nor to toady the archbishop in the hope of being taken into his service. No, he was not going to be in anyone's service. We concealed our indignation, but for the three weeks he has been here he has turned everything upside down. My wife's maid left us yesterday, to our great annoyance, because of him; and the cook says she will go if he remains, as he is always bothering her in the kitchen. We are therefore resolved that he shall go, for his society is intolerable to us. I am delighted to have you here, as I think we ought to be able to drive him away between us, and the sooner the better."

"Nothing easier," said I; "if he likes to stay in Paris, let him do so. You can send off his rags to some furnished apartments, and serve him with a police order not to put foot in your house again. On the other hand if he wants to go away, let him say where, and I will pay his journey-money this evening."

"Nothing could be more generous. What do you say, abbe?"

"I say that this is the way in which he drove me from Marseilles. What intolerable violence!"

“Give God thanks, monster, that instead of thrashing you within an inch of your life as you deserve, I am going to give you some money! You thought you would get me hanged at Lyons, did you?”

“Where is Marcoline ?”

“What is that to you? Make haste and choose between Rome and Paris, and remember that if you choose Paris you will have nothing to live on.”

“Then I will go to Rome.”

“Good! The journey only costs twenty louis, but I will give you twenty-five.”

“Hand them over.”

“Patience. Give me pens, ink and paper.”

“What are you going to write?”

“Bills of exchange on Lyons, Turin, Genoa, Florence, and Rome. Your place will be paid as far as Lyons, and there you will be able to get five louis, and the same sum in the other towns, but as long as you stay in Paris not one single farthing will I give you. I am staying at the ‘Hotel Montmorenci;’ that’s all you need know about me.”

I then bade farewell to my brother and his wife, telling them that we should meet again. Checco, as we called my brother, told me he would send on the abbe’s trunk the day following, and I bade him do so by all means.

The next day trunk and abbe came together. I did not even look at him, but after I had seen that a room had been assigned to him, I called out to the landlord that I would be answerable for the abbe’s board and lodging for three days, and not a moment more. The abbe tried to speak to me, but I sternly declined to have anything to say to him, strictly forbidding Clairmont to admit him to my apartments.

When I went to Madame du Rumain’s, the porter said,—

“Sir, everybody is still asleep, but who are you? I have instructions.”

“I am the Chevalier de Seingalt.”

“Kindly come into my lodge, and amuse yourself with my niece. I will soon be with you.”

I went in, and found a neatly-dressed and charming girl.

“Mademoiselle,” said I, “your uncle has told me to come and amuse myself with you.”

“He is a rascal, for he consulted neither of us.”

“Yes, but he knew well enough that there could be no doubt about my opinion after I had seen you.”

“You are very flattering, sir, but I know the value of compliments.”

“Yes, I suppose that you often get them, and you well deserve them all.”

The conversation, as well as the pretty eyes of the niece, began to interest me, but fortunately the uncle put an end to it by begging me to follow him. He took me to the maid’s room, and I found her putting on a petticoat, and grumbling the while.

“What is the matter, my pretty maid? You don’t seem to be in a good humour.”

“You would have done better to come at noon; it is not nine o’clock yet, and madame did not come home till three o’clock this morning. I am just going to wake her, and I am sorry for her.”

I was taken into the room directly, and though her eyes were half closed she thanked me for awaking her, while I apologized for having disturbed her sleep.

“Raton,” said she, “give us the writing materials, and go away. Don’t come till I call you, and if anyone asks for me, I am asleep.”

“Very good, madam, and I will go to sleep also.”

“My dear M. Casanova, how is it that the oracle has deceived us? M. du Rumain is still alive, and he ought to have died six months ago. It is true that he is not

well, but we will not go into all that again. The really important question is this: You know that music is my favourite pursuit, and that my voice is famous for its strength and compass; well, I have comrletely lost it. I have not sung a note for three months. The doctors have stuffed me with remedies which have had no effect: It makes me very unhappy, for singing was the one thing that made me cling to life. I entreat you to ask the oracle how I can recover my voice. How delighted I should be if I could sing by tomorrow. I have a great many people coming here, and I should enjoy the general astonishment. If the oracle wills it I am sure that it might be so, for I have a very strong chest. That is my question; it is a long one, but so much the better; the answer will be long too, and I like long answers."

I was of the same opinion, for when the question was a long one, I had time to think over the answer as I made the pyramid. Madame Rumain's complaint was evidently something trifling, but I was no physician, and knew nothing about medicine. Besides, for the honour of the cabala, the oracle must have nothing to do with mere empiric remedies. I soon made up my mind that a little care in her way of living would soon restore the throat to its normal condition, and any doctor with brains in his head could have told her as much. In the position I was in, I had to make use of the language of a charlatan, so I resolved on prescribing a ceremonial worship to the sun, at an hour which would insure some regularity in her mode of life.

The oracle declared that she would recover her voice in twenty-one days, reckoning from the new moon, if she worshipped the rising sun every morning, in a room which had at least one window looking to the east.

A second reply bade her sleep seven hours in succession before she sacrificed to the sun, each hour symbolizing one of the seven planets; and before she went to sleep she was to take a bath in honour of the moon, placing her legs in lukewarm water up to the knees. I then pointed out the psalms which she was to recite to the moon, and those which she was to say in the face of the rising sun, at a closed window.

This last direction filled her with admiration, "for," said she, "the oracle knew that I should catch cold if the window were open. I will do everything the oracle bids me," added the credulous lady, "but I hope you will get me everything necessary for the ceremonies"

“I will not only take care that you have all the requisites, but as a proof of my zeal for you, I will come and do the suffumigations myself that you may learn how it is done.”

She seemed deeply moved by this offer, but I expected as much. I knew how the most trifling services are assessed at the highest rates; and herein lies the great secret of success in the world, above all, where ladies of fashion are concerned.

As we had to begin the next day, being the new moon, I called on her at nine o’clock. As she had to sleep for seven successive hours before performing the ceremonies to the rising sun, she would have to go to bed before ten; and the observance of all these trifles was of importance, as anyone can understand.

I was sure that if anything could restore this lady’s voice a careful regimen would do it. I proved to be right, and at London I received a grateful letter announcing the success of my method.

Madame du Rumain, whose daughter married the Prince de Polignac, was a lover of pleasure, and haunted grand supper-parties. She could not expect to enjoy perfect health, and she had lost her voice by the way in which she had abused it. When she had recovered her voice, as she thought, by the influence of the genii, she laughed at anyone who told her that there was no such thing as magic.

I found a letter from Therese at Madame d’Urfe’s, in which she informed me that she would come to Paris and take her son back by force if I did not bring him to London, adding that she wanted a positive reply. I did not ask for anything more, but I thought Therese very insolent.

I told Aranda that his mother would be waiting for us at Abbeville in a week’s time, and that she wanted to see him.

“We will both give her the pleasure of seeing us.”

“Certainly,” said he; “but as you are going on to London, how shall I come back?”

“By yourself,” said Madame d’Urfe, “dressed as a postillion.”

“What shall I ride post? How delightfull”

“You must only cover eight or ten posts a day, for you have no need to risk your life by riding all night.”

“Yes, yes; but I am to dress like a postillion, am I not?”

“Yes; I will have a handsome jacket and a pair of leather breeches made for you, and you shall have a flag with the arms of France on it.”

“They will take me for a courier going to London.”

With the idea that to throw difficulties in the way would confirm him in his desire to go, I said roughly that I could not hear of it, as the horse might fall and break his neck. I had to be begged and entreated for three days before I would give in, and I did so on the condition that he should only ride on his way back.

As he was certain of returning to Paris, he only took linen sufficient for a very short absence; but as I knew that once at Abbeville he could not escape me, I sent his trunk on to Calais, where we found it on our arrival. However, the worthy Madame d’Urfe got him a magnificent postillion’s suit, not forgetting the top-boots.

This business which offered a good many difficulties was happily arranged by the action of pure chance; and I am glad to confess that often in my life has chance turned the scale in my favour.

I called on a banker and got him to give me heavy credits on several of the most important houses in London, where I wished to make numerous acquaintances.

While I was crossing the Place des Victoires, I passed by the house where the Corticelli lived, and my curiosity made me enter. She was astonished to see me, and after a long silence she burst into tears, and said,—

“I should never have been unhappy if I had never known you.”

“Yes, you would, only in some other way; your misfortunes are the result of your bad conduct. But tell me what are your misfortunes.”

“As I could not stay in Turin after you had dishonoured me …”

“You came to dishonour yourself here, I suppose. Drop that tone, or else I will

leave you."

She began her wretched tale, which struck me with consternation, for I could not help feeling that I was the first and final cause of this long list of woes. Hence I felt it was my duty to succour her, however ill she had treated me in the past.

"Then," said I, "you are at present the victim of a fearful disease, heavily in debt, likely to be turned out of doors and imprisoned by your creditors. What do you propose to do?"

"Do! Why, throw myself in the Seine, to be sure; that's all that is left for me to do. I have not a farthing left."

"And what would you do if you had some money?"

"I would put myself under the doctor's hands, in the first place, and then if any money was left I would go to Bologna and try to get a living somehow. Perhaps I should have learnt a little wisdom by experience."

"Poor girl, I pity you! and in spite of your bad treatment of me, which has brought you to this pass, I will not abandon you. Here are four louis for your present wants, and tomorrow I will tell you where you are to go for your cure. When you have got well again, I will give you enough money for the journey. Dry your tears, repent, amend your ways, and may God have mercy on you!"

The poor girl threw herself on the ground before me, and covered one of my hands with kisses, begging me to forgive her for the ill she had done me. I comforted her and went my way, feeling very sad. I took a coach and drove to the Rue de Seine, where I called on an old surgeon I knew, told him the story, and what I wanted him to do. He told me he could cure her in six weeks without anybody hearing about it, but that he must be paid in advance.

"Certainly; but the girl is poor, and I am doing it out of charity."

The worthy man took a piece of paper and gave me a note addressed to a house in the Faubourg St. Antoine, which ran as follows:

"You will take in the person who brings you this note and three hundred francs, and in six weeks you will send her back cured, if it please God. The person has reasons for not wishing to be known."

I was delighted to have managed the matter so speedily and at such a cheap rate, and I went to bed in a calmer state of mind, deferring my interview with my brother till the next day.

He came at eight o'clock, and, constant to his folly, told me he had a plan to which he was sure I could have no objection.

"I don't want to hear anything about it; make your choice, Paris or Rome."

"Give me the journey-money, I will remain at Paris; but I will give a written engagement not to trouble you or your brother again. That should be sufficient."

"It is not for you to judge of that. Begone! I have neither the time nor the wish to listen to you. Remember, Paris without a farthing, or Rome with twenty-five louis."

Thereupon I called Clairmont, and told him to put the abbe out.

I was in a hurry to have done with the Corticelli affair, and went to the house in the Faubourg St. Antoine, where I found a kindly and intelligent-looking man and woman, and all the arrangements of the house satisfactory and appropriate to the performance of secret cures. I saw the room and the bath destined for the new boarder, everything was clean and neat, and I gave them a hundred crowns, for which they handed me a receipt. I told them that the lady would either come in the course of the day, or on the day following.

I went to dine with Madame d'Urfe and the young Count d'Aranda. After dinner the worthy marchioness talked to me for a long time of her pregnancy, dwelling on her symptoms, and on the happiness that would be hers when the babe stirred within her. I had put to a strong restrain upon myself to avoid bursting out laughing. When I had finished with her I went to the Corticelli, who called me her saviour and her guardian angel. I gave her two louis to get some linen out of pawn, and promised to come and see her before I left Paris, to give her a hundred crowns, which would take her back to Bologna. Then I waited on Madame du Rumain who had said farewell to society for three weeks.

This lady had an excellent heart, and was pretty as well, but she had so curious a society-manner that she often made me laugh most heartily. She talked of the sun and moon as if they were two Exalted Personages, to whom she was about to be presented. She was once discussing with me the state of the elect in heaven, and

said that their greatest happiness was, no doubt, to love God to distraction, for she had no idea of calm and peaceful bliss.

I gave her the incense for the fumigation, and told her what psalms to recite, and then we had a delicious supper. She told her chambermaid to escort me at ten o'clock to a room on the second floor which she had furnished for me with the utmost luxury, adding,—

"Take care that the Chevalier de Seingalt is able to come into my room at five o'clock tomorrow."

At nine o'clock I placed her legs in a bath of lukewarm water, and taught her how to suffumigate. Her legs were moulded by the hand of the Graces and I wiped them amorously, laughing within myself at her expression of gratitude, and I then laid her in bed, contenting myself with a solemn kiss on her pretty forehead. When it was over I went up to my room where I was waited on by the pretty maid, who performed her duties with that grace peculiar to the French soubrette, and told me that as I had become her mistress's chambermaid it was only right that she should be my valet. Her mirth was infectious, and I tried to make her sit down on my knee; but she fled away like a deer, telling me that I ought to take care of myself if I wanted to cut a good figure at five o'clock the next day. She was wrong, but appearances were certainly against us, and it is well known that servants do not give their masters and mistresses the benefit of the doubt.

At five o'clock in the morning I found Madame du Rumain nearly dressed when I went into her room, and we immediately went into another, from which the rising sun might have been see if the "Hotel de Bouillon" had not been in the way, but that, of course, was a matter of no consequence. Madame du Rumain performed the ceremonies with all the dignity of an ancient priestess of Baal. She then sat down to her piano, telling me that to find some occupation for the long morning of nine hours would prove the hardest of all the rules, for she did not dine till two, which was then the fashionable hour. We had a meat breakfast without coffee, which I had proscribed, and I left her, promising to call again before I left Paris.

When I got back to my inn, I found my brother there looking very uneasy at my absence at such an early hour. When I saw him I cried,—

“Rome or Paris, which is it to be?”

“Rome,” he replied, cringingly.

“Wait in the antechamber. I will do your business for you.”

When I had finished I called him in, and found my other brother and his wife, who said they had come to ask me to give them a dinner.

“Welcome!” said I. “You are come just in time to see me deal with the abbe, who has resolved at last to go to Rome and to follow my directions.”

I sent Clairmont to the diligence office, and told him to book a place for Lyons; and then I wrote out five bills of exchange, of five louis each, on Lyons, Turin, Genoa, Florence, and Rome.

“Who is to assure me that these bills will be honoured?”

“I assure you, blockhead. If you don’t like them you can leave them.”

Clairmont brought the ticket for the diligence and I gave it to the abbe, telling him roughly to be gone.

“But I may dine with you, surely?” said he.

“No, I have done with you. Go and dine with Possano, as you are his accomplice in the horrible attempt he made to murder me. Clairmont, shew this man out, and never let him set foot here again.”

No doubt more than one of my readers will pronounce my treatment of the abbe to have been barbarous; but putting aside the fact that I owe no man an account of my thoughts, deeds, and words, nature had implanted in me a strong dislike to this brother of mine, and his conduct as a man and a priest, and, above all, his connivance with Possano, had made him so hateful to me that I should have watched him being hanged with the utmost indifference, not to say with the greatest pleasure. Let everyone have his own principles and his own passions, and my favourite passion has always been vengeance.

“What did you do with the girl he eloped with?” said my sister-in- raw.

“I sent her back to Venice with the ambassadors the better by thirty thousand francs, some fine jewels, and a perfect outfit of clothes. She travelled in a carriage I gave her which was worth more than two hundred louis.”

“That’s all very fine, but you must make some allowance for the abbe’s grief and rage at seeing you sleep with her.”

“Fools, my dear sister, are made to suffer such grief, and many others besides. Did he tell you that she would not let him have anything to do with her, and that she used to box his ears?”

“On the the contrary, he was always talking of her love for him.”

“He made himself a fine fellow, I have no doubt, but the truth is, it was a very ugly business.”

After several hours of pleasant conversation my brother left, and I took my sister-in-law to the opera. As soon as we were alone this poor sister of mine began to make the most bitter complaints of my brother.

“I am no more his wife now,” said she, “than I was the night before our marriage.”

“What! Still a maid?”

“As much a maid as at the moment I was born. They tell me I could easily obtain a dissolution of the marriage, but besides the scandal that would arise, I unhappily love him, and I should not like to do anything that would give him pain.”

“You are a wonderful woman, but why do you not provide a substitute for him?”

“I know I might do so, without having to endure much remorse, but I prefer to bear it.”

“You are very praiseworthy, but in the other ways you are happy?”

“He is overwhelmed with debt, and if I liked to call upon him to give me back my dowry he would not have a shirt to his back. Why did he marry me? He must have known his impotence. It was a dreadful thing to do.”

“Yes, but you must forgive him for it.”

She had cause for complaint, for marriage without enjoyment is a thorn without roses. She was passionate, but her principles were stronger than her passions, or else she would have sought for what she wanted elsewhere. My impotent brother excused himself by saying that he loved her so well that he thought cohabitation with her would restore the missing faculty; he deceived himself and her at the same time. In time she died, and he married another woman with the same idea, but this time passion was stronger than virtue, and his new wife drove him away from Paris. I shall say more of him in twenty years time.

At six o’clock the next morning the abbe went off in the diligence, and I did not see him for six years. I spent the day with Madame d’Urfe, and I agreed, outwardly, that young d’Aranda should return to Paris as a postillion. I fixed our departure for the day after next.

The following day, after dining with Madame d’Urfe who continued to revel in the joys of her regeneration, I paid a visit to the Corticelli in her asylum. I found her sad and suffering, but content, and well pleased with the gentleness of the surgeon and his wife, who told me they would effect a radical cure. I gave her twelve louis, promising to send her twelve more as soon as I had received a letter from her written at Bologna. She promised she would write to me, but the poor unfortunate was never able to keep her word, for she succumbed to the treatment, as the old surgeon wrote to me, when I was at London. He asked what he should do with the twelve louis which she had left to one Madame Laura, who was perhaps known to me. I sent him her address, and the honest surgeon hastened to fulfil the last wishes of the deceased.

All the persons who helped me in my magical operations with Madame d’Urfe betrayed me, Marcoline excepted, and all save the fair Venetian died miserably. Later on the reader will hear more of Possano and Costa.

The day before I left for London I supped with Madame du Rumain, who told me that her voice was already beginning to return. She added a sage reflection which pleased me highly.

“I should think,” she observed, “that the careful living prescribed by the cabala must have a good effect on my health.”

“Most certainly,” said I, “and if you continue to observe the rules you will keep

both your health and your voice."

I knew that it is often necessary to deceive before one can instruct; the shadows must come before the dawn.

I took leave of my worthy Madame d'Urfe with an emotion which I had never experienced before; it must have been a warning that I should never see her again. I assured her that I would faithfully observe all my promises, and she replied that her happiness was complete, and that she knew she owed it all to me. In fine, I took d'Aranda and his top-boots, which he was continually admiring, to my inn, whence we started in the evening, as he had begged me to travel by night. He was ashamed to be seen in a carriage dressed as a courier.

When we reached Abbeville he asked me where his mother was.

"We will see about it after dinner."

"But you can find out in a moment whether she is here or not?"

"Yes, but there is no hurry."

"And what will you do if she is not here?"

"We will go on till we meet her on the way. In the meanwhile let us go and see the famous manufactory of M. Varobes before dinner."

"Go by yourself. I am tired, and I will sleep till you come back."

"Very good."

I spent two hours in going over the magnificent establishment, the owner himself shewing it me, and then I went back to dinner and called for my young gentleman.

"He started for Paris riding post," replied the innkeeper, who was also the post-master, "five minutes after you left. He said he was going after some dispatches you had left at Paris."

"If you don't get him back I will ruin you with law-suits; you had no business to let him have a horse without my orders."

“I will capture the little rascal, sir, before he has got to Amiens.”

He called a smart-looking postillion, who laughed when he heard what was wanted.

“I would catch him up,” said he, “even if he had four hours start. You shall have him here at six o’clock.”

“I will give you two louis.”

“I would catch him for that, though he were a very lark.”

He was in the saddle in five minutes, and by the rate at which he started I did not doubt his success. Nevertheless I could not enjoy my dinner. I felt so ashamed to have been taken in by a lad without any knowledge of the world. I lay down on a bed and slept till the postillion aroused me by coming in with the runaway, who looked half dead. I said nothing to him, but gave orders that he should be locked up in a good room, with a good bed to sleep on, and a good supper; and I told the landlord that I should hold him answerable for the lad as long as I was in his inn. The postillion had caught him up at the fifth post, just before Amiens, and as he was already quite tired out the little man surrendered like a lamb.

At daybreak I summoned him before me, and asked him if he would come to London of his own free will or bound hand and foot.

“I will come with you, I give you my word of honour; but you must let me ride on before you. Otherwise, with this dress of mine, I should be ashamed to go. I don’t want it to be thought that you had to give chase to me, as if I had robbed you.”

“I accept your word of honour, but be careful to keep it. Embrace me, and order another saddle-horse.”

He mounted his horse in high spirits, and rode in front of the carriage with Clairmont. He was quite astonished to find his trunk at Calais, which he reached two hours before me.

CHAPTER VII

My Arrival in London; Madame Cornelis—I Am Presented at Court— I Rent a Furnished House—I Make a Large Circle of Acquaintance— Manners of the English

When I got to Calais I consigned my post-chaise to the care of the landlord of the inn, and hired a packet. There was only one available for a private party, there being another for public use at six francs apiece. I paid six guineas in advance, taking care to get a proper receipt, for I knew that at Calais a man finds himself in an awkward position if he is unable to support his claim by documents.

Before the tide was out Clairmont got all my belongings on board, and I ordered my supper. The landlord told me that louis were not current in England, and offered to give me guineas in exchange for mine; but I was surprised when I found he gave me the same number of guineas as I had given him of louis. I wanted him to take the difference—four per cent.—but he refused, saying that he did not allow anything when the English gave him guineas for louis. I do not know whether he found his system a profitable one on the whole, but it was certainly so for me.

The young Count d'Aranda, to whom I had restored his humble name of Trenti, was quite resigned, but proud of having given me a specimen of his knowingness by riding post. We were just going to sit down at table, well pleased with one another, when I heard a loud conversation in English going on near my door, and mine host came in to tell me what it was about.

"It's the courier of the Duke of Bedford, the English ambassador," said he; "he announces the approach of his master, and is disputing with the captain of the packet. He says he hired the boat by letter, and that the captain had no right to let it to you. The master maintains that he has received no such letter, and no one can prove that he is telling a lie."

I congratulated myself on having taken the packet and paid the earnest-money, and went to bed. At daybreak the landlord said that the ambassador had arrived

at midnight, and that his man wanted to see me.

He came in and told me that the nobleman, his master, was in a great hurry to get to London, and that I should oblige him very much by yielding the boat to him.

I did not answer a word, but wrote a note which ran as follows:

“My lord duke may dispose of the whole of the packet, with the exception of the space necessary for my own accommodation, that of two other persons, and my luggage. I am delighted to have the opportunity of obliging the English ambassador.”

The valet took the note, and returned to thank me on behalf of his master, who stipulated, however, that he should be allowed to pay for the packet.

“Tell him that it is out of the question, as the boat is paid for already.”

“He will give you the six guineas”

“Tell your master that I cannot allow him to pay. I do not buy to sell again.”

The duke called on me in the course of half an hour, and said that we were both of us in the right.

“However,” he added, “there is a middle course, let us adopt it, and I shall be just as much indebted to you.”

“What is that, my lord?”

“We will each pay half.”

“My desire to oblige you, my lord, will not allow me to refuse, but it is I who will be indebted to you for the honour your lordship does me. We will start as soon as you like, and I can make my arrangements accordingly.”

He shook my hand and left the room, and when he had gone I found three guineas on the table. He had placed them there without my noticing them. An hour afterwards I returned his call, and then told the master to take the duke and his carriages on board.

We took two hours and a half in crossing the Channel; the wind was strong, but we made a good passage.

The stranger who sets his foot on English soil has need of a good deal of patience. The custom-house officials made a minute, vexatious and even an impertinent perquisition; but as the duke and ambassador had to submit, I thought it best to follow his example; besides, resistance would be useless. The Englishman, who prides himself on his strict adherence to the law of the land, is curt and rude in his manner, and the English officials cannot be compared to the French, who know how to combine politeness with the exercise of their rights.

English is different in every respect from the rest of Europe; even the country has a different aspect, and the water of the Thames has a taste peculiar to itself. Everything has its own characteristics, and the fish, cattle, horses, men, and women are of a type not found in any other land. Their manner of living is wholly different from that of other countries, especially their cookery. The most striking feature in their character is their national pride; they exalt themselves above all other nations.

My attention was attracted by the universal cleanliness, the beauty of the country, the goodness of the roads, the reasonable charges for posting, the quickness of the horses, although they never go beyond a trot; and lastly, the construction of the towns on the Dover road; Canterbury and Rochester for instance, though large and populous, are like long passages; they are all length and no breadth.

We got to London in the evening and stopped at the house of Madame Cornelis, as Therese called herself. She was originally married to an actor named Imer, then to the dancer Pompeati, who committed suicide at Venice by ripping up his stomach with a razor.

In Holland she had been known as Madame Trenti, but at London she had taken the name of her lover Cornelius Rigerboos, whom she had contrived to ruin.

She lived in Soho Square, almost facing the house of the Venetian ambassador. When I arrived I followed the instructions I had received in her last letter. I left her son in the carriage, and sent up my name, expecting she would fly to meet me; but the porter told me to wait, and in a few minutes a servant in grand livery brought me a note in which Madame Cornelis asked me to get down at the house

to which her servant would conduct me. I thought this rather strange behaviour, but still she might have her reasons for acting in this manner, so I did not let my indignation appear. When we got to the house, a fat woman named Rancour, and two servants, welcomed us, or rather welcomed my young friend; for the lady embraced him, told him how glad she was to see him, and did not appear to be aware of my existence.

Our trunks were taken in, and Madame Rancour having ascertained which belonged to Cornelis, had them placed in a fine suite of three rooms, and said, pointing out to him the apartment and the two servants,

“This apartment and the two servants are for you, and I, too, am your most humble servant.”

Clairmont told me that he had put my things in a room which communicated with Cornelis’s. I went to inspect it, and saw djrectly that I was being treated as if I were a person of no consequence. The storm of anger was gathering, but wonderful to relate, I subdued myself, and did not say a word.

“Where is your room?” I said to Clairmont.

“Near the roof, and I am to share it with one of those two louts you saw.”

The worthy Clairmont, who knew my disposition, was surprised at the calm with which I said,—

“Take your trunk there.”

“Shall I open yours?”

“No. We will see what can be done tomorrow.”

I still kept on my mask, and returned to the room of the young gentleman who seemed to be considered as my master. I found him listening with a foolish stare to Madame Rancour, who was telling him of the splendid position his mother occupied, her great enterprise, her immense credit, the splendid house she had built, her thirty-three servants, her two secretaries, her six horses, her country house, etc., *etc.*

“How is my sister Sophie?” said the young gentleman.

“Her name is Sophie, is it? She is only known as Miss Cornelis. She is a beauty, a perfect prodigy, she plays at sight on several instruments, dances like Terpsichore, speaks English, French, and Italian equally well—in a word, she is really wonderful. She has a governess and a maid. Unfortunately, she is rather short for her age; she is eight.”

She was ten, but as Madame Rancour was not speaking to me I refrained from interrupting her.

My lord Cornelis, who felt very tired, asked at what hour they were to sup.

“At ten o’clock and not before,” said the duenna, “for Madame Cornelis is always engaged till then. She is always with her lawyer, on account of an important law-suit she has against Sir Frederick Fermer.”

I could see that I should learn nothing worth learning by listening to the woman’s gossip, so I took my hat and cane and went for a walk in the immense city, taking care not to lose my way.

It was seven o’clock when I went out, and a quarter of an hour after, seeing a number of people in a coffeehouse, I entered it. It was the most notorious place in London, the resort of all the rascally Italians in town. I had heard of it at Lyons, and had taken a firm resolve never to set foot in it, but almighty chance made me go there unknown to myself. But it was my only visit.

I sat down by myself and called for a glass of lemonade, and before long a man came and sat by me to profit by the light. He had a printed paper in his hand, and I could see that the words were Italian. He had a pencil with which he scratched out some words and letters, writing the corrections in the margin. Idle curiosity made me follow him in his work, and I noticed him correcting the word ‘ancora’, putting in an ‘h’ in the margin. I was irritated by this barbarous spelling, and told him that for four centuries ‘ancora’ had been spelt without an ‘h’.

“Quite so,” said he, “but I am quoting from Boccaccio, and one should be exact in quotations.”

“I apologize, sir; I see you are a man of letters.”

“Well, in a small way. My name is Martinelli.”

“Then you are in a great way indeed. I know you by repute, and if I am not mistaken you are a relation of Calsabigi, who has spoken of you to me. I have read some of your satires.”

“May I ask to whom I have the honour of speaking?”

“My name is Seingalt. Have you finished your edition of the Decameron?”

“I am still at work on it, and trying to increase the number of my subscribers.”

“If you will be so kind I should be glad to be of the number.”

“You do me honour.”

He gave me a ticket, and seeing that it was only for a guinea I took four, and telling him I hoped to see him again at the same coffeehouse, the name of which I asked him, he told it me, evidently astonished at my ignorance; but his surprise vanished when I informed him that I had only been in London for an hour, and that it was my first visit to the great city.

“You will experience some trouble in finding your way back,” said he, “allow me to accompany you.”

When we had got out he gave me to understand that chance had led me to the “Orange Coffee House,” the most disreputable house in London.

“But you go there.”

“Yes, but I can say with Juvenal:

“‘Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.’

“The rogues can’t hurt me; I know them and they know me; we never trouble each other.”

“You have been a long time in London, I suppose.”

“Five years.”

“I presume you know a good many people.”

“Yes, but I seldom wait on anyone but Lord Spencer. I am occupied with literary work and live all by myself. I don’t make much, but enough to live on. I live in furnished apartments, and have twelve shirts and the clothes you see on my back, and that is enough for my happiness.

“‘Nec ultra deos lacesso.’”

I was pleased with this honest man, who spoke Italian with the most exquisite correctness.

On the way back I asked him what I had better do to get a comfortable lodging. When he heard the style in which I wished to live and the time I proposed to spend in London, he advised me to take a house completely furnished.

“You will be given an inventory of the goods,” said he, “and as soon as you get a surety your house will be your castle.”

“I like the idea,” I answered, “but how shall I find such a house?”

“That is easily done.”

He went into a shop, begged the mistress to lend him the Advertiser, noted down several advertisements, and said,—

“That’s all we have to do.”

The nearest house was in Pall Mall and we went to see it. An old woman opened the door to us, and shewed us the ground floor and the three floors above. Each floor contained two rooms and a closet. Everything shone with cleanliness; linen, furniture, carpets, mirrors, and china, and even the bells and the bolts on the doors. The necessary linen was kept in a large press, and in another was the silver plate and several sets of china. The arrangements in the kitchen were excellent, and in a word, nothing was lacking in the way of comfort. The rent was twenty guineas a week, and, not stopping to bargain, which is never of any use in London, I told Martinelli that I would take it on the spot.

Martinelli translated what I said to the old woman, who told me that if I liked to keep her on as housekeeper I need not have a surety, and that it would only be necessary for me to pay for each week in advance. I answered that I would do so, but that she must get me a servant who could speak French or Italian as well as

English. She promised to get one in a day's time, and I paid her for four weeks' rent on the spot, for which she gave me a receipt under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt. This was the name by which I was known during the whole of my stay in London.

Thus in less than two hours I was comfortably settled in a town which is sometimes described as a chaos, especially for a stranger. But in London everything is easy to him who has money and is not afraid of spending it. I was delighted to be able to escape so soon from a house where I was welcomed so ill, though I had a right to the best reception; but I was still more pleased at the chance which had made me acquainted with Martinelli, whom I had known by repute for six years.

When I got back Madame Cornelis had not yet arrived, though ten o'clock had struck. Young Cornelis was asleep on the sofa. I was enraged at the way the woman treated me, but I resolved to put a good face on it.

Before long three loud knocks announced the arrival of Madame Cornelis in a sedan-chair, and I heard her ascending the stairs. She came in and seemed glad to see me, but did not come and give me those caresses which I had a right to expect. She ran to her son and took him on her knee, but the sleepy boy did not respond to her kisses with any great warmth.

"He is very tired, like myself," said I, "and considering that we are travellers in need of rest you have kept us waiting a long time."

I do not know whether she would have answered at all, or, if so, what her answer would have been, for just at that moment a servant came in and said that supper was ready. She rose and did me the honour to take my arm, and we went into another room which I had not seen. The table was laid for four, and I was curious enough to enquire who was the fourth person.

"It was to have been my daughter, but I left her behind, as when I told her that you and her brother had arrived she asked me if you were well."

"And you have punished her for doing so?"

"Certainly, for in my opinion she ought to have asked for her brother first and then for you. Don't you think I was right?"

“Poor Sophie! I am sorry for her. Gratitude has evidently more influence over her than blood relationship.”

“It is not a question of sentiment, but of teaching young persons to think with propriety.”

“Propriety is often far from proper.”

The woman told her son that she was working hard to leave him a fortune when she died, and that she had been obliged to summon him to England as he was old enough to help her in her business.

“And how am I to help you, my dear mother?”

“I give twelve balls and twelve suppers to the nobility, and the same number to the middle classes in the year. I have often as many as six hundred guests at two guineas a head. The expenses are enormous, and alone as I am I must be robbed, for I can’t be in two places at once. Now that you are here you can keep everything under lock and key, keep the books, pay and receive accounts, and see that everyone is properly attended to at the assemblies; in fine, you will perform the duties of the master.”

“And do you think that I can do all that?”

“You will easily learn it.”

“I think it will be very difficult.”

“One of my secretaries will come and live with you, and instruct you in everything. During the first year you will only have to acquire the English language, and to be present at my assemblies, that I may introduce you to the most distinguished people in London. You will get quite English before long.”

“I would rather remain French.”

“That’s mere prejudice, my dear, you will like the sound of Mister Cornelis by-and-bye.”

“Cornelis?”

“Yes; that is your name.”

“It’s a very funny one.”

“I will write it down, so that you may not forget it.” Thinking that her dear son was joking. Madame Cornelis looked at me in some astonishment, and told him to go to bed, which he did instantly. When we were alone she said he struck her as badly educated, and too small for his age.

“I am very much afraid,” said she, “that we shall have to begin his education all over again. What has he learnt in the last six years?”

“He might have learnt a great deal, for he went to the best boarding school in Paris; but he only learnt what he liked, and what he liked was not much. He can play the flute, ride, fence, dance a minuet, change his shirt every day, answer politely, make a graceful bow, talk elegant trifles, and dress well. As he never had any application, he doesn’t know anything about literature; he can scarcely write, his spelling is abominable, his arithmetic limited, and I doubt whether he knows in what continent England is situated.”

“He has used the six years well, certainly.”

“Say, rather, he has wasted them; but he will waste many more.”

“My daughter will laugh at him; but then it is I who have had the care of her education. He will be ashamed when he finds her so well instructed though she is only eight.”

“He will never see her at eight, if I know anything of reckoning; she is fully ten.”

“I think I ought to know the age of my own daughter. She knows geography, history, languages, and music; she argues correctly, and behaves in a manner which is surprising in so young a child. All the ladies are in love with her. I keep her at a school of design all day; she shews a great taste for drawing. She dines with me on Sundays, and if you would care to come to dinner next Sunday you will confess that I have not exaggerated her capacities.”

It was Monday. I said nothing, but I thought it strange that she did not seem to consider that I was impatient to see my daughter. She should have asked me to meet her at supper the following evening.

“You are just in time,” said she, “to witness the last assembly of the year; for in a few weeks all the nobility will leave town in order to pass the summer in the country. I can’t give you a ticket, as they are only issued to the nobility, but you can come as my friend and keep close to me. You will see everything. If I am asked who you are, I will say that you have superintended the education of my son in Paris, and have brought him back to me.”

“You do me too much honour.”

We continued talking till two o’clock in the morning, and she told me all about the suit she had with Sir Frederick Fermer. He maintained that the house she had built at a cost of ten thousand guineas belonged to him as he had furnished the money. In equity he was right, but according to English law wrong, for it was she who had paid the workmen, the contractors, and the architect; it was she that had given and received receipts, and signed all documents. The house, therefore, belonged to her, and Fermer admitted as much; but he claimed the sum he had furnished, and here was the kernel of the whole case, for she had defied him to produce a single acknowledgment of money received.

“I confess,” said this honest woman, “that you have often given me a thousand pounds at a time, but that was a friendly gift, and nothing to be wondered at in a rich Englishman, considering that we were lovers and lived together.”

She had won her suit four times over in two years, but Fermer took advantage of the intricacies of English law to appeal again and again, and now he had gone to the House of Lords, the appeal to which might last fifteen years.

“This suit,” said the honest lady, “dishonours Fermer.”

“I should think it did, but you surely don’t think it honours you.”

“Certainly I do.”

“I don’t quite understand how you make that out.”

“I will explain it all to you.”

“We will talk it over again”

In the three hours for which we talked together this woman did not once ask me

how I was, whether I was comfortable, how long I intended to stay in London, or whether I had made much money. In short she made no enquiries what ever about me, only saying with a smile, but not heedlessly,—

“I never have a penny to spare.”

Her receipts amounted to more than twenty-four thousand pounds per annum, but her expenses were enormous and she had debts.

I avenged myself on her indifference by not saying a word about myself. I was dresssed simply but neatly, and had not any jewellry or diamonds about my person.

I went to bed annoyed with her, but glad to have discovered the badness of her heart. In spite of my longing to see my daughter I determined not to take any steps to meet her till the ensuing Sunday, when I was invited to dinner.

Early next morning I told Clairmont to pull all my goods and chattels in a carriage, and when all was ready I went to take leave of young Cornelis, telling him I was going to live in Pall Mall, and leaving him my address.

“You are not going to stay with me, then?” said he.

“No, your mother doesn’t know how to welcome or to treat me.”

“I think you are right. I shall go back to Paris.”

“Don’t do anything so silly. Remember that here you are at home, and that in Paris you might not find a roof to shelter you. Farewell; I shall see you on Sunday.”

I was soon settled in my new house, and I went out to call on M. Zuccato, the Venetian ambassador. I gave him M. Morosini’s letter, and he said, coldly, that he was glad to make my acquaintance. When I asked him to present me at Court the insolent fool only replied with a smile, which might fairly be described as contemptuous. It was the aristocratic pride coming out, so I returned his smile with a cold bow, and never set foot in his house again.

On leaving Zuccato I called on Lord Egremont, and finding him ill left my letter with the porter. He died a few days after, so M. Morosini’s letters were both

useless through no fault of his. We shall learn presently what was the result of the little note.

I then went to the Comte de Guerchi, the French ambassador, with a letter from the Marquis Chauvelin, and I received a warm welcome. This nobleman asked me to dine with him the following day, and told me that if I liked he would present me at Court after chapel on Sunday. It was at that ambassador's table that I made the acquaintance of the Chevalier d'Eon, the secretary of the embassy, who afterwards became famous. This Chevalier d'Eon was a handsome woman who had been an advocate and a captain of dragoons before entering the diplomatic service; she served Louis XV. as a valiant soldier and a diplomatist of consummate skill. In spite of her manly ways I soon recognized her as a woman; her voice was not that of a castrato, and her shape was too rounded to be a man's. I say nothing of the absence of hair on her face, as that might be an accident.

In the first days of my stay in London I made the acquaintance of my bankers; who held at least three hundred thousand francs of my money. They all honoured my drafts and offered their services to me, but I did not make use of their good offices.

I visited the theatres of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, but I could not extract much enjoyment out of the perfomances as I did not know a word of English. I dined at all the taverns, high and low, to get some insight into the peculiar manners of the English. In the morning I went on 'Change, where I made some friends. It was there that a merchant to whom I spoke got me a Negro servant who spoke English, French, and Italian with equal facility; and the same individual procured me a cook who spoke French. I also visited the bagnios where a rich man can sup, bathe, and sleep with a fashionable courtezan, of which species there are many in London. It makes a magnificent debauch and only costs six guineas. The expense may be reduced to a hundred francs, but economy in pleasure is not to my taste.

On Sunday I made an elegant toilette and went to Court about eleven, and met the Comte de Guerchi as we had arranged. He introduced me to George III., who spoke to me, but in such a low voice that I could not understand him and had to reply by a bow. The queen made up for the king, however, and I was delighted to observe that the proud ambassador from my beloved Venice was also present. When M. de Guerchi introduced me under the name of the Chevalier de

Seingalt, Zuccato looked astonished, for Mr. Morosini had called me Casanova in his letter. The queen asked me from what part of France I came, and understanding from my answer that I was from Venice, she looked at the Venetian ambassador, who bowed as if to say that he had no objection to make. Her Majesty then asked me if I knew the ambassadors extraordinary, who had been sent to congratulate the king, and I replied that I had the pleasure of knowing them intimately, and that I had spent three days in their society at Lyons, where M. Morosini gave me letters for my Lord d'Egremont and M. Zuccato.

"M. Querini amused me extremely," said the queen; "he called me a little devil."

"He meant to say that your highness is as witty as an angel."

I longed for the queen to ask me why I had not been presented by M. Zuccatto, for I had a reply on the tip of my tongue that would have deprived the ambassador of his sleep for a week, while I should have slept soundly, for vengeance is a divine pleasure, especially when it is taken on the proud and foolish; but the whole conversation was a compound of nothings, as is usual in courts.

After my interview was over I got into my sedan-chair and went to Soho Square. A man in court dress cannot walk the streets of London without being pelted with mud by the mob, while the gentleman look on and laugh. All customs must be respected; they are all at once worthy and absurd.

When I got to the house of Madame Cornelis, I and my Negro Jarbe were shewn upstairs, and conducted through a suite of gorgeous apartments to a room where the lady of the house was sitting with two English ladies and two English gentlemen. She received me with familiar politeness, made me sit down in an armchair beside her, and then continued the conversation in English without introducing me. When her steward told her that dinner was ready, she gave orders for the children to be brought down.

I had long desired this meeting, and when I saw Sophie I ran to meet her; but she, who had profited by her mother's instructions, drew back with profound courtesy and a compliment learnt by heart. I did not say anything for fear I should embarrass her, but I felt grieved to the heart.

Madame Cornelis then brought forward her son, telling the company that I had

brought him to England after superintending his education for six years. She spoke in French, so I was glad to see that her friends understood that language.

We sat down to table; Madame Cornelis between her two children, and I between the two Englishwomen, one of whom delighted me by her pleasant wit. I attached myself to her as soon as I noticed that the mistress of the house only spoke to me by chance, and that Sophie did not look at me. She was so like me that no mistake was possible. I could see that she had been carefully tutored by her mother to behave in this manner, and I felt this treatment to be both absurd and impertinent.

I did not want to let anyone see that I was angry, so I began to discourse in a pleasant strain on the peculiarities of English manners, taking care, however, not to say anything which might wound the insular pride of the English guests. My idea was to make them laugh and to make myself agreeable, and I succeeded, but not a word did I speak to Madame Cornelis; I did not so much as look at her.

The lady next to me, after admiring the beauty of my lace, asked me what was the news at Court.

“It was all news to me,” said I, “for I went there to-day for the first time.”

“Have you seen the king?” said Sir Joseph Cornelis.

“My dear, you should not ask such questions,” said his mother.

“Why not?”

“Because the gentleman may not wish to answer them.”

“On the contrary, madam, I like being questioned. I have been teaching your son for the last six years to be always asking something, for that is the way to acquire knowledge. He who asks nothing knows nothing.”

I had touched her to the quick, and she fell into a sulky silence.

“You have not told me yet,” said the lad, “whether you saw the king.”

“Yes, my man, I saw the king and the queen, and both their majesties did me the honour to speak to me.”

“Who introduced you?”

“The French ambassador.”

“I think you will agree with me,” said the mother, “that last question was a little too much.”

“Certainly it would be if it were addressed to a stranger, but not to me who am his friend. You will notice that the reply he extracted from me did me honour. If I had not wished it to be known that I had been at Court, I should not have come here in this dress.”

“Very good; but as you like to be questioned, may I ask you why you were not presented by your own ambassador?”

“Because the Venetian ambassador would not present me, knowing that his Government have a bone to pick with me.”

By this time we had come to the dessert, and poor Sophie had not uttered a syllable.

“Say something to M. de Seingalt,” said her mother.

“I don’t know what to say,” she answered. “Tell M. de Seingalt to ask me some questions, and I will answer to the best of my ability.”

“Well, Sophie, tell me in what studies you are engaged at the present time.”

“I am learning drawing; if you like I will shew you some of my work.”

“I will look at it with pleasure; but tell me how you think you have offended me; you have a guilty air.”

“I, sir? I do not think I have done anything amiss.”

“Nor do I, my dear; but as you do not look at me when you speak I thought you must be ashamed of something. Are you ashamed of your fine eyes? You blush. What have you done?”

“You are embarrassing her,” said the mother. “Tell him, my dear, that you have

done nothing, but that a feeling of modesty and respect prevents you from gazing at the persons you address."

"Yes," said I; "but if modesty bids young ladies lower their eyes, politeness should make them raise them now and again."

No one replied to this objection, which was a sharp cut for the absurd woman; but after an interval of silence we rose from the table, and Sophie went to fetch her drawings.

"I won't look at anything, Sophie, unless you will look at me."

"Come," said her mother, "look at the gentleman."

She obeyed as quickly as lightning, and I saw the prettiest eyes imaginable.

"Now," said I, "I know you again, and perhaps you may remember having seen me."

"Yes, although it is six years ago since we met, I recognized you directly."

"And yet you did not look me in the face! If you knew how impolite it was to lower your eyes when you are addressing anyone, you would not do it. Who can have given you such a bad lesson?"

The child glanced towards her mother, who was standing by a window, and I saw who was her preceptress.

I felt that I had taken sufficient vengeance, and began to examine her drawings, to praise them in detail, and to congratulate her on her talents. I told her that she ought to be thankful to have a mother who had given her so good an education. This indirect compliment pleased Madame Cornelis, and Sophie, now free from all restraint, gazed at me with an expression of child-like affection which ravished me. Her features bore the imprint of a noble soul within, and I pitied her for having to grow up under the authority of a foolish mother. Sophie went to the piano, played with feeling, and then sang some Italian airs, to the accompaniment of the guitar, too well for her age. She was too precocious, and wanted much more discretion in her education than Madame Cornelis was able to give her.

When her singing had been applauded by the company, her mother told her to dance a minuet with her brother, who had learnt in Paris, but danced badly for want of a good carriage. His sister told him so with a kiss, and then asked me to dance with her, which I did very readily. Her mother, who thought she had danced exquisitely, as was indeed the case, told her that she must give me a kiss. She came up to me, and drawing her on my knee I covered her face with kisses, which she returned with the greatest affection. Her mother laughed with all her heart, and then Sophie, beginning to be doubtful again, went up to her and asked if she were angry. Her mother comforted her with a kiss.

After we had taken coffee, which was served in the French fashion, Madame Cornelis shewed me a magnificent hall which she had built, in which she could give supper to four hundred persons seated at one table. She told me, and I could easily believe her, that there was not such another in all London.

The last assembly was given before the prorogation of Parliament; it was to take place in four or five days. She had a score of pretty girls in her service, and a dozen footmen all in full livery.

“They all rob me,” said she, “but I have to put up with it. What I want is a sharp man to help me and watch over my interests; if I had such an one I should make an immense fortune in a comparatively short time; for when it is a question of pleasure, the English do not care what they spend.”

I told her I hoped she would find such man and make the fortune, and then I left her, admiring her enterprise.

When I left Soho Square I went to St. James’s Park to see Lady Harrington for whom I bore a letter, as I have mentioned. This lady lived in the precincts of the Court, and received company every Sunday. It was allowable to play in her house, as the park is under the jurisdiction of the Crown. In any other place there is no playing cards or singing on Sundays. The town abounds in spies, and if they have reason to suppose that there is any gaming or music going on, they watch for their opportunity, slip into the house, and arrest all the bad Christians, who are diverting themselves in a manner which is thought innocent enough in any other country. But to make up for this severity the Englishman may go in perfect liberty to the tavern or the brothel, and sanctify the Sabbath as he pleases.

I called on Lady Harrington, and having sent up my letter she summoned me

into her presence. I found her in the midst of about thirty persons, but the hostess was easily distinguished by the air of welcome she had for me.

After I had made my bow she told me she had seen me at Court in the morning, and that without knowing who I was she had been desirous of making my acquaintance. Our conversation lasted three-quarters of an hour, and was composed of those frivolous observations and idle questions which are commonly addressed to a traveller.

The lady was forty, but she was still handsome. She was well known for her gallantries and her influence at Court. She introduced me to her husband and her four daughters, charming girls of a marriageable age. She asked me why I had come to London when everybody was on the point of going out of town. I told her that as I always obeyed the impulse of the moment, I should find it difficult to answer her question; besides, I intended staying for a year, so that the pleasure would be deferred but not lost.

My reply seemed to please her by its character of English independence, and she offered with exquisite grace to do all in her power for me.

“In the meanwhile,” said she, “we will begin by letting you see all the nobility at Madame Cornelis’s on Thursday next. I can give you a ticket to admit to ball and supper. It is two guineas.”

I gave her the money, and she took the ticket again, writing on it, “Paid.—Harrington.”

“Is this formality necessary, my lady?”

“Yes; or else they would ask you for the money at the doors.”

I did not think it necessary to say anything about my connection with the lady of Soho Square.

While Lady Harrington was making up a rubber at whist, she asked me if I had any other letters for ladies.

“Yes,” said I, “I have one which I intend to present tomorrow. It is a singular letter, being merely a portrait.”

“Have you got it about you?”

“Yes, my lady.”

“May I see it?”

“Certainly. Here it is.”

“It is the Duchess of Northumberland. We will go and give it her.”

“With pleasure!”

“Just wait till they have marked the game.”

Lord Percy had given me this portrait as a letter of introduction to his mother.

“My dear duchess,” said Lady Harrington, “here is a letter of introduction which this gentleman begs to present to you.”

“I know, it is M. de Seingalt. My son has written to me about him. I am delighted to see you, Chevalier, and I hope you will come and see me. I receive thrice a week.”

“Will your ladyship allow me to present my valuable letter in person?”

“Certainly. You are right.”

I played a rubber of whist for very small stakes, and lost fifteen guineas, which I paid on the spot. Directly afterwards Lady Harrington took me apart, and gave me a lesson which I deem worthy of record.

“You paid in gold,” said she; “I suppose you had no bank notes about you?”

“Yes, my lady, I have notes for fifty and a hundred pounds.”

“Then you must change one of them or wait till another time to play, for in England to pay in gold is a solecism only pardonable in a stranger. Perhaps you noticed that the lady smiled?”

“Yes; who is she?”

“Lady Coventry, sister of the Duchess of Hamilton.”

“Ought I to apologize?”

“Not at all, the offence is not one of those which require an apology. She must have been more surprised than offended, for she made fifteen shillings by your paying her in gold.”

I was vexed by this small mischance, for Lady Coventry was an exquisitely beautiful brunette. I comforted myself, however, without much trouble.

The same day I made the acquaintance of Lord Hervey, the nobleman who conquered Havana, a pleasant an intelligent person. He had married Miss Chudleigh, but the marriage was annulled. This celebrated Miss Chudleigh was maid of honour to the Princess Dowager of Wales, and afterwards became Duchess of Kingston. As her history is well known I shall say something more of her in due course. I went home well enough pleased with my day’s work.

The next day I began dining at home, and found my cook very satisfactory; for, besides the usual English dishes, he was acquainted with the French system of cooking, and did fricandeaus, cutlets, ragouts, and above all, the excellent French soup, which is one of the principal glories of France.

My table and my house were not enough for my happiness. I was alone, and the reader will understand by this that Nature had not meant me for a hermit. I had neither a mistress nor a friend, and at London one may invite a man to dinner at a tavern where he pays for himself, but not to one’s own table. One day I was invited by a younger son of the Duke of Bedford to eat oysters and drink a bottle of champagne. I accepted the invitation, and he ordered the oysters and the champagne, but we drank two bottles, and he made me pay half the price of the second bottle. Such are manners on the other side of the Channel. People laughed in my face when I said that I did not care to dine at a tavern as I could not get any soup.

“Are you ill?” they said, “soup is only fit for invalids.”

The Englishman is entirely carnivorous. He eats very little bread, and calls himself economical because he spares himself the expense of soup and dessert, which circumstance made me remark that an English dinner is like eternity: it has no beginning and no end. Soup is considered very extravagant, as the very

servants refuse to eat the meat from which it has been made. They say it is only fit to give to dogs. The salt beef which they use is certainly excellent. I cannot say the same for their beer, which was so bitter that I could not drink it. However, I could not be expected to like beer after the excellent French wines with which the wine merchant supplied me, certainly at a very heavy cost.

I had been a week in my new home without seeing Martinelli. He came on a Monday morning, and I asked him to dine with me. He told me that he had to go to the Museum, and my curiosity to see the famous collection which is such an honour to England made me accompany him. It was there that I made the acquaintance of Dr. Mati, of whom I shall speak in due course.

At dinner Martinelli made himself extremely pleasant. He had a profound knowledge of the English manners and customs which it behoved me to know if I wished to get on. I happened to speak of the impoliteness of which I had been guilty in paying a gaming debt in gold instead of paper, and on this text he preached me a sermon on the national prosperity, demonstrating that the preference given to paper shews the confidence which is felt in the Bank, which may or may not be misplaced, but which is certainly a source of wealth. This confidence might be destroyed by a too large issue of paper money, and if that ever took place by reason of a protracted or unfortunate war, bankruptcy would be inevitable, and no one could calculate the final results.

After a long discussion on politics, national manners, literature, in which subjects Martinelli shone, we went to Drury Lane Theatre, where I had a specimen of the rough insular manners. By some accident or other the company could not give the piece that had been announced, and the audience were in a tumult. Garrick, the celebrated actor who was buried twenty years later in Westminster Abbey, came forward and tried in vain to restore order. He was obliged to retire behind the curtain. Then the king, the queen, and all the fashionables left the theatre, and in less than an hour the theatre was gutted, till nothing but the bare walls were left.

After this destruction, which went on without any authority interposing, the mad populace rushed to the taverns to consume gin and beer. In a fortnight the theatre was refitted and the piece announced again, and when Garrick appeared before the curtain to implore the indulgence of the house, a voice from the pit shouted, “On your knees.” A thousand voices took up the cry “On your knees,” and the English Roscius was obliged to kneel down and beg forgiveness. Then came a

thunder of applause, and everything was over. Such are the English, and above all, the Londoners. They hoot the king and the royal family when they appear in public, and the consequence is, that they are never seen, save on great occasions, when order is kept by hundreds of constables.

One day, as I was walking by myself, I saw Sir Augustus Hervey, whose acquaintance I had made, speaking to a gentleman, whom he left to come to me. I asked him whom he had been speaking to.

“That’s the brother of Earl Ferrers,” said he, “who was hanged a couple of months ago for murdering one of his people.”

“And you speak to his brother?”

“Why shouldn’t I?”

“Is he not dishonoured by the execution of his relative?”

“Dishonoured! Certainly not; even his brother was not dishonoured. He broke the law, but he paid for it with his life, and owed society nothing more. He’s a man of honour, who played high and lost; that’s all. I don’t know that there is any penalty in the statute book which dishonours the culprit; that would be tyrannical, and we would not bear it. I may break any law I like, so long as I am willing to pay the penalty. It is only a dishonour when the criminal tries to escape punishment by base or cowardly actions.”

“How do you mean?”

“To ask for the royal mercy, to beg forgiveness of the people, and the like.”

“How about escaping from justice?”

“That is no dishonour, for to fly is an act of courage; it continues the defiance of the law, and if the law cannot exact obedience, so much the worse for it. It is an honour for you to have escaped from the tyranny of your magistrates; your flight from The Leads was a virtuous action. In such cases man fights with death and flees from it. ‘Vir fugiens denuo pugnabit’.”

“What do you think of highway robbers, then?”

“I detest them as wretches dangerous to society, but I pity them when I reflect that they are always riding towards the gallows. You go out in a coach to pay a visit to a friend three or four miles out of London. A determined and agile-looking fellow springs upon you with his pistol in his hand, and says, ‘Your money or your life.’ What would you do in such a case?”

“If I had a pistol handy I would blow out his brains, and if not I would give him my purse and call him a scoundrelly assassin.”

“You would be wrong in both cases. If you killed him, you would be hanged, for you have no right to take the law into your own hands; and if you called him an assassin, he would tell you that he was no assassin as he attacked you openly and gave you a free choice. Nay, he is generous, for he might kill you and take your money as well. You might, indeed, tell him he has an evil trade, and he would tell you that you were right, and that he would try to avoid the gallows as long as possible. He would then thank you and advise you never to drive out of London without being accompanied by a mounted servant, as then no robber would dare to attack you. We English always carry two purses on our journeys; a small one for the robbers and a large one for ourselves.”

What answer could I make to such arguments, based as they were on the national manners? England is a rich sea, but strewn with reefs, and those who voyage there would do well to take precautions. Sir Augustus Hervey’s discourse gave me great pleasure.

Going from one topic to another, as is always the way with a desultory conversation, Sir Augustus deplored the fate of an unhappy Englishman who had absconded to France with seventy thousand pounds, and had been brought back to London, and was to be hanged.

“How could that be?” I asked.

“The Crown asked the Duc de Nivernois to extradite him, and Louis XV. granted the request to make England assent to some articles of the peace. It was an act unworthy of a king, for it violates the right of nations. It is true that the man is a wretch, but that has nothing to do with the principle of the thing.”

“Of course they have got back the seventy thousand pounds?”

“Not a shilling of it.”

“How was that?”

“Because no money was found on him. He has most likely left his little fortune to his wife, who can marry again as she is still young and pretty.”

“I wonder the police have not been after her.”

“Such a thing is never thought of. What could they do? It’s not likely that she would confess that her husband left her the stolen money. The law says robbers shall be hanged, but it says nothing about what they have stolen, as they are supposed to have made away with it. Then if we had to take into account the thieves who had kept their theft and thieves who had spent it, we should have to make two sets of laws, and make all manner of allowances; the end of it would be inextricable confusion. It seems to us Englishmen that it would not be just to ordain two punishments for theft. The robber becomes the owner of what he has stolen; true, he ‘got it by violence, but it is none the less his, for he can do what he likes with it. That being the case, everyone should be careful to keep what he has, since he knows that once stolen he will never see it again. I have taken Havana from Spain: this was robbery on a large scale.”

He talked at once like a philosopher and a faithful subject of his king.

Engaged in this discussion we walked towards the Duchess of Northumberland’s, where I made the acquaintance of Lady Rochefort, whose husband had just been appointed Spanish ambassador. This lady’s gallantries were innumerable, and furnished a fresh topic of conversation every day.

The day before the assembly at Soho Square Martinelli dined with me, and told me that Madame Cornelis was heavily in debt, and dared not go out except on Sundays, when debtors are privileged.

“The enormous and unnecessary expense which she puts herself to,” said he, “will soon bring her to ruin. She owes four times the amount of her assets, even counting in the house, which is a doubtful item, as it is the subject of litigation.”

This news only distressed me for her children’s sake, for I thought that she herself well deserved such a fate.

CHAPTER VIII

The Assembly—Adventure at Ranelagh The English Courtezans—Pauline

I went in due time to the assembly, and the secretary at the door wrote down my name as I handed in my ticket. When Madame Cornelis saw me she said she was delighted I had come in by ticket, and that she had had some doubts as to whether I would come.

“You might have spared yourself the trouble of doubting,” said I, “for after hearing that I had been to Court you might have guessed that a matter of two guineas would not have kept me away. I am sorry for our old friendship’s sake that I did not pay the money to you; for you might have known that I would not condescend to be present in the modest manner you indicated.”

This address, delivered with an ironical accent, embarrassed Madame Cornelis, but Lady Harrington, a great supporter of hers, came to her rescue.

“I have a number of guineas to hand over to you, my dear Cornelis, and amongst others two from M. de Seingalt, who, I fancy, is an old friend of yours. Nevertheless, I did not dare to tell him so,” she added, with a sly glance in my direction.

“Why not, my lady? I have known Madame Cornelis for many years.”

“I should think you have,” she answered, laughing, “and I congratulate you both. I suppose you know the delightful Miss Sophie too, Chevalier?”

“Certainly, my lady, who so knows the mother knows the daughter.”

“Quite so, quite so.”

Sophie was standing by, and after kissing her fondly Lady Harrington said,—

“If you love yourself, you ought to love her, for she is the image of you.”

“Yes, it is a freak of nature.”

“I think there is something more than a freak in this instance.”

With these words the lady took Sophie’s hand, and leaning on my arm she led us through the crowd, and I had to bear in silence the remarks of everyone.

“There is Madame Cornelis’s husband.”

“That must be M. Cornelis.”

“Oh! there can be no doubt about it.”

“No, no,” said Lady Harrington, “you are all quite wrong.”

I got tired of these remarks, which were all founded on the remarkable likeness between myself and Sophie. I wanted Lady Harrington to let the child go, but she was too much amused to do so.

“Stay by me,” she said, “if you want to know the names of the guests.” She sat down, making me sit on one side and Sophie on the other.

Madame Cornelis then made her appearance, and everyone asked her the same questions, and made the same remarks about me. She said bravely that I was her best and her oldest friend, and that the likeness between me and her daughter might possibly be capable of explanation. Everyone laughed and said it was very natural that it should be so. To change the subject, Madame Cornelis remarked that Sophie had learnt the minuet and danced it admirably.

“Then fetch a violin player,” said Lady Harrington, “that we may have the pleasure of witnessing the young artist’s performance.”

The ball had not yet begun, and as soon as the violinist appeared, I stepped forward and danced with Sophie, to the delight of the select circle of spectators.

The ball lasted all night without ceasing, as the company ate by relays, and at all times and hours; the waste and prodigality were worthy of a prince’s palace. I made the acquaintance of all the nobility and the Royal Family, for they were all there, with the exception of the king and queen, and the Prince of Wales. Madame Cornelis must have received more than twelve hundred guineas, but the outlay was enormous, without any control or safeguard against the thefts, which must have been perpetrated on all sides. She tried to introduce her son to

everybody, but the poor lad looked like a victim, and did nothing but make profound bows. I pitied him from my heart.

As soon as I got home I went to bed and spent the whole of the next day there. The day after I went to the “Staven Tavern,” as I had been told that the prettiest girls in London resorted to it. Lord Pembroke gave me this piece of information; he went there very frequently himself. When I got to the tavern I asked for a private room, and the landlord, perceiving that I did not know English, accosted me in French, and came to keep me company. I was astonished at his grave and reverend manner of speaking, and did not like to tell him that I wanted to dine with a pretty Englishwoman. At last, however, I summoned up courage to say, with a great deal of circumlocution, that I did not know whether Lord Pembroke had deceived me in informing me that I should find the prettiest girls in London at his house.

“No, sir,” said he, “my lord has not deceived you, and you can have as many as you like.”

“That’s what I came for.”

He called out some name, and a tidy-looking lad making his appearance, he told him to get me a wench just as though he were ordering a bottle of champagne. The lad went out, and presently a girl of herculean proportions entered.

“Sir,” said I, “I don’t like the looks of this girl.”

“Give her a shilling and send her away. We don’t trouble ourselves about ceremonies in London.”

This put me at my ease, so I paid my shilling and called for a prettier wench. The second was worse than the first, and I sent her away, and ten others after her, while I could see that my fastidiousness amused the landlord immensely.

“I’ll see no more girls,” said I at last, “let me have a good dinner. I think the procurer must have been making game of me for the sake of the shillings.”

“It’s very likely; indeed it often happens so when a gentleman does not give the name and address of the wench he wants.”

In the evening as I was walking in St. James’s Park, I remembered it was a

Ranelagh evening, and wishing to see the place I took a coach and drove there, intending to amuse myself till midnight, and to find a beauty to my taste.

I was pleased with the rotunda. I had some tea, I danced some minuets, but I made no acquaintances; and although I saw several pretty women, I did not dare to attack any of them. I got tired, and as it was near midnight I went out thinking to find my coach, for which I had not paid, still there, but it was gone, and I did not know what to do. An extremely pretty woman who was waiting for her carriage in the doorway, noticed my distress, and said that if I lived anywhere near Whitehall, she could take me home. I thanked her gratefully, and told her where I lived. Her carriage came up, her man opened the door, and she stepped in on my arm, telling me to sit beside her, and to stop the carriage when it got to my house.

As soon as we were in the carriage, I burst out into expressions of gratitude; and after telling her my name I expressed my regret at not having seen her at Soho Square.

“I was not in London,” she replied, “I returned from Bath to-day.”

I apostrophised my happiness in having met her. I covered her hands with kisses, and dared to kiss her on the cheek; and finding that she smiled graciously, I fastened my lips on hers, and before long had given her an unequivocal mark of the ardour with which she had inspired me.

She took my attentions so easily that I flattered myself I had not displeased her, and I begged her to tell me where I could call on her and pay my court while I remained in London, but she replied,—

“We shall see each other again; we must be careful.”

I swore secrecy, and urged her no more. Directly after the carriage stopped, I kissed her hand and was set down at my door, well pleased with the ride home.

For a fortnight I saw nothing of her, but I met her again in a house where Lady Harrington had told me to present myself, giving her name. It was Lady Betty German’s, and I found her out, but was asked to sit down and wait as she would be in soon. I was pleasantly surprised to find my fair friend of Ranelagh in the room, reading a newspaper. I conceived the idea of asking her to introduce me to Lady Betty, so I went up to her and proffered my request, but she replied politely

that she could not do so not having the honour to know my name.

“I have told you my name, madam. Do you not remember me?”

“I remember you perfectly, but a piece of folly is not a title of acquaintance.”

I was dumbfounded at the extraordinary reply, while the lady calmly returned to her newspaper, and did not speak another word till the arrival of Lady Betty.

The fair philosopher talked for two hours without giving the least sign of knowing who I was, although she answered me with great politeness whenever I ventured to address her. She turned out to be a lady of high birth and of great reputation.

Happening to call on Martinelli, I asked him who was the pretty girl who was kissing her hands to me from the house opposite. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that she was a dancer named Binetti. Four years ago she had done me a great service at Stuttgart, but I did not know she was in London. I took leave of Martinelli to go and see her, and did so all the more eagerly when I heard that she had parted from her husband, though they were obliged to dance together at the Haymarket.

She received me with open arms, telling me that she had recognized me directly.

“I am surprised, my dear elder,” said she, “to see you in London.”

She called me “elder” because I was the oldest of her friends.

“Nor did I know that you were here. I came to town after the close of the opera. How is it that you are not living with your husband?”

“Because he games, loses, and despoils me of all I possess. Besides, a woman of my condition, if she be married, cannot hope that a rich lover will come and see her, while if she be alone she can receive visits without any constraint.”

“I shouldn’t have thought they would be afraid of Binetti; he used to be far from jealous.”

“Nor is he jealous now; but you must know that there is an English law which allows the husband to arrest his wife and her lover if he finds them in ‘flagrante

delicto’. He only wants two witnesses, and it is enough that they are sitting together on a bed. The lover is forced to pay to the husband the half of all he possesses. Several rich Englishmen have been caught in this way, and now they are very shy of visiting married women, especially Italians.”

“So you have much to be thankful for. You enjoy perfect liberty, can receive any visitors you like, and are in a fair way to make a fortune.”

“Alas! my dear friend, you do not know all. When he has information from his spies that I have had a visitor, he comes to me in a sedan-chair at night, and threatens to turn me out into the street if I do not give him all the money I have. He is a terrible rascal!”

I left the poor woman, after giving her my address, and telling her to come and dine with me whenever she liked. She had given me a lesson on the subject of visiting ladies. England has very good laws, but most of them are capable of abuse. The oath which jurymen have to take to execute them to the letter has caused several to be interpreted in a manner absolutely contrary to the intention of the legislators, thus placing the judges in a difficult predicament. Thus new laws have constantly to be made, and new glosses to explain the old ones.

My Lord Pembroke, seeing me at my window, came in, and after examining my house, including the kitchen, where the cook was at work, told me that there was not a nobleman in town who had such a well-furnished and comfortable house. He made a calculation, and told me that if I wanted to entertain my friends I should require three hundred pounds a month. “You can’t live here,” said he, “without a pretty girl, and those who know that you keep bachelor’s hall are of opinion that you are very wise, and will save a great deal of useless expense.”

“Do you keep a girl, my lord?”

“No, for I am unfortunate enough to be disgusted with a woman after I have had her for a day.”

“Then you require a fresh one every day?”

“Yes, and without being as comfortable as you I spend four times as much. You must know that I live in London like a stranger. I never dine at my own house. I wonder at your dining alone.”

“I can’t speak English. I like soup and good wine, and that is enough to keep me from your taverns.”

“I expect so, with your French tastes.”

“You will confess that they are not bad tastes.”

“You are right, for, good Englishman as I am, I get on very well in Paris.”

He burst out laughing when I told him how I had dispatched a score of wenches at the “Staven Tavern,” and that my disappointment was due to him.

“I did not tell you what names to send for, and I was wrong.”

“Yes, you ought to have told me.”

“But even if I did they wouldn’t have come, for they are not at the orders of the procurers. If you will promise to pay them as I do, I will give you some tickets which will make them come.”

“Can I have them here?”

“Just as you like.”

“That will be most convenient for me. Write out the tickets and let them know French if you can.”

“That’s the difficulty; the prettiest only speak English.”

“Never mind, we shall understand each other well enough for the purpose I dare say.”

He wrote several tickets for four and six guineas each; but one was marked twelve guineas.

“She is doubly pretty, is she?” said I.

“Not exactly, but she has cuckolded a duke of Great Britain who keeps her, and only uses her once or twice a month.”

“Would you do me the honour of testing the skill of my cook?”

“Certainly, but I can’t make an appointment.”

“And supposing I am out.”

“I’ll go to the tavern.”

Having nothing better to do I sent Jarbe to one of the four-guinea wenches, telling him to advise her that she would dine with me. She came. She did not attract me sufficiently to make me attempt more than some slight toying. She went away well pleased with her four guineas, which she had done nothing to earn. Another wench, also at four guineas, supped with me the following evening. She had been very pretty, and, indeed, was so still, but she was too melancholy and quiet for my taste, and I could not makeup my mind to tell her to undress.

The third day, not feeling inclined to try another ticket, I went to Covent Garden, and on meeting an attractive young person I accosted her in French, and asked her if she would sup with me.

“How much will you give me at dessert?”

“Three guineas.”

“Come along.”

After the play I ordered a good supper for two, and she displayed an appetite after mine own heart. When we had supped I asked for her name and address, and I was astonished to find that she was one of the girls whom Lord Pembroke had assessed at six guineas. I concluded that it was best to do one’s own business, or, at any rate, not to employ noblemen as agents. As to the other tickets, they procured me but little pleasure. The twelve-guinea one, which I had reserved for the last, as a choice morsel, pleased me the least of all, and I did not care to cuckold the noble duke who kept her.

Lord Pembroke was young, handsome, rich, and full of wit. I went to see him one day, and found him just getting out of bed. He said he would walk with me and told his valet to shave him.

“But,” said I, “there’s not a trace of beard on your face.”

“There never is,” said he, “I get myself shaved three times a day.”

“Three times?”

“Yes, when I change my shirt I wash my hands; when I wash my hands I have to wash my face, and the proper way to wash a man’s face is with a razor.”

“When do you make these three ablutions?”

“When I get up, when I dress for dinner, and when I go to bed, for I should not like the woman who is sleeping with me to feel my beard.”

We had a short walk together, and then I left him as I had some writing to do. As we parted, he asked me if I dined at home. I replied in the affirmative, and foreseeing that he intended dining with me I warned my cook to serve us well, though I did not let him know that I expected a nobleman to dinner. Vanity has more than one string to its bow.

I had scarcely got home when Madame Binetti came in, and said that if she were not in the way, she would be glad to dine with me. I gave her a warm welcome, and she said I was really doing her a great service, as her husband would suffer the torments of hell in trying to find out with whom she had dined.

This woman still pleased me; and though she was thirty-five, nobody would have taken her for more than twenty-five. Her appearance was in every way pleasing. Her lips were of the hue of the rose, disclosing two exquisite rows of teeth. A fine complexion, splendid eyes, and a forehead where Innocence might have been well enthroned, all this made an exquisite picture. If you add to this, that her breast was of the rarest proportions, you will understand that more fastidious tastes than mine would have been satisfied with her.

She had not been in my house for half an hour when Lord Pembroke came in. They both uttered an exclamation, and the nobleman told me that he had been in love with her for the last six months; that he had written ardent letters to her of which she had taken no notice.

“I never would have anything to do with him,” said she, “because he is the greatest profligate in all England; and it’s a pity,” she added, “because he is a

kindhearted nobleman."

This explanation was followed by a score of kisses, and I saw that they were agreed.

We had a choice dinner in the French style, and Lord Pembroke swore he had not eaten so good a dinner for the last year.

"I am sorry for you," he said, "when I think of you being alone every day."

Madame Binetti was as much a gourmet as the Englishman, and when we rose from table we felt inclined to pass from the worship of Comus to that of Venus; but the lady was too experienced to give the Englishman anything more than a few trifling kisses.

I busied myself in turning over the leaves of some books I had bought the day before, and left them to talk together to their heart's content; but to prevent their asking me to give them another dinner I said that I hoped chance would bring about such another meeting on another occasion.

At six o'clock, after my guests had left me, I dressed and went to Vauxhaull, where I met a French officer named Malingan, to whom I had given some money at Aix-la-Chapelle. He said he would like to speak to me, so I gave him my name and address. I also met a well-known character, the Chevalier Goudar, who talked to me about gaming and women. Malingan introduced me to an individual who he said might be very useful to me in London. He was a man of forty, and styled himself son of the late Theodore, the pretender to the throne of Corsica, who had died miserably in London fourteen years before, after having been imprisoned for debt for seven years. I should have done better if I had never gone to Vauxhall that evening.

The entrance-fee at Vauxhall was half the sum charged at Ranelagh, but in spite of that the amusements were of the most varied kinds. There was good fare, music, walks in solitary alleys, thousands of lamps, and a crowd of London beauties, both high and low.

In the midst of all these pleasures I was dull, because I had no girl to share my abode or my good table, and make it dear to me. I had been in London for six

weeks; ana in no other place had I been alone for so long.

My house seemed intended for keeping a mistress with all decency, and as I had the virtue of constancy a mistress was all I wanted to make me happy. But how was I to find a woman who should be the equal of those women I had loved before? I had already seen half a hundred of girls, whom the town pronounced to be pretty, and who did not strike me as even passable. I thought the matter over continually, and at last an odd idea struck me.

I called the old housekeeper, and told her by the servant, who acted as my interpreter, that I wanted to let the second or third floor for the sake of company; and although I was at perfect liberty to do what I liked with the house, I would give her half-a-guinea a week extra. Forthwith I ordered her to affix the following bill to the window:

Second or third floor to be let, furnished, to a young lady speaking English and French, who receives no visitors, either by day or night.

The old Englishwoman, who had seen something of the world, began to laugh so violently when the document was translated to her that I thought she would have choked.

“What are you laughing at, my worthy woman?”

“Because this notice is a laughing matter.”

“I suppose you think I shall have no applications?”

“Not at all, the doorstep will be crowded from morn to night, but I shall leave it all to Fanny. Only tell me how much to ask.”

“I will arrange about the rent in my interview with the young lady. I don’t think I shall have so many enquiries, for the young lady is to speak French and English, and also to be respectable. She must not receive any visits, not even from her father and mother, if she has them.”

“But there will be a mob in front of the house reading the notice.”

“All the better. Nothing is the worse for being a little odd.”

It happened just as the old woman had foretold; as soon as the notice was up, everybody stopped to read it, made various comments, and passed on. On the second day after it was up, my Negro told me that my notice was printed in full in the St. James's Chronicle, with some amusing remarks. I had the paper brought up to me, and Fanny translated it. It ran as follows:

"The landlord of the second and third floors probably occupies the first floor himself. He must be a man of the world and of good taste, for he wants a young and pretty lodger; and as he forbids her to receive visits, he will have to keep her company himself."

He added,—

"The landlord should take care lest he become his own dupe, for it is very likely that the pretty lodger would only take the room to sleep in, and possibly only to sleep in now and then; and if she chose she would have a perfect right to refuse to receive the proprietor's visits."

These sensible remarks delighted me, for after reading them I felt forewarned.

Such matters as these give their chief interest to the English newspapers. They are allowed to gossip about everything, and the writers have the knack of making the merest trifles seem amusing. Happy is the nation where anything may be written and anything said!

Lord Pembroke was the first to come and congratulate me on my idea, and he was succeeded by Martinelli; but he expressed some fears as to the possible consequences, "for," said he, "there are plenty of women in London who would come and lodge with you to be your ruin."

"In that case," I answered, "it would be a case of Greek meeting Greek; however, we shall see. If I am taken in, people will have the fullest right to laugh at me, for I have been warned."

I will not trouble my readers with an account of the hundred women who came in the first ten days, when I refused on one pretext or another, though some of them were not wanting in grace and beauty. But one day, when I was at dinner, I received a visit from a girl of from twenty to twenty-four years, simply but elegantly dressed; her features were sweet and gracious, though somewhat grave, her complexion pale, and her hair black. She gave me a bow which I had to rise

to return, and as I remained standing she politely begged me not to put myself out, but to continue my dinner. I begged her to be seated and to take dessert, but she refused with an air of modesty which delighted me.

This fair lady said, not in French, but in Italian worthy of a Sinnese, its purity was so perfect, that she hoped I would let her have a room on the third floor, and that she would gladly submit to all my conditions.

“You may only make use of one room if you like, but all the floor will belong to you.”

“Although the notice says the rooms will be let cheaply, I shall not be able to afford more than one room. Two shillings a week is all I can spend.”

“That’s exactly what I want for the whole suite of rooms; so you see you can use them all. My maid will wait on you, get you whatever food you may require, and wash your linen as well. You can also employ her to do your commissions, so that you need not go out for trifles.”

“Then I will dismiss my maid,” she said; “she robs me of little, it is true, but still too much for my small means. I will tell your maid what food to buy for me every day, and she shall have six sots a week for her pains.”

“That will be ample. I should advise you to apply to my cook’s wife, who will get your dinner and supper for you as cheaply as you could buy it.”

“I hardly think so, for I am ashamed to tell you how little I spend.”

“Even if you only spend two sols a day, she will give you two sols’ worth. All the same I advise you to be content with what you get from the kitchen, without troubling about the price, for I usually have provision made for four, though I dine alone, and the rest is the cook’s perquisite. I merely advise you to the best of my ability, and I hope you will not be offended at my interest in your welfare.”

“Really, sir, you are too generous.”

“Wait a moment, and you will see how everything will be settled comfortably.”

I told Clairmont to order up the maid and the cook’s wife, and I said to the latter:

“For how much could you provide dinner and supper for this young lady who is not rich, and only wants to eat to live?”

“I can do it very cheaply; for you usually eat alone, and have enough for four.”

“Very good; then I hope you will treat her very well for the sum she gives you.”

“I can only afford five sols a day.”

“That will do nicely.”

I gave orders that the bill should be taken down directly, and that the young lady’s room should be made comfortable. When the maid and the cook’s wife had left the room, the young lady told me that she should only go out on Sundays to hear mass at the Bavarian ambassador’s chapel, and once a month to a person who gave her three guineas to support her.

“You can go out when you like,” said I, “and without rendering an account to anybody of your movements.”

She begged me not to introduce anyone to her, and to tell the, porter to deny her to anyone who might come to the door to make enquiries. I promised that her wishes should be respected, and she went away saying that she was going for her trunk.

I immediately ordered my household to treat her with the utmost respect. The old housekeeper told me that she had paid the first week in advance, taking a receipt, and had gone, as she had come, in a sedan-chair. Then the worthy old woman made free to tell me to be on my guard.

“Against what? If I fall in love with her, so much the better; that is just what I want. What name did she give you?”

“Mistress Pauline. She was quite pale when she came, and she went away covered with blushes.”

I was delighted to hear it. I did not want a woman merely to satisfy my natural desires, for such can be found easily enough; I wished for some one whom I could love. I expected beauty, both of the body and the soul; and my love increased with the difficulties and obstacles I saw before me. As to failure, I

confess I did not give it a moment's thought, for there is not a woman in the world who can resist constant and loving attentions, especially when her lover is ready to make great sacrifices.

When I got back from the theatre in the evening the maid told me that the lady had chosen a modest closet at the back, which was only suitable for a servant. She had had a moderate supper, only drinking water, and had begged the cook's wife only to send her up soup and one dish, to which the woman had replied that she must take what was served, and what she did not eat would do for the servant.

"When she finished she shut herself up to write, and wished me good evening with much politeness."

"What is she going to take in the morning?"

"I asked her, and she said she would only take a little bread."

"Then you had better tell her that it is the custom of the house for the cook to serve everybody with coffee, chocolate, or tea, according to taste, in the morning, and that I shall be pained if she refuses to fare like the rest of us. But don't tell her I said so. Here's a crown for you, and you shall have one every week if you will wait upon and care for her properly."

Before going to bed I wrote her a polite note, begging her to leave the closet. She did so, but she went into another back room, and consented to take coffee for her breakfast. Wishing to make her dine and sup with me, I was dressing myself, and preparing to proffer my request in such a way as to make a refusal impossible, when young Cornelis was announced. I received him smilingly, and thanked him for the first visit he had paid me in the course of six weeks.

"Mamma hasn't allowed me to come. I have tried to do so a score of times without her leave. Read this letter, and you will find something which will surprise you."

I opened the letter and read as follows:

"Yesterday a bailiff waited for my door to be opened and slipped in and arrested me. I was obliged to go with him, and I am now in the sponging-house, and if I can't get bail by to-day he will take me to Kings Bench Prison. The bail I require

is to the amount of two hundred pounds, to pay a bill which has fallen due. Dear friend, come and succour me or else my other creditors will get wind of my imprisonment and I shall be ruined. You surely will not allow that to happen, if not for my sake at least for the sake of my innocent children. You cannot bail me yourself, but you can easily get a householder to do so. If you have the time come and call on me, and I will shew you that I could not help doing the bill, otherwise I could not have given my last ball, as the whole of my plate and china was pledged."

I felt angry with the impudent woman who had hitherto paid me so little attention, and I wrote that I could only pity her, and that I had no time to go and see her, and that I should be ashamed to ask anyone to bail her out.

When young Cornelis had gone away in a melancholy mood, I told Clairmont to ask Pauline if she would allow me to bid her a good day. She sent word that I was at liberty to do so, and on going upstairs to her room I found her sitting at a table on which were several books.

Some linen on a chest of drawers did not give me the idea that she was very poor.

"I am immensely obliged," said she, "for all your goodness to me."

"Say nothing of that, madam; it is I who have need of your goodness."

"What can I do to shew my gratitude?"

"Could you trouble yourself to take your meals with me? When I am alone I eat like an ogre, and my health suffers. If you do not feel inclined to grant me that favour, do not hesitate to refuse, and I assure you you shall fare just as well as if you had acceded to my request."

"I shall be delighted to dine and sup with you; sir, whenever you are alone and you like to send for me. Nevertheless, I am not sure that my society will amuse you."

"Very good, I am grateful to you, and I promise you you shall never repent of your kindness. I will do my best to amuse you, and I hope I shall succeed, for you have inspired me with the liveliest interest. We will dine at one to-day."

I did not sit down or look at her books, or even ask her if she had spent a good night. The only thing I noted was that she had looked pale and careworn when I came in, and when I went out her cheeks were the colour of the rose.

I went for a walk in the park, feeling quite taken with this charming woman, and resolved to make her love me, for I did not want to owe anything to gratitude. I felt curious to know where she came from, and suspected she was an Italian; but I determined to ask her no questions for fear of offending her.

When I got home Pauline came down of her own free will, and I was delighted with this, which I took for a good omen. As we had half an hour before us, I asked her how she found her health.

“Nature,” she replied, “has favoured me with such a good constitution that I have never had the least sickness in my life, except on the sea.”

“You have made a voyage, then.”

“I must have done so to come to England.”

“You might be an Englishwoman.”

“Yes, for the English language has been familiar to me from my childhood.”

We were seated on a sofa, and on the table in front of us was a chess-board. Pauline toyed with the pawns, and I asked her if she could play chess.

“Yes, and pretty well too from what they tell me.”

“Then we will have a game together; my blunders will amuse you.”

We began, and in four moves I was checkmated. She laughed, and I admired her play. We began again, and I was checkmated in five moves. My agreeable guest laughed heartily, and while she laughed I became intoxicated with love, watching the play of her features, her exquisite teeth, and her happy expression. We began another game, Pauline played carelessly, and I placed her in a difficult position.

“I think you may conquer me,” said she.

“What happiness for me!”

The servant came in to tell us that dinner was ready.

“Interruptions are often extremely inconvenient,” said I, as I offered her my arm, feeling quite sure that she had not lost the significance of my last words, for women find a meaning for everything.

We were just sitting down to table when Clairmont announced my daughter and Madame Rancour.

“Tell them that I am at dinner, and that I shall not be disengaged till three o’clock.”

Just as my man was leaving the room to carry back my answer, Sophie rushed in and knelt before me, choking with sobs.

This was too much for me, and raising her I took her on my knees, saying I knew what she had come for, and that for love of her I would do it.

Passing from grief to joy the dear child kissed me, calling me her father, and at last made me weep myself.

“Dine with us, dear Sophie,” said I, “I shall be the more likely to do what you wish.”

She ran from my arms to embrace Pauline, who was weeping out of sympathy, and we all dined happily together. Sophie begged me to give Madame Rancour some dinner.

“It shall be so if you please, but only for your sake, for that woman Rancour deserves that I should leave her standing at the door to punish her for her impertinence to me when I came to London.”

The child amused us in an astonishing way all dinnertime, Pauline keeping her ears open and not saying a word, so surprised was she to hear a child of her age talk in a way that would have excited attention in a woman of twenty. Although perfectly respectful she condemned her mother’s conduct, and said that she was unfortunate in being obliged to give her a blind obedience.

“I would wager that you don’t love her much.”

“I respect, but I cannot love her, for I am always afraid. I never see her without fearing her.”

“Why do you weep, then, at her fate?”

“I pity her, and her family still more, and the expressions she used in sending me to you were very affecting.”

“What were these expressions?”

“‘Go,’ said she, ‘kneel before him, for you and you alone can soften his heart.’”

“Then you knelt before me because your mother told you to do so.”

“Yes, for if I had followed my own inclination I should have rushed to your arms.”

“You answer well. But are you sure of persuading me?”

“No, for one can never be sure of anything; but I have good hopes of success, remembering what you told me at the Hague. My mother told me that I was only three then, but I know I was five. She it was who told me not to look at you when I spoke to you, but fortunately you made her remove her prohibition. Everybody says that you are my father, and at the Hague she told me so herself; but here she is always dinning it into my ears that I am the daughter of M. de Monpernis.”

“But, Sophie dear, your mother does wrong in making you a bastard when you are the legitimate daughter of the dancer Pompeati, who killed himself at Vienna.”

“Then I am not your daughter?”

“Clearly, for you cannot have two fathers, can you?”

“But how is it that I am your image?”

“It’s a mere chance.”

“You deprive me of a dream which has made me happy.”

Pauline said nothing, but covered her with kisses, which Sophie returned effusively. She asked me if the lady was my wife, and on my replying in the affirmative she called Pauline her “dear mamma,” which made “dear mamma” laugh merrily.

When the dessert was served I drew four fifty-pound notes out of my pocket-book, and giving them to Sophie told her that she might hand them over to her mother if she liked, but that the present was for her and not for her mother.

“If you give her the money,” I said, “she will be able to sleep to-night in the fine house where she gave me such a poor reception.”

“It makes me unhappy to think of it, but you must forgive her.”

“Yes, Sophie; but out of love for you.”

“Write to her to the effect that it is to me you give the money, not to her; I dare not tell her so myself.”

“I could not do that, my dear; it would be insulting her in her affliction. Do you understand that?”

“Yes, quite well.”

“You may tell her that whenever she sends you to dine or sup with me, she will please me very much.”

“But you can write that down without wounding her, can you not? Do so, I entreat you. Dear mamma,” said she, addressing Pauline, “ask papa to do so, and then I will come and dine with you sometimes.”

Pauline laughed with all her heart as she addressed me as husband, and begged me to write the desired epistle. The effect on the mother could only let her know how much I loved her daughter, and would consequently increase her love for her child. I gave in, saying that I could not refuse anything to the adorable woman who had honoured me with the name of husband. Sophie kissed us, and went away in a happy mood.

“It’s a long time since I have laughed so much,” said Pauline, “and I don’t think I have ever had such an agreeable meal. That child is a perfect treasure. She is unhappy, poor little girl, but she would not be so if I were her mother.”

I then told her of the true relationship between Sophie and myself, and the reasons I had for despising her mother.

“I wonder what she will say when Sophie tells her that she found you at table with your wife.”

“She won’t believe it, as she knows my horror for the sacrament of matrimony.”

“How is that?”

“I hate it because it is the grave of love.”

“Not always.”

As she said this Pauline sighed, and lowering her eyes changed the conversation. She asked me how long I intended to stay in London and when I had replied, “Nine or ten months,” I felt myself entitled to ask her the same question.

“I really can’t say,” she answered, “my return to my country depends on my getting a letter.”

“May I ask you what country you come from?”

“I see I shall soon have no secrets from you, but let me have a little time. I have only made your acquaintance to-day, and in a manner which makes me have a very high opinion of you.”

“I shall try my best to deserve the good opinions you have conceived of my character.”

“You have shewn yourself to me in a thoroughly estimable light.”

“Give me your esteem, I desire it earnestly, but don’t say anything of respect, for that seems to shut out friendship; I aspire to yours, and I warn you that I shall do my best to gain it.”

“I have no doubt you are very clever in that way, but you are generous too, and I hope you will spare me. If the friendship between us became too ardent, a parting would be dreadful, and we may be parted at any moment, indeed I ought to be looking forward to it.”

Our dialogue was getting rather sentimental, and with that ease which is only acquired in the best society, Pauline turned it to other topics, and soon asked me to allow her to go upstairs. I would have gladly spent the whole day with her, for I have never met a woman whose manners were so distinguished and at the same time so pleasant.

When she left me I felt a sort of void, and went to see Madame Binetti, who asked me for news of Pembroke. She was in a rage with him.

“He is a detestable fellow,” said she; “he would like to have a fresh wife every day! What do you think of such conduct?”

“I envy him his happiness.”

“He enjoys it because all women are such fools. He caught me through meeting me at your house; he would never have done so otherwise. What are you laughing at?”

“Because if he has caught you, you have also caught him; you are therefore quits.”

“You don’t know what you are talking about.”

I came home at eight o’clock, and as soon as Fanny had told Pauline that I had returned she came downstairs. I fancied she was trying to captivate me by her attentions, and as the prospect was quite agreeable to me I thought we should come to an understanding before very long.

Supper was brought in and we stayed at table till midnight, talking about trifles, but so pleasantly that the time passed away very quickly. When she left me she wished me good night, and said my conversation had made her forget her sorrows.

Pembroke came next morning to ask me to give him breakfast, and congratulated me on the disappearance of the bill from my window.

“I should very much like to see your boarder,” said he.

“I daresay, my lord, but I can’t gratify your curiosity just now, for the lady likes to be alone, and only puts up with my company because she can’t help it.”

He did not insist, and to turn the conversation I told him that Madame Binetti was furious with him for his inconstancy, which was a testimony to his merits. That made him laugh, and without giving me any answer he asked me if I dined at home that day.

“No, my lord, not to-day.”

“I understand. Well, it’s very natural; bring the affair to a happy conclusion.”

“I will do my best.”

Martinelli had found two or three parodies of my notice in the Advertiser, and came and read them to me. I was much amused with them; they were mostly indecent, for the liberty of the press is much abused in London. As for Martinelli he was too discreet and delicate a man to ask me about my new boarder. As it was Sunday, I begged him to take me to mass at the Bavarian ambassador’s chapel; and here I must confess that I was not moved by any feelings of devotion, but by the hope of seeing Pauline. I had my trouble for nothing, for, as I heard afterwards, she sat in a dark corner where no one could see her. The chapel was full, and Martinelli pointed out several lords and ladies who were Catholics, and did not conceal their religion.

When I got home I received a note from Madame Cornelis, saying that as it was Sunday and she could go out freely, she hoped I would let her come to dinner. I shewed the letter to Pauline, not knowing whether she would object to dining with her, and she said she would be happy to do so, provided there were no men. I wrote in answer to Madame Cornelis that I should be glad to see her and her charming daughter at dinner. She came, and Sophie did not leave my side for a moment. Madame Cornelis, who was constrained in Pauline’s presence, took me aside to express her gratitude and to communicate to me some chimerical schemes of hers which were soon to make her rich.

Sophie was the life and soul of the party, but as I happened to tell her mother that Pauline was a lady who was lodging in my house, she said,

“Then she is not your wife?”

“No; such happiness is not for me. It was a joke of mine, and the lady amused herself at the expense of your credulity.”

“Well, I should like to sleep with her.”

“Really? When?”

“Whenever mamma will let me.”

“We must first ascertain,” said the mother, “what the lady thinks of the arrangement.”

“She needn’t fear a refusal,” said Pauline, giving the child a kiss.

“Then you shall have her with pleasure, madam. I will get her governess to fetch her away tomorrow.”

“At three o’clock,” said I, “for she must dine with us.”

Sophie, taking her mother’s silence for consent, went up to her and kissed her, but these attentions were but coldly received. She unfortunately did not know how to inspire love.

After Madame Cornelis had gone, I asked Pauline if she would like to take a walk with Sophie and myself in the suburbs, where nobody would know her.

“In prudence,” said she, “I cannot go out unless I am alone.”

“Then shall we stay here?”

“We could not do better.”

Pauline and Sophie sang Italian, French, and English duets, and the concert of their voices seemed to me ravishing. We supped gaily, and at midnight I escorted them to the third floor, telling Sophie that I would come and breakfast with her in the morning, but that I should expect to find her in bed. I wanted to see if her body was as beautiful as her face. I would gladly have asked Pauline to grant me the same favour, but I did not think things had advanced far enough for that. In

the morning I found Pauline up and dressed.

When Sophie saw me she laughed and hid her head under the sheets, but as soon as she felt me near her she soon let me see her pretty little face, which I covered with kisses.

When she had got up we breakfasted together, and the time went by as pleasantly as possible till Madame Rancour came for her little charge, who went away with a sad heart. Thus I was left alone with my Pauline who began to inspire me with such ardent desires that I dreaded an explosion every moment. And yet I had not so much as kissed her hand.

When Sophie had gone I made her sit beside me, and taking her hand I kissed it rapturously, saying,

“Are you married, Pauline?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know what it is to be a mother?”

“No, but I can partly imagine what happiness it must be.”

“Are you separated from your husband?”

“Yes, by circumstances and against our will. We were separated before we had cohabited together.”

“Is he at London?”

“No, he is far away, but please don’t say anything more about it.”

“Only tell me whether my loss will be his gain.”

“Yes, and I promise not to leave you till I have to leave England— that is, unless you dismiss me—and I shall leave this happy island to be happy with the husband of my choice.”

“But I, dear Pauline, will be left unhappy, for I love you with all my heart, and am afraid to give you any proof of my love.”

“Be generous and spare me, for I am not my own mistress, and have no right to give myself to you; and perhaps, if you were so ungenerous as to attack me, I should not have the strength to resist.”

“I will obey, but I shall still languish. I cannot be unhappy unless I forfeit your favour.”

“I have duties to perform, my dear friend, and I cannot neglect them without becoming contemptible in my own eyes and yours too.”

“I should deem myself the most miserable of men if I despised a woman for making me happy.”

“Well, I like you too well to think you capable of such conduct, but let us be moderate, for we may have to part tomorrow. You must confess that if we yielded to desire, this parting would be all the more bitter. If you are of another opinion, that only shews that your ideas of love and mine are different.”

“Then tell me of what sort of love is that with which I am happy enough to have inspired you?”

“It is of such a kind that enjoyment would only increase it, and yet enjoyment seems to me a mere accident.”

“Then what is its essence?”

“To live together in perfect unity.”

“That’s a blessing we can enjoy from morning to eve, but why should we not add the harmless accident which would take so short a time, and give us such peace and tranquillity. You must confess, Pauline, that the essence cannot exist long without the accident.”

“Yes, but you in your turn, you will agree that the food often proves in time to be deadly.”

“No, not when one loves truly, as I do. Do you think that you will not love me so well after having possessed me?”

“No, it’s because I think quite otherwise, that I dread to make the moment of

parting so bitter."

"I see I must yield to your logic. I should like to see the food on which you feed your brain, otherwise your books. Will you let me come upstairs?"

"Certainly, but you will be caught."

"How?"

"Come and see."

We went to her room, and I found that all her books were Portuguese, with the exception of Milton, in English, Ariosto, in Italian, and Labruyere's "Characters," in French.

"Your selection gives me a high idea of your mental qualities," said I, "but tell me, why do you give such a preference to Camoens and all these Portuguese authors?"

"For a very good reason, I am Portuguese myself."

"You Portuguese? I thought you were Italian. And so you already know five languages, for you doubtless know Spanish."

"Yes, although Spanish is not absolutely necessary."

"What an education you have had!"

"I am twenty-two now, but I knew all these languages at eighteen."

"Tell me who you are, tell me all about yourself. I am worthy of your confidence."

"I think so too, and to give you a proof of my trust in you I am going to tell you my history, for since you love me you can only wish to do me good."

"What are all these manuscripts?"

"My history, which I have written down myself. Let us sit down:"

CHAPTER IX

Pauline’s Story—I Am Happy—Pauline Leaves Me

I am the only daughter of the unfortunate Count X–-o, whom Carvailho Oeiras killed in prison on suspicion of being concerned in the attempt on the king’s life, in which the Jesuits were supposed to have had a hand. I do not know whether my father was innocent or guilty, but I do know that the tyrannical minister did not dare to have him tried, or to confiscate the estates, which remain in my possession, though I can only enjoy them by returning to my native land.

“My mother had me brought up in a convent where her sister was abbess. I had all kinds of masters, especially an Italian from Leghorn, who in six years taught me all that he thought proper for me to know. He would answer any questions I chose to put him, save on religious matters, but I must confess that his reserve made me all the fonder of him, for in leaving me to reflect on certain subjects by myself he did a great deal to form my judgment.

“I was eighteen when my grandfather removed ms from the convent, although I protested that I would gladly stay there till I got married. I was fondly attached to my aunt, who did all in her power after my mother’s death to make me forget the double loss I had sustained. My leaving the convent altered the whole course of my existence, and as it was not a voluntary action I have nothing to repent of.

“My grandfather placed me with his sister-in-law, the Marchioness X–-o, who gave me up half her house. I had a governess, a companion, maids, pages, and footmen, all of whom, though in my service, were under the orders of my governess, a well-born lady, who was happily honest and trustworthy.

“A year after I had left the convent my grandfather came and told me in the presence of my governess that Count Fl–- had asked my hand for his son, who was coming from Madrid end would arrive that day.

“‘What answer did you give him, dear grandfather?’

“‘That the marriage would be acceptable to the whole of the nobility, and also to the king and royal family.’

“‘But are you quite sure that the young count will like me and that I shall like the count?’

“‘That, my dear daughter, is a matter of course, and there need be no discussion on the subject.’

“‘But it is a question in which I am strongly interested, and I should like to consider it very carefully. We shall see how matters arrange themselves.’

“‘You can see each other before deciding, but you must decide all the same.’

“‘I hope so, but let us not be too certain. We shall see.’

“As soon as my grandfather had gone I told my governess that I had made up my mind never to give my hand save where I had given my heart, and that I should only marry a man whose character and tastes I had carefully studied. My governess gave me no answer, and on my pressing her to give me her opinion, she replied that she thought her best course would be to keep silence on such a delicate question. This was as much as to tell me that she thought I was right; at least I persuaded myself that it was so.

“The next day I went to the convent, and told the story to my aunt, the abbess, who listened to me kindly and said it was to be hoped that I should fall in love with him and he with me, but that even if it were otherwise she was of opinion that the marriage would take place, as she had reasons for believing that the scheme came from the Princess of Brazil, who favoured Count Fl–-.

“Though this information grieved me, I was still glad to hear it, and my resolution never to marry save for love was all the more strongly confirmed.

“In the course of a fortnight the count arrived, and my grandfather presented him to me, several ladies being in the company. Nothing was said about marrying, but there was a deal of talk about the strange lands and peoples the new arrival had seen. I listened with the greatest attention, not opening my mouth the whole time. I had very little knowledge of the world, so I could not make any comparisons between my suitor and other men, but my conclusion was that he could never hope to please any woman, and that he would certainly never be mine. He had an unpleasant sneering manner, joked in bad taste, was stupid, and a devotee, or rather a fanatic. Furthermore he was ugly and ill-shapen, and so great a fop that he was not ashamed to relate the story of his conquests in France

and Italy.

“I went home hoping with all my heart that he had taken a dislike to me, and a week which passed away without my hearing anything on the subject confirmed me in this belief, but I was doomed to be disappointed. My great-aunt asked me to dinner, and when I went I found the foolish young man and his father present, together with my grandfather, who formally introduced him to me as my future husband, and begged me to fix the wedding day. I made up my mind that I would rather die than marry him, and answered politely but coldly that I would name the day when I had decided on marrying, but I should require time to think it over. The dinner went off silently, and I only opened my mouth to utter monosyllables in reply to questions which I could not avoid. After the coffee had been served I left the house, taking no notice of anyone besides my aunt and my grandfather.

“Some time elapsed; and I again began to hope that I had effectually disgusted my suitor, but one morning my governess told me that Father Freire was waiting to speak to me in the antechamber. I ordered him to be sent in. He was the confessor of the Princess of Brazil, and after some desultory conversation he said the princess had sent him to congratulate me on my approaching marriage with Count Fl–-.

“I did not evince any surprise, merely replying that I was sensible of her highness’s kindness, but that nothing had been decided so far, as I was not thinking of getting married.

“The priest, who was a perfect courtier, smiled in a manner, half kindly, half sardonic, and said that I was at that happy age when I had no need to think of anything, as my kind friends and relations did all my thinking for me.

“I only answered by an incredulous smile, which, for all his monastic subtlety, struck him as the expression of a young girl’s coyness.

“Foreseeing the persecution to which I should be subjected, I went the next day to my aunt the abbess, who could not refuse me her advice. I began by stating my firm resolve to die rather than wed a being I detested.

“The worthy nun replied that the count had been introduced to her, and that to tell the truth she thought him insufferable; all the same, she said she was afraid I should be made to marry him.

“These words were such a shock to me that I turned the conversation, and spoke of other subjects for the remainder of my visit. But when I got back to my house I pursued an extraordinary course. I shut myself up in my closet and wrote a letter to the executioner of my unhappy father, the pitiless Oeiras, telling him the whole story, and imploring him to protect me and to speak to the king in my favour; ‘for,’ said I, ‘as you have made me an orphan it is your duty before God to care for me.’ I begged him to shelter me from the anger of the Princess of Brazil, and to leave me at liberty to dispose of my hand according to my pleasure.

“Though I did not imagine Oeiras to be a humane man, yet I thought he must have some sort of a heart; besides, by this extraordinary step and the firmness of my language, I hoped to appeal to his pride and to interest him in my favour. I felt sure that he would do me justice, if only to prove that he had not been unjust to my father. I was right, as will be seen, and although I was but an inexperienced girl my instinct served me well.

“Two days elapsed before I was waited on by a messenger from Oeiras, who begged the honour of a private interview with me. The messenger told me that the minister wished me to reply to all who pressed me to marry that I should not decide until I was assured that the princess desired the match. The minister begged me to excuse his not answering my letter, but he had good reasons for not doing so. The messenger assured me that I could count on his master’s support.

“His message delivered, the gentleman took leave with a profound bow, and went back without waiting for an answer. I must confess that the young man’s looks had made a great impression on me. I cannot describe my feelings, but they have exerted great influence on my conduct, and will no doubt continue to do so for the rest of my life.

“This message put me quite at ease, for he would never have given me the instructions he did without being perfectly sure that the princess would not interfere any farther with my marriage; and so I gave myself up entirely to the new sentiments which possessed my heart. Though strong, the flame would no doubt soon have died down if it had not received fresh fuel every day, for when I saw the young messenger a week later in church I scarcely recognized him. From that moment, however, I met him everywhere; out walking, in the theatre, in the houses where I called, and especially when I was getting in or out of my

carriage he was ever beside me, ready to offer his hand; and I got so used to his presence that when I missed his face I felt a void at my heart that made me unhappy.

“Almost every day I saw the two Counts Fl–- at my great-aunt’s, but as there was no longer any engagement between us their presence neither joyed me nor grieved me. I had forgiven them but I was not happy. The image of the young messenger, of whom I knew nothing, was ever before me, and I blushed at my thoughts though I would not ask myself the reasons.

“Such was my state of mind, when one day I heard a voice, which was unknown to me, in my maid’s room. I saw a quantity of lace on a table and proceeded to examine it without paying any attention to a girl who was standing near the table and curtsying to me. I did not like any of the lace, so the girl said that she would bring me some more to choose from the next day, and as I raised my eyes I was astonished to see that she had the face of the young man who was always in my thoughts. My only resource was to doubt their identity and to make myself believe that I had been deceived by a mere chance likeness. I was reassured on second thoughts; the girl seemed to me to be taller than the young man, whom I hesitated to believe capable of such a piece of daring. The girl gathered up her lace and went her way without raising her eyes to mine, and this made me feel suspicious again.

“‘Do you know that girl?’ I said, coldly, to my maid, and she replied that she had never seen her before. I went away without another word, not knowing what to think.

“I thought it over and resolved to examine the girl when she came on the following day, and to unmask her if my suspicions proved to be well founded. I told myself that she might be the young man’s sister, and that if it were otherwise it would be all the more easy to cure myself of my passion. A young girl who reasons on love falls into love, especially if she have no one in whom to confide.

“The pretended lace-seller duly came the next day with a box of lace. I told her to come into my room, and then speaking to her to force her to raise her eyes I saw before me the being who exerted such a powerful influence over me. It was such a shock that I had no strength to ask her any of the questions I had premeditated. Besides, my maid was in the room, and the fear of exposing myself operated, I think, almost as strongly as emotion. I set about choosing

some pieces of lace in a mechanical way, and told my maid to go and fetch my purse. No sooner had she left the room than the lace-seller fell at my feet and exclaimed passionately,

“‘Give me life or death, madam, for I see you know who I am.’

“‘Yes, I do know you, and I think you must have gone mad.’

“‘Yes, that may be; but I am mad with love. I adore you.’

“‘Rise, for my maid will come back directly.’

“‘She is in my secret.’

“‘What! you have dared ‘

“He got up, and the maid came in and gave him his money with the utmost coolness. He picked up his lace, made me a profound bow, and departed.

“It would have been natural for me to speak to my maid, and still more natural if I had dismissed her on the spot. I had no courage to do so, and my weakness will only astonish those rigorous moralists who know nothing of a young girl’s heart, and do not consider my painful position, passionately in love and with no one but myself to rely on.

“I did not follow at once the severe dictates of duty; afterwards it was too late, and I easily consoled myself with the thought that I could pretend not to be aware that the maid was in the secret. I determined to dissemble, hoping that I should never see the adventurous lover again, and that thus all would be as if it had never happened.

“This resolve was really the effect of anger, for a fortnight passed by without my seeing the young man in the theatre, the public walks, or in any of the public places he used to frequent, and I became sad and dreamy, feeling all the time ashamed of my own wanton fancies. I longed to know his name, which I could only learn from my maid, and it was out of the question for me to ask Oeiras. I hated my maid, and I blushed when I saw her, imagining that she knew all. I was afraid that she would suspect my honour, and at another time I feared lest she might think I did not love him; and this thought nearly drove me mad. As for the young adventurer I thought him more to be pitied than to be blamed, for I did not

believe that he knew I loved him, and it seemed to me that the idea of my despising him was enough vengeance for his audacity. But my thoughts were different when my vanity was stronger than love, for then despair avenged itself on pride, and I fancied he would think no more of me, and perhaps had already forgotten me.

“Such a state cannot last long, for if nothing comes to put an end to the storm which tosses the soul to and fro, it ends at last by making an effort of itself to sail into the calm waters of peace.

“One day I put on a lace kerchief I had bought from him, and asked my maid,

“‘What has become of the girl who sold me this kerchief?’

“I asked this question without premeditation; it was, as it were, an inspiration from my ‘good or my evil genius.

“As crafty as I was simple, the woman answered that to be sure he had not dared to come again, fearing that I had found out his disguise.

“‘Certainly,’ I replied, ‘I found it out directly, but I was astonished to hear that you knew this lace-seller was a young man.’

“‘I did not think I should offend you, madam, I know him well.’

“‘Who is he?

“‘Count d’Al–-; you ought to know him, for he paid you a visit about four months ago’

“‘True, and it is possible that I did not know him, but why did you tell a lie when I asked you, “Do you know that girl?”’

“‘I lied to spare your feelings, madam, and I was afraid you would be angry at the part I had taken:

“‘You would have honoured me more by supposing the contrary. When you went out, and I told him he was mad, and that you would find him on his knees when you returned, he told me you were in the secret.’

“‘If it be a secret, but it seems to me a mere joke:

“‘I wished to think so too, but nevertheless it seemed of such weight to me, that I resolved to be silent that I might not be obliged to send you away.’

“‘My idea was that you would have been amused, but as you take it seriously I am sorry that I have failed in my strict duty.’

“So weak is a woman in love that in this explanation which should have shewn me the servant’s fault in all its enormity I only saw a full justification. In fact she had given peace to my heart, but my mind was still uneasy. I knew that there was a young Count d’Al–- belonging to a noble family, but almost penniless. All he had was the minister’s patronage, and the prospect of good State employments. The notion that Heaven meant me to remedy the deficiencies in his fortune made me fall into a sweet reverie, and at last I found myself deciding that my maid who put it all down as a jest had more wit than I. I blamed myself for my scrupulous behaviour, which seemed no better than prudery. My love was stronger than I thought, and this is my best excuse, besides I had no one to guide or counsel me.

“But after sunshine comes shadow. My soul was like the ebb and tide of the sea, now in the heights and now in the depths. The resolve, which the count seemed to have taken, to see me no more, either shewed him to be a man of little enterprise or little love, and this supposition humiliated me. ‘If,’ I said to myself, ‘the count is offended with me for calling him a madman, he can have no delicacy and no discretion; he is unworthy of my love.’

“I was in this dreadful state of uncertainty when my maid took upon herself to write to the count that he could come and see me under the same diguise. He followed her advice, and one fine morning the crafty maid came into my chamber laughing, and told me that the lace-seller was in the next room. I was moved exceedingly, but restraining myself I began to laugh also, though the affair was no laughing matter for me.

“‘Shall I shew her in? said the maid.

“‘Are you crazy?

“Shall I send her away?

“‘No, I will go and speak to him myself.’

“This day was a memorable one. My maid left the room now and again, and we had plenty of time to disclose our feelings to one another. I frankly confessed that I loved him, but added that it were best that I should forget him, as it was not likely that my relations would consent to our marriage. In his turn he told me that the minister having resolved to send him to England, he would die of despair unless he carried with him the hope of one day possessing me, for he said he loved me too well to live without me. He begged me to allow him to come and see me under the same disguise, and though I could not refuse him anything I said that we might be discovered.

“‘It is enough for me,’ he replied, tenderly, ‘that you will incur no danger, my visits will be set down to the account of your maid.’

“‘But I am afraid for you,’ I replied, ‘your disguise is a crime in itself; your reputation will suffer, and that will not tend to bring the wish of your heart nearer.’

“In spite of my objections, my heart spoke in his favour, and he pleaded so well and promised to be so discreet that at last I said I would see him gladly whenever he liked to come.

“Count Al–- is twenty-two, and is shorter than I; he is small-boned, and in his disguise as a lace-seller it was hard to recognize him, even by his voice, which is very soft. He imitated the gestures and ways of women to perfection, and not a few women would be only too glad to be like him.

“Thus for nearly three months the disguised count came to see me three or four times a week, always in my maid’s room, and mostly in her presence. But even if we had been perfectly alone his fear of my displeasure was too great to allow him to take the slightest liberties. I think now that this mutual restraint added fuel to our flames, for when we thought of the moment of parting it was with dumb sadness and with no idea of taking the opportunity of rendering one another happy. We flattered ourselves that Heaven would work some miracle in our favour, and that the day would never come wherein we should be parted.

“But one morning the count came earlier than usual, and, bursting into tears, told me that the minister had given him a letter for M. de Saa, the Portuguese ambassador at London, and another letter open for the captain of a ship which

was shortly to sail for London. In this letter the minister ordered the captain to embark Count Al–-, to take him to London, and to treat him with distinction.

“My poor lover was overwhelmed, he was nearly choked with sobs, and his brain was all confusion. For his sake, and taking pity on his grief and my love, I conceived the plan of accompanying him as his servant, or rather to avoid disguising my sex, as his wife. When I told him, he was at once stupefied and dazzled. He was beyond reasoning, and left everything in my hands. We agreed to discuss the matter at greater length on the following day, and parted.

“Foreseeing that it would be difficult for me to leave the house in woman’s dress, I resolved to disguise myself as a man. But if I kept to my man’s dress I should be obliged to occupy the position of my lover’s valet, and have to undertake tasks beyond my strength. This thought made me resolve to impersonate the master myself, but thinking that I should not care to see my lover degraded to the rank of a servant, I determined that he should be my wife, supposing that the captain of the ship did not know him by sight.

“‘As soon as we get to England,’ I thought, ‘we will get married, and can resume our several dresses. This marriage will efface whatever shame may be attached to our flight; they will say, perhaps, that the count carried me off; but a girl is not carried off against her will, and Oeiras surely will not persecute me for having made the fortune of his favourite. As to our means of subsistence, till I get my rents, I can sell my diamonds, and they will realize an ample sum.’

“The next day, when I told my lover of this strange plan, he made no objections. The only obstacle which he thought of was the circumstance that the sea-captain might know him by sight, and this would have been fatal; but as he did not think it likely we determined to run the risk, and it was agreed that he should get me the clothes for the new part I was to play.

“I saw my lover again after an interval of three days; it was nightfall when he came. He told me that the Admiralty had informed him that the ship was riding at the mouth of the Tagus, and that the captain would put out to sea as soon as he had delivered his dispatches and had received fresh instructions. Count Al was consequently requested to be at a certain spot at midnight, and a boat would be in waiting to take him on board.

“I had made up my mind, and this was enough for me; and after having fixed the

time and place of meeting, I shut myself up, pretending to be unwell. I put a few necessaries into a bag, not forgetting the precious jewel-casket, and I dressed myself up as a man and left the house by a stair only used by the servants. Even the porter did not see me as I made my escape.

“Fearing lest I should go astray the count was waiting for me at a short distance, and I was pleasantly surprised when he took me by the arm, saying, “Tis I.” From this careful action, simple though it was, I saw that he had intelligence; he was afraid to catch hold of me without making himself known. We went to a house where he had his trunk, and in half an hour his disguise was made. When all was ready a man came for our slight baggage, and we walked to the river where the count was waiting for us. It was eleven o’clock when we left land, and thinking my jewels would be safer in his pocket than in my bag, I gave them to him, and we anxiously awaited the arrival of the captain. He came aboard with his officers at midnight, and accosted me politely, saying he had received orders to treat me with distinction. I thanked him cordially, and introduced my wife to him, whom he greeted respectfully, saying he was delighted to have such a charming passenger, who would doubtless give us a fortunate voyage. He was too polite to be astonished that the minister had made no mention of the count’s wife in his letter.

“We got to the frigate in less than an hour; she was three leagues from land, and as soon as we got on board the captain ordered the men to set sail. He took us to a room which was extremely comfortable, considering it was only a cabin, and after doing the honours left us to ourselves.

“When we were alone we thanked Heaven that everything had gone off so well, and far from going to sleep we spent the night in discussing the bold step we had taken, or rather, only just begun to take; however, we hoped it would have as fortunate an ending as beginning. When the day dawned our hearts were gladdened because Lisbon was no longer in sight, and as we were in need of rest I laid down on a seat, while the count got into a hammock, neither of us troubling to undress.

“We were just falling asleep, when we began to feel the approach of sea-sickness, and for three days we knew no peace.

“On the fourth day, scarcely being able to stand upright for weakness, we began to be hungry, and had to exercise a careful moderation, so as not to become

seriously ill. Happily for us the captain had a store of good food, and our meals were delicate and well-served.

“My lover, whose sickness has been more severe than mine, used this as a pretext for not leaving his room. The captain only came to see us once; this must have been out of extreme politeness, for in Portugal one may be jealous and yet not ridiculous. As for me, I stood upon the bridge nearly all day; the fresh air did me good, and I amused myself by scanning the horizon with my telescope.

“The seventh day of the voyage my heart trembled as with a presentiment of misfortune, when the sailors said that a vessel which could be seen in the distance was a corvette which was due to sail a day after us, but being a swift sailor would probably reach England two or three days before us.

“Though the voyage from Lisbon to England is a long one we had a fair wind all the way, and in fourteen days we dropped anchor at daybreak in the port of Plymouth.

“The officer sent ashore by the captain to ask leave to disembark passengers came on board in the evening with several letters. One the captain read with peculiar attention, and then called me to one side and said,

“‘This letter comes from Count Oeiras, and enjoins me, on my life, not to let any Portuguese young lady land, unless she be known to me. I am to take her back to Lisbon after having executed my various commissions. There is neither wife nor maid on my frigate, except the countess your wife. If you can prove that she is really your wife she may land with you; otherwise, you see, I cannot disobey the minister’s orders.’

“‘She is my wife,’ I said, coolly; ‘but as I could not foresee this accident I have no papers to prove the fact.’

“‘I am sorry to hear it, as in that case she must go back to Lisbon. You may be sure I will treat her with all possible respect.’

“‘But a wife may not be parted from her husband.’

“‘Quite so, but I cannot disobey orders. If you like you can return to Lisbon in the corvette; you will be there before us.’

“‘Why cannot I return in this frigate?

“‘Because I have distinct orders to put you on land. And now I come to think of it, how was it that there was not a word about your wife in the letter you gave me when we started? If the lady is not the person meant by the minister, you may be sure she will be sent back to join you in London.’

“‘You will allow me to go and speak to her?

“‘Certainly, but in my presence.’

“My heart was broken; nevertheless, I had to put a good face on the losing game I was playing. I went to the count, and addressing him as my dear wife communicated the order which was to part us.

“I was afraid he would betray himself, but he was strong-minded enough to restrain his emotion, and only replied that we must needs submit, and that we should see each other again in a couple of months.

“As the captain stood beside us, I could only utter common-places. I warned him, however, that I should write to the abbess directly I got to London, who was the first person he must go and see at Lisbon, as she would have my address. I took care not to ask for my jewel-case, as the captain might have thought that my false wife was some rich young lady whom I had seduced.

“We had to abandon ourselves to our destiny. We embraced each other and mingled our ears, and the captain wept, too, when he heard me say,

“‘Trust in all things to the worthy captain, and let us not fear at all.’

“The count’s trunk was lowered into the boat, and as I did not dare to take my bag I found myself loaded with nothing but a man’s clothes, which would not have fitted me, even if I had intended to keep up my disguise.

“When I came to the custom-house I saw my possessions. There were books, letters, linen, some suits of clothes, a sword and two pairs of pistols, one pair of which I put in my pockets, and then I went to an inn where the host said that if I wanted to travel to London the next morning I should only have to pay for one horse.

“‘Who are the people,’ said I, ‘who desire a companion?

“‘You shall sup with them if you like,’ said he.

“I accepted the offer, and found the party consisted of a minister of religion and two ladies whose faces pleased me. I was fortunate enough to win their good graces, and early the next day we got to London and alighted in the Strand at an inn where I only dined, going out to seek a lodging appropriate to my means and the kind of life I wished to lead. Fifty Lisbon pieces and a ring of about the same value was all that I possessed in the world.

“I took a room on the third floor, being attracted by the honest and kindly expression of the landlady. I could only trust in God and confide my position to her. I agreed to pay her ten shillings a week, and begged her to get me some woman’s clothes, for I was afraid to go out in my man’s dress any longer.

“The next day I was clothed like a poor girl who desires to escape notice. I spoke English well enough to seem a native of the country, and I knew how I must behave if I wished to be let alone. Although the landlady was a worthy woman, her house was not exactly suitable for me; my stay in England might be protracted, and if I came to destitution I should be wretched indeed; so I resolved to leave the house. I received no visitors, but I could not prevent the inquisitive from hovering round my door, and the more it became known that I saw no one, the more their curiosity increased. The house was not quiet enough. It was near the Exchange, and the neighborhood swarmed with young men who came to dine on the first floor of the house, and did their best to cure me of my sadness, as they called it, though I had not shewn any signs of wishing to be cured.

“I made up my mind not to spend more than a guinea a week, and resolved to sell my ring if I could have the money paid to me at intervals. An old jeweler who lodged next door, and for whose honesty my landlady answered, told me it was worth a hundred and fifty guineas, and asked me to let him have it if I had no better offer. I had not thought it to be so valuable, and I sold it to him on condition that he would pay me four guineas a month, and that I should be at liberty to buy it back if I could do so before all the payments had been made.

“I wanted to keep my ready money, which I still have by me, so as to be able to go back to Lisbon by land when I can do so in safety, for I could not face the horrors of a sea voyage a second time.

“I told my case to my worthy landlady who still befriends me, and she helped me to get another lodging, but I had to procure a servant to fetch me my food; I could not summon up courage to have my meals in a coffeehouse. However, all my servants turned out ill; they robbed me continually, and levied a tax on all their purchases.

“The temperance I observed—for I almost lived on bread and water— made me get thinner every day, still I saw no way of mending my existence till chance made me see your singular announcement. I laughed at it; and then drawn by some irresistible power, or perhaps by the curiosity that falls to the lot of most of us women, I could not resist going in and speaking to you. Instinct thus pointed out the way to improve my lot without increasing my expenditure.

“When I got back I found a copy of the Advertiser on my landlady’s table; it contained some editorial fun on the notice I had just read. The writer said that the master of the house was an Italian, and had therefore nothing to fear from feminine violence. On my side I determined to hazard everything, but I feel I have been too hasty, and that there are certain attacks which it is pleasant not to resist. I was brought up by an Italian, a clever and good man, and I have always had a great respect for your fellow-countrymen.”

My fair Portuguese had finished her story, and I observed,—

“Really, your history has amused me very much; it has all the air of a romance.”

“Quite so,” said she; “but it is a strictly historical romance. But the most amusing thing to me is that you have listened to it without weariness.”

“That is your modesty, madam; not only, has your tale interested me, but now that I know you are a Portuguese I am at peace with the nation.”

“Were you at war with us, then?”

“I have never forgiven you for letting your Portuguese Virgil die miserably two hundred years ago.”

“You mean Camoens. But the Greeks treated Homer in the same way.”

“Yes, but the faults of others are no excuse for our own.”

“You are right; but how can you like Camoens so much if you do not know Portuguese?”

“I have read a translation in Latin hexameters so well done that I fancied I was reading Virgil.”

“Is that truly so?”

“I would never lie to you.”

“Then I make a vow to learn Latin.”

“That is worthy of you, but it is of me that you must learn the language. I will go to Portugal and live and die there, if you will give me your heart.’

“My heart! I have only one, and that is given already. Since I have known you I have despised myself, for I am afraid I have an inconstant nature.”

“It will be enough for me if you will love me as your father, provided I may sometimes take my daughter to my arms. But go on with your story, the chief part is yet untold. What became of your lover, and what did your relations do when they found out your flight?”

“Three days after I arrived in this vast city I wrote to the abbess, my aunt, and told her the whole story, begging her to protect my lover, and to confirm me in my resolution never to return to Lisbon till I could do so in security, and have no obstacles placed in the way of my marriage. I also begged her to write and inform me of all that happened, addressing her letters to ‘Miss Pauline,’ under cover of my landlady.

“I sent my letter by Paris and Madrid, and I had to wait three months before I got an answer. My aunt told me that the frigate had only returned a short time, and that the captain immediately on his arrival wrote to the minister informing him that the only lady who was in his ship when he sailed was still on board, for he had brought her back with him, despite the opposition of Count Al——, who declared she was his wife. The captain ended by asking his excellency for further orders with respect to the lady aforesaid.

“Oeiras, feeling sure that the lady was myself, told the captain to take her to the convent of which my aunt was abbess, with a letter he had written. In this letter

he told my aunt that he sent her her niece, and begged her to keep the girl securely till further orders. My aunt was extremely surprised, but she would have been still more surprised if she had not got my letter a few days before. She thanked the captain for his care, and took the false niece to a room and locked her up. She then wrote to Oeiras, telling him that she had received into her convent a person supposed to be his niece, but as this person was really a man in woman's dress she begged his excellency to remove him as soon as possible.

"When the abbess had written this curious letter she paid a visit to the count, who fell on his knees before her. My good aunt raised him, and shewed him my letter. She said that she had been obliged to write to the minister, and that she had no doubt he would be removed from the convent in the course of a few hours. The count burst into tears, and begging the abbess to protect us both gave her my jewel-casket, which the worthy woman received with great pleasure. She left him, promising to write to me of all that happened.

"The minister was at one of his country estates, and did not receive the abbess's letter till the next day, but hastened to reply in person. My aunt easily convinced his excellency of the need for keeping the matter secret, for a man had been sent into the convent, which would be to her dishonour. She shewed the proud minister the letter she had had from me, and told him how the honest young man had given her my jewel-casket. He thanked her for her open dealing, and begged her pardon with a smile for sending a fine young man to her nunnery.

"'The secret,' said he, 'is of the greatest importance; we must see that it goes no farther. I will relieve you of your false niece, and take her away in my carriage.'

"My aunt took him at his word and brought out the young recluse, who drove away with the minister. The abbess tells me that from that day she has heard nothing about him, but that all Lisbon is talking over the affair, but in a wholly distorted manner. They say that the minister first of all put me under the care of my aunt, but soon after took me away, and has kept me in some secret place ever since. Count Al–- is supposed to be in London, and I in the minister's power, and probably we are supposed to have entered into a tender relationship. No doubt his excellency is perfectly well informed of my doings here, for he knows my address and has spies everywhere.

"On the advice of my aunt I wrote to Oeiras a couple of months ago, telling him that I am ready to return to Lisbon, if I may marry Count Al–- and live in perfect

liberty. Otherwise, I declared, I would stay in London, where the laws guaranteed my freedom. I am waiting for his answer every day, and I expect it will be a favourable one, for no one can deprive me of my estates, and Oeiras will probably be only too glad to protect me to lessen the odium which attaches to his name as the murderer of my father."

Pauline made no mystery of the names of the characters, but she may be still alive, and I respect her too well to run the risk of wounding her, though these Memoirs will not see the light of day during my lifetime. It is sufficient to say that the story is known to all the inhabitants of Lisbon, and that the persons who figure in it are public characters in Portugal.

I lived with dear Pauline in perfect harmony, feeling my love for her increase daily, and daily inspiring her with tenderer feelings towards myself. But as my love increased in strength, I grew thin and feeble; I could not sleep nor eat. I should have languished away if I had not succeeded in gratifying my passion. On the other hand, Pauline grew plumper and prettier every day.

"If my sufferings serve to increase your charms," said I, "you ought not to let me die, for a dead man has no suffering."

"Do you think that your sufferings are due to your love for me?"

"Certainly."

"There may be something in it, but, believe me, the tender passion does not destroy the appetite nor take away the power of sleep. Your indisposition is undoubtedly due to the sedentary life you have been leading of late. If you love me, give me a proof of it; go out for a ride."

"I cannot refuse you anything, dearest Pauline, but what then?"

"Then you shall find me grateful to you, you will have a good appetite, and will sleep well."

"A horse, a horse! Quick! My boots!" I kissed her hand—for I had not got any farther than that—and began to ride towards Kingston. I did not care for the motion of trotting, so I put my horse at a gallop, when all of a sudden he stumbled, and in an instant I was lying on the ground in front of the Duke of Kingston's house. Miss Chudleigh happened to be at the window, and seeing me

thrown to the ground uttered a shriek. I raised my head and she recognized me, and hastened to send some of her people to help me. As soon as I was on my feet I wanted to go and thank her, but I could not stir, and a valet who knew something of surgery examined me, and declared that I had put out my collar-bone and would require a week's rest.

The young lady told me that if I liked to stay in her house the greatest care should be taken of me. I thanked her warmly, but begged her to have me taken home, as I should not like to give her so much trouble. She immediately gave the necessary orders, and I was driven home in a comfortable carriage. The servants in charge would not acept any money, and I saw in the incident a proof of that hospitality for which the English are famed, although they are at the same time profoundly egotistic.

When I got home I went to bed, and sent for a surgeon, who laughed when I told him that I had put out a bone.

"I'll wager it is nothing more than a sprain. I only wish it was put out that I might have some chance of shewing my skill."

"I am delighted," I said, "not to be in a position to call for that amount of talent, but I shall have a high opinion of you if you set me up in a short time."

I did not see Pauline, much to my astonishment. I was told she had gone out in a sedan-chair, and I almost felt jealous. In two hours she came in looking quite frightened, the old housekeeper having told her that I had broken my leg, and that the doctor had been with me already.

"Unhappy wretch that I am!" she exclaimed as she came to my bedside, "'tis I that have brought you to this."

With these words she turned pale and almost fell in a swoon beside me.

"Divine being!" I cried, as I pressed her to my breast, "it is nothing; only a sprain."

"What pain that foolish old woman has given me!

"God be praised that it is no worse! Feel my heart."

“Oh, yes! I felt it with delight. It was a happy fall for me.”

Fastening my lips on hers, I felt with delight that our transports were mutual, and I blessed the sprain that had brought me such bliss.

After these ectasies I felt that Pauline was laughing.

“What are you laughing at, sweetheart?”

“At the craft of love, which always triumphs at last.”

“Where have you been?”

“I went to my old jeweler’s to redeem my ring, that you might have a souvenir of me; here it is.”

“Pauline! Pauline! a little love would have been much more precious to me than this beautiful ring.”

“You shall have both. Till the time of my departure, which will come only too soon, we will live together like man and wife; and to-night shall be our wedding night, and the bed the table for the feast.”

“What sweet news you give me, Pauline! I cannot believe it till my happiness is actually accomplished.”

“You may doubt, if you like; but let it be a slight doubt, or else you will do me wrong. I am tired of living with you as a lover and only making you wretched, and the moment I saw you on horseback I determined to belong to you. Consequently I went to redeem the ring directly you left, and I do not intend to leave you until I receive the fatal message from Lisbon. I have dreaded its arrival every day for the last week.”

“May the messenger that brings it be robbed on the way.”

“No such luck, I am afraid.”

As Pauline was standing, I asked her to come to my arms, for I longed to give her some palpable signs of my love.

“No, dearest, one can love and yet be wise; the door is open.”

She got down Ariosto and began to read to me the adventure of Ricciardetto with Fiordespina, an episode which gives its beauty to the twenty-ninth canto of that beautiful poem which I knew by heart. She imagined that she was the princess, and I Ricciardetto. She liked to fancy,

‘Che il ciel L’abbia concesso, Bradamante cangiata in miglior sesso.’

When she came to the lines;

‘Le belle braccia al collo indi mi getta, E dolcemente stringe, a baccia in bocca: Tu puoi pensar se allora la saetta Dirizza Amor, se in mezzo al cor mi tocca.’

She wanted some explanations on the expression ‘baccia in bocca’, and on the love which made Ricciardetto’s arrow so stiff, and I, only too ready to comment on the text, made her touch an arrow as stiff as Ricciardetto’s. Of course, she was angry at that, but her wrath did not last long. She burst out laughing when she came to the lines,

‘Io il veggo, io il sento, e a pena vero parmi: Sento in maschio in femina matarsi.’

And then,

‘Cosi le dissi, e feci ch’ella stessa Trovo con man la veritade expressa.

She expressed her, wonder that this poem abounding in obscenities had not been put on the “Index” at Rome.

“What you call obscenity is mere license, and there is plenty of that at Rome.”

“That’s a joke which should bring the censures of the Church upon you. But what do you call obscenities, if Ariosto is not obscene?”

“Obscenity disgusts, and never gives pleasure.”

“Your logic is all your own, but situated as I am I cannot reargue your proposition. I am amused at Ariosto’s choosing a Spanish woman above all

others to conceive that strange passion for Bradamante.”

“The heat of the Spanish climate made him conclude that the Spanish temperament was also ardent, and consequently whimsical in its tastes.”

“Poets are a kind of madmen who allow themselves to give utterance to all their fancies.”

The reading was continued, and I thought my time had come when she read the verses:

Io senza scale in su la rooca salto, E to stendardo piantovi di botto, E la nemica mia mi caccio sotto**

**I scaled the rock without a ladder, I planted my standard suddenly, and held my enemy beneath me.

I wanted to give her a practical illustration of the lines, but with that sensibility so natural to women, and which they can use so well as a goad to passion, she said,—

“Dearest, you might make yourself worse; let us wait till your sprain is cured.”

“Are we to wait till I am cured for the consummation of our marriage?”

“I suppose so, for if I am not mistaken the thing can’t be done without a certain movement.”

“You are wrong, dear Pauline, but it would make no difference to me even if it were so. You may be sure I would not put it off till tomorrow, even if it cost me my leg. Besides, you shall see that there are ways and means of satisfying our passions without doing me any harm. Is that enough for you?”

“Well, well, as it is written that a wife should obey her husband, you will find me docile.”

“When?”

“After supper.”

“Then we will have no supper. We shall dine with all the better appetite tomorrow. Let us begin now.”

“No, for the suspicions of the servants might be aroused. Love has its rules of decency like everything else.”

“You talk as wisely as Cato, and I am obliged to confess that you are right in all you say.”

Supper was served as usual; it was delicate enough, but the thought of approaching bliss had taken away our appetites, and we ate only for form’s sake. At ten o’clock we were at liberty, and could indulge our passion without any fear of being disturbed.

But this delightful woman, who had so plainly told me a few hours before that when I was cured we would live together as man and wife, was now ashamed to undress before me. She could not make up her mind, and told me so, laughing at herself. From this circumstance I gathered that the decency of the body is more tenacious in its grasp than the purity of the soul.

“But, sweetheart,” said I, “you dressed and undressed for a fortnight before your betrothed.”

“Yes, but he was always lying in his hammock with his back towards me at night, and in the morning he never turned round and wished me good day till he knew I was dressed.”

“What, he never turned?”

“I never let him take any liberties.”

“Such virtue is incomprehensible to me.”

“You see the count was to be my husband, and I was to be his wife, and in such cases a young woman is careful. Besides, I believe that if one will but refrain from taking the first step, continence is easy. Then the count was naturally timid, and would never have taken any liberties without my encouraging him, which I took care not to do. For this once, you will allow me to sleep with you in my clothes.”

“Certainly, if you wish me to be dressed also, otherwise it would be unbearable for both of us.”

“You are very cruel.”

“But, dearest, are you not ashamed of these foolish scruples?”

“Well, well, put out the candles, and in a minute I will be beside you.”

“Very good; though the want of light will deprive me of a great pleasure. Quick, out with them!”

My charming Portuguese did not reflect that the moon shone full into the room, and that the muslin curtains would not prevent my seeing her exquisite figure, which shewed to greater advantage in the position she happened to take. If Pauline had been a coquette I should have considered her scruples as mere artifice calculated to increase my ardour; but she had no need to use such stratagems. At last she was within my arms, and we clasped each other closely and in silence that was only broken by the murmur of our kisses. Soon our union became closer, and her sighs and the ardour of her surrender shewed me that her passion was more in need of relief than mine. I was sufficiently master of myself to remember that I must have a care for her honour, greatly to her astonishment, for she confessed she had never thought of such a thing, and had given herself up freely, resolved to brave the consequences which she believed to be inevitable. I explained the mystery and made her happy.

Till this moment love alone had swayed me, but now that the bloody sacrifice was over I felt full of respect and gratitude. I told her effusively that I knew how great was my happiness, and that I was ready to sacrifice my life to her to prove my love.

The thought that our embraces would have no dangerous result had put Pauline at her ease, and she have reins to her ardent temperament, while I did valiant service, till at last we were exhausted and the last sacrifice was not entirely consummated. We abandoned ourselves to a profound and peaceful sleep. I was the first to awake; the sun was shining in through the window, and I gazed on Pauline. As I looked at this woman, the first beauty in Portugal, the only child of an illustrious family, who had given herself to me all for love, and whom I should possess for so short a time, I could not restrain a profound sigh.

Pauline awoke, and her gaze, as bright as the rising sun in springtime, fixed itself on me truthfully and lovingly.

“What are you thinking of, dearest?”

“I am trying to convince myself that my happiness is not a dream, and if it be real I want it to last for ever. I am the happy mortal to whom you have given up your great treasure, of which I am unworthy, though I love you tenderly.”

“Sweetheart, you are worthy of all my devotion and affection, if you have not ceased to respect me.”

“Can you doubt it, Pauline?”

“No, dearest, I think you love me, and that I shall never repent having trusted in you.”

The sweet sacrifice was offered again, and Pauline rose and laughed to find that she was no longer ashamed of her nakedness before me. Then, passing from jest to earnest, she said,—

“If the loss of shame is the result of knowledge, how was it that our first parents were not ashamed till they had acquired knowledge?”

“I don’t know, dearest, but tell me, did you ever ask your learned Italian master that same question?”

“Yes, I did.”

“What did he say?”

“That their shame arose not from their enjoyment, but from disobedience; and that in covering the parts which had seduced them, they discovered, as it were, the sin they had committed. Whatever may be said on the subject, I shall always think that Adam was much more to blame than Eve.”

“How is that?”

“Because Adam had received the prohibition from God, while Eve had only received it from Adam.”

“I thought that both of them received the prohibition directly from God.”

“You have not read Genesis, then.”

“You are laughing at me.”

“Then you have read it carelessly, because it is distinctly stated that God made Eve after he had forbidden Adam to eat of the fruit.”

“I wonder that point has not been remarked by our commentators; it seems a very important one to me.”

“They are a pack of knaves, all sworn enemies of women.”

“No, no, they give proofs of quite another feeling only too often.”

“We won’t say anything more about it. My teacher was an honest man.”

“Was he a Jesuit?”

“Yes, but of the short robe.”

“What do you mean?”

“We will discuss the question another time.”

“Very good; I should like to have it proved to me that a man can be a Jesuit and honest at the same time.”

“There are exceptions to all rules.”

My Pauline was a profound thinker, and strongly attached to her religion. I should never have discovered that she possessed this merit if I had not slept with her. I have known several women of the same stamp; if you wish to know the elevation of their souls, you must begin by damning them. When this is done, one enjoys their confidence, for they have no secrets for the happy victor. This is the reason why the charming though feeble sex loves the brave and despises the cowardly. Sometimes they appear to love cowards, but always for their physical beauty. Women amuse themselves with such fellows, but are the first to laugh if they get caned.

After the most delicious night I had ever passed, I resolved not to leave my house till Pauline had to return to Portugal. She did not leave me for a moment, save to hear mass on Sundays. I shut my door to everybody, even to the doctor, for my sprain disappeared of itself. I did not fail to inform Miss Chudleigh of my rapid cure; she had sent twice a day ever since the accident to learn how I was.

Pauline went to her room after our amorous conflict, and I did not see her again till dinnertime; but when I did see her I thought her an angel. Her face had caught the hues of the lily and the rose, and had an air of happiness I could not help admiring.

As we both wanted to have our portraits taken, I asked Martinelli to send me the best miniature-painter in London. He sent a Jew, who succeeded admirably. I had my miniature mounted in a ring and gave it to Pauline; and this was the only present she would accept from me, who would have thought myself all the richer if she had accepted all I had.

We spent three weeks in a happy dream which no pen can describe. I was quite well again, and we tasted all the sweets of love together. All day and all night we were together, our desires were satisfied only to be renewed; we enjoyed the extremest bliss. In a word, it is difficult to form a just idea of the state of two individuals who enjoy all the range of physical and mental pleasures together, whose life is for the present without thought of the future; whose joys are mutual and continual; such, nevertheless, was the position of myself and my divine Pauline.

Every day I discovered in her some fresh perfection which made me love her more; her nature was inexhaustible in its treasures, for her mental qualities even surpassed her physical beauties, and an excellent education had wonderfully increased the powers of her intelligence. With all the beauty and grace of a woman she had that exalted character which is the lot of the best of men. She began to flatter herself that the fatal letter would never come, and the count was little more than a dream of the past. Sometimes she would say that she could not understand how a pretty face could exercise such a strong influence over us in spite of our reason.

“I have found out too late,” she added, “that chance alone can make a marriage, contracted for such physical reasons, happy.”

The 1st of August was a fatal day for both of us. Pauline received a letter from Lisbon, which summoned her home without delay, and I had a letter from Paris announcing the death of Madame d'Urfe. Madame du Rumain told me that on the evidence of her maid the doctors had pronounced her death to be due to an overdose of the liquid she called "The Panacea." She added that a will had been found which savoured of a lunatic asylum, for she had left all her wealth to the son or daughter that should be born of her, declaring that she was with child. I was to be the governor of the infant; this vexed me exceedingly, as I knew I should be the laughing-stock of Paris for a week at least. Her daughter, the Comtesse de Chatelet, had taken possession of all her real estate and of her pocket-book, which contained, to my surprise, four hundred thousand francs. It was a great shock for me, but the contents of the two letters Pauline had received was a greater blow. One was from her aunt, and the other from Oeiras, who begged her to return to Lisbon as soon as possible, and assured her that she should be put in possession of her property on her arrival, and would be at liberty to marry Count Al–- in the sight of all the world. He sent her a cheque for twenty million reis. I was not aware of the small value of the coin, and was in an ecstasy; but Pauline laughed, and said it only came to two thousand pounds, which was a sufficient sum, however, to allow her to travel in the style of a duchess. The minister wanted her to come by sea, and all she had to do was to communicate with the Portuguese ambassador, who had orders to give her a passage on a Portuguese frigate which happened to be riding in an English port. Pauline would not hear of the voyage, or of applying to the ambassador, for she did not want anyone to think that she had been obliged to return. She was angry with the minister for having sent her a cheque, thinking that he must be aware that she had been in need, but I soon brought her to see reason on this point, telling her that it was a very thoughtful and delicate proceeding on the part of Oeiras, and that he had merely lent-her the money, and not given it to her.

Pauline was rich, and she was a high-minded woman. Her generosity may be estimated by her giving me her ring when she was in want, and she certainly never counted on my purse, though she may have felt sure that I would not abandon her. I am sure she believed me to be very rich, and my conduct was certainly calculated to favour that idea.

The day and even the night passed sadly. The next day Pauline addressed me as follows:

"We must part, dear friend, and try to forget one another, for my honour obliges

me to become the wife of the count as soon as I arrive in Lisbon. The first fancy of my heart, which you have almost effaced, will regain all its old force when I see you no longer, and I am sure I shall love my husband, for he is a goodhearted, honest, and pleasant young man; that much I know from the few days we lived together.

“Now I have a favour to ask of you, which I am sure you will grant. Promise me never to come to Lisbon without my permission. I hope you will not seek to know my reasons; you would not, I am sure, come to trouble my peace, for if I sinned I should be unhappy, and you would not desire that for me. I have dreamed we have lived together as man and wife, and now we are parted I shall fancy myself a widow about to undertake another marriage.”

I burst into tears, and pressing her to my breast promised I would do as she wished.

Pauline wrote to her aunt and Oeiras that she would be in Lisbon in October, and that they should have further news of her when she reached Spain. She had plenty of money, and bought a carriage and engaged a maid, and these arrangements took up her time during the last week she spent with me. I made her promise me to let Clairmont accompany her as far as Madrid. She was to send me back my faithful servant when she reached the Spanish capital, but fate had decreed that I should see his face no more.

The last few days were spent partly in sorrow and partly in delight. We looked at each other without speaking, and spoke without knowing what we said. We forgot to eat, and went to bed hoping that love and anguish would keep us awake, but our exhausted bodies fell into a heavy sleep, and when we awoke we could only sigh and kiss again.

Pauline allowed me to escort her as far as Calais, and we started on the 10th of August, only stopping at Dover to embark the carriage on the packet, and four hours afterwards we disembarked at Calais, and Pauline, considering her widowhood had begun, begged me to sleep in another room. She started on the 12th of August, preceded by my poor Clairmont, and resolved only to travel by daytime.

The analogy between my parting with Pauline and my parting with Henriette fifteen years before, was exceedingly striking; the two women were of very

similar character, and both were equally beautiful, though their beauty was of a different kind. Thus I fell as madly in love with the second as with the first, both being equally intelligent. The fact that one had more talent and less prejudices than the other must have been an effect of their different educations. Pauline had the fine pride of her nation, her mind was a serious cast, and her religion was more an affair of the heart than the understanding. She was also a far more ardent mistress than Henriette. I was successful with both of them because I was rich; if I had been a poor man I should never have known either of them. I have half forgotten them, as everything is forgotten in time, but when I recall them to my memory I find that Henriette made the profounder impression on me, no doubt because I was twenty-five when I knew her, while I was thirty-seven in London.

The older I get the more I feel the destructive effects of old age; and I regret bitterly that I could not discover the secret of remaining young and happy for ever. Vain regrets! we must finish as we began, helpless and devoid of sense.

I went back to England the same day, and had a troublesome passage. Nevertheless, I did not rest at Dover; and as soon as I got to London I shut myself up with a truly English attack of the spleen, while I thought of Pauline and strove to forget her. Jarbe put me to bed, and in the morning, when he came into my room, he made me shudder with a speech at which I laughed afterwards.

“Sir,” said he, “the old woman wants to know whether she is to put up the notice again.”

“The old hag! Does she want me to choke her?”

“Good heavens-no, sir! She is very fond of you, seeing you seemed so sad, she thought … .”

“Go and tell her never to think such things again, and as for you . .

…”

“I will do as you wish, sir.”

“Then leave me.”

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