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**Honoré de Balzac**  
LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE  
VOLUME XXXI

EDITION DEFINITIVE

OF WHICH THERE ARE PRINTED ON IMPERIAL JAPAN  
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No. 333

**The Human Comedy**

SCENES OF PROVINCIAL LIFE

VOLUME IX

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ADRIEN-MOREAU.



## TO SUPPER

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He hardly recognized Florine and Coralie, who had changed their clothes and were arrayed in ordinary silk dresses and cloaks, like butterflies returned to their cocoons.

"Will you do me the honor to give me your arm?"

said Coralie, in a trembling voice.

"With pleasure," said Lucien, who felt the actress's heart beating against his like a bird's when it is snared.

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Honoré de Balzac NOW FOR THE  
FIRST TIME COMPLETELY  
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH  
LOST ILLUSIONS BY G. BURNHAM  
IVES .

TO SUPPER

THE TWO POETS

A PROVINCIAL GREAT MAN IN PARIS

THE TRIALS OF AN INVENTOR

He hardly recognized Florine and Covale, who

had changed their clothes and were arrayed in

very silk dresses and cloaks, like butterflies

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ETCHINGS BY ALFRED BOILLOT,

CHARLES-THÉODORE DEBLOIS AND

XAVIER LE SUEUR AFTER PAINTINGS

BY ADRIEN MOREAU

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POL. II

searched.

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## TO SUPPER

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Edouard readily recognized Elvire and Coralie, who had changed their clothes and were arrayed in ordinary dresses and cloaks, like butterflies returned to their rooms.

"Will you do me the honor to give me your arm?" asked Coralie, in a trembling voice.

"With pleasure," said Edouard, who felt the actress's hand beating against his like a bird's when it is startled.

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## LOST ILLUSIONS

THE PROVINCIAL GREAT MAN IN PARIS

*Continued*

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Since the thrice-blessed day on which Lucien made the acquaintance of Daniel d'Arthez, he had changed his place at Flicoteaux's: the two friends dined side by side and talked in low tones of literary matters, of subjects to be written up, of the best method of presenting them, of treating them, of developing them. At this moment, Daniel d'Arthez was revising the manuscript of *L'Archer de Charles IX.*, recasting some of the chapters, writing the finest passages it contains, and the magnificent preface, which may be said to dominate the whole book, and which threw such a bright light upon the younger school of literature. One day, just as Lucien was about to take his seat beside Daniel, who had waited for him and whose hand was in his, he saw Etienne Lousteau at the door, just turning the handle. He suddenly dropped Daniel's hand and told the waiter that he would dine in his old place, near the desk. D'Arthez bestowed upon Lucien one of those angelic glances in which forgiveness swallows up blame, and which made such a vivid impression upon the poet, that he took Daniel's hand again and pressed it anew.

(3)

"I must see him on important business, I will tell you about it," he said.

Lucien was in his old seat when Lousteau took his; he was the first to bow; they soon engaged in conversation, and to such good purpose that Lucien went to fetch the manuscript of *Les Marguerites* while Lousteau was finishing his dinner. He had obtained the privilege of submitting his sonnets to the journalist, and relied upon his pompous goodwill to procure him a publisher or a position on the newspaper. On his return, Lucien saw Daniel in a corner of the restaurant, leaning on his elbows and gazing at him with a melancholy expression; but, being devoured by want and impelled by ambition, he pretended not to see his brother of the club and followed Lousteau.

Just before nightfall, the journalist and the neophyte sat down together under the trees in that part of the Luxembourg which lies between the broad Avenue de l'Observatoire and Rue de l'Ouest. This street was at that time a long mud-hole, bordered by plank walks and swamps, with no houses except in the neighborhood of Rue de Vaugirard, and the path was so little frequented that, at the hour when Paris was dining, two lovers could quarrel there and go through all the formalities of reconciliation without fear of being seen. The only possible kill-joy was the veteran, doing sentry duty at the little wicket on Rue de l'Ouest, if it should occur to that venerable soldier to add to the number of steps of which his monotonous promenade

was commonly composed. It was in that path, upon a wooden bench between two yew-trees, that Etienne listened to the sonnets selected as specimens from *Les Marguerites*. Etienne Lousteau, who, after an apprenticeship of two years, had his foot in the stirrup in the capacity of editor, and who could call some of the celebrities of the time his friends, was an imposing personage in Lucien's eyes. And so, as he fumbled over the manuscript of *Les Marguerites*, the provincial poet thought it proper to deliver a few prefatory remarks.

"The sonnet, monsieur, is one of the most difficult forms of poetry. It has been quite generally abandoned. No one in France has ever been able to rival Petrarch, whose language, being infinitely more flexible than ours, allows the poet to indulge in plays of thought which are excluded by our positivism—forgive the word. It seemed to me therefore to be a unique idea to begin with a collection of sonnets. Victor Hugo has made the ode his own, Canalis confines himself to fugitive pieces, Béranger monopolizes the chanson, Casimir Delavigne, tragedy, and Lamartine, meditation."

"Are you a classicist or a romanticist?" asked Lousteau.

Lucien's amazed expression denoted such complete ignorance of the state of affairs in the republic of letters, that Lousteau deemed it advisable to enlighten him.

"My dear monsieur, you have arrived upon the scene while a desperate battle is in progress, and

you must make up your mind at once. In the first place, literature is divided into several zones, but our great men are all in one or the other of two camps. The royalists are romantic, the liberals, classic. The divergence of literary opinions is involved in the divergence of political opinions, and the result is war with all sorts of weapons, torrents of ink, witty remarks with a sharpened point, cutting slanders, extravagant nicknames between dawning reputations and those that are sinking below the horizon. By a strange caprice, the romantic royalists demand literary freedom and the repeal of the laws that provide fixed forms for our literature; whereas the liberals want to maintain the unities, the swing of the alexandrine and the classic theme. Thus the literary opinions are out of harmony with the political opinions in each camp. If you are an eclectic, you will have no one on your side. Which side do you take?"

"Which is the stronger?"

"The liberal newspapers have many more subscribers than the royalist and ministerial ones: nevertheless, Canalis makes his way, although he is a monarchist and a religious man, although he is patronized by the court and by the clergy.—Bah! sonnets are literature of the days before Boileau," said Etienne, when he saw that Lucien was dismayed at having to choose between two banners. "Be a romanticist. The romanticists are nearly all young men and the classicists are old fogies: the romanticists will win."

The word *wig* was the last word adopted by romantic journalism as a fitting designation with which to crush the classicists.

“LA PÂQUERETTE!” said Lucien, selecting the first of the two sonnets from which the book took its title and which served as an introduction :

O daisies of the mead, your hues harmonious, rare  
 Not always sparkle to delight the eye alone ;  
 But rather they the cherished hopes of man make known  
 In poems that the source of human sympathies declare ;

Your golden stalks reveal in silver settings fair  
 The treasures deified that human hearts enthroned ;  
 Your fibres tender with mysterious fluid shown,  
 The cost of victory tell in suffering borne, and care.

O say ! is't to bloom on the morn when, the tomb unsealed,  
 The risen Christ, to a fairer world Himself revealed,  
 And scattered healing in the spreading of His wings,

That autumn sees once more your petals dwarfed and white  
 Accusing, as we look, inconstant, joyous things ?  
 Or teach us that the days of youth make rapid flight ?

Lucien was hurt by Lousteau's absolute immobility while he was listening to the sonnet ; he was not as yet acquainted with the disconcerting impassiveness due to the habit of criticism and especially observable in newspaper critics, worn out as they are with prose and verses and dramas. The poet, who was accustomed to applause, swallowed his chagrin, and read the sonnet preferred by Madame de Bargeton and some of his friends of the club.

“Perhaps this will extort a word from him,” he thought.

## SECOND SONNET

### LA MARGUERITE

I am the marguerite, fairest of flowers I  
 That erstwhile decked with varied charms the velvet sward.  
 And proud, my beauty was the seeker's sole regard  
 And flattered, that my joyous dayspring would not die.

Alas! an unsought power, spite of my earnest cry,  
 My brow has adorned with a circle of glory ill-starred;  
 By fate condemned, the gift of truth is mine to guard,  
 I suffer, I perish; for knowledge to death clings always nigh.

No more the joy of silence mine, nor sweets of rest;  
 For love, in a word, has robbed the future I possessed,  
 It rends my heart the secret of its love to bare.

Of flowers, only I am spurned without a sigh;  
 And stripped my brow of its white diadem and fair,  
 My secret gained, 'neath cruel feet, despoiled I die.

When he had finished, the poet glanced at his Aristarchus: Etienne Lousteau was gazing at the trees in the nursery.

“Well?” said Lucien.

“Well, my dear fellow, go on! Am I not listening to you? In Paris, to listen without speaking is high praise.”

“Have you heard enough?” said Lucien.

“Go on,” replied the journalist bluntly.

Lucien read the following sonnet; but he read it with death at his heart, for Lousteau's impenetrable sang-froid froze his utterance. Had he been farther



advanced in literary life, he would have known that, among authors, silence and bluntness, under such circumstances, betray the jealousy inspired by a fine work, just as their admiration indicates the pleasure caused by a commonplace work which soothes their self-esteem.

## THIRTIETH SONNET

## LE CAMELLIA

A word from Nature's page each beauteous flower spells ;  
 The rose bespeaks of love, and beauty well defines,  
 Of pure and tender hearts, the violets' fragrance tells,  
 The lily fair in robe of simple splendor shines.

But the camellia, culture's offspring and its prize,  
 A scentless rose, and lily of all grandeur shorn,  
 Expands its bloom beneath the cruel, winter skies,  
 To charm the maidens' changeful fancies, hourly born.

Yet, ne'ertheless, within the boxes at the play,  
 I love to see, outspread in all their fair array,  
 A crown of modesty, camellias gleaming white

Amid the raven locks of women young and fair,  
 Well-skilled to quicken love in souls, a love as rare  
 As Grecian marbles Phidias' chisel gave to sight.

"What do you think of my poor sonnets?" inquired Lucien explicitly.

"Do you want the truth?" said Lousteau.

"I am young enough to love it, and I am too anxious to succeed not to listen to it without anger but not without despair," was Lucien's reply.

"Well, my dear fellow, the subtleties of the first

indicate a poem written at Angoulême, which undoubtedly cost you too much for you to abandon it; the second and third already have the Parisian flavor; but read me still another," he added with a gesture which delighted the provincial great man.

Encouraged by this request, Lucien read with more confidence the sonnet which D'Arthez and Bridau preferred, perhaps because of its coloring.

### FIFTIETH SONNET

#### LA TULIPE

Behold the tulip I, rich Holland's floral pride;  
Such power my beauty wields that Flemish miser buys  
My bulb at higher price than old Golconda's prize,  
If proudly tall I am, and pure my strain and tried.

A feudal air is mine, and like a Yolande espied,  
Enrobed in skirts with graceful folds of ample size,  
My vesture, too, in blazons bright, my arms apprise  
Thus, *gules with argent barred, or with purple divide.*

With touch creative, the celestial gardener spun  
From royal purple and beams of the golden sun  
My gorgeous robe with tissue wondrous soft and fine.

On splendor's roll, no garden flower my place can fill;  
But alas! in my cup no fragrance doth nature distil,  
My cup that shows the China vase's curved outline.

"Well?" said Lucien after a moment's silence,  
which seemed to him immeasurably long.

NOTE.—"It is well known," says M. de Lovenjoul (*Histoire des Œuvres de Balzac*), "that the sonnets given in this work were given to Balzac, *La Marguerite* by Madame de Girardin, *La Tulipe* by Théophile Gautier, and the others by Lassally."

“My dear fellow,” said Etienne Lousteau gravely, looking at the toes of the boots Lucien had brought from Angoulême, which were well-nigh worn out, “I advise you to blacken your boots with ink so as to save blacking, to make toothpicks of your quills so as to make it look as if you had dined when you walk through the lovely paths of this garden after leaving Flicoteaux’s, and to find employment of some sort. Become clerk to a bailiff if you have the nerve, a salesman if you have lead in your loins, or a soldier if you like military music. You have the making of three poets; but you have time enough to die of hunger six times over before you get a start, if you depend upon the products of your poetry for a living.

“Now it is your purpose, to judge from your too youthful discourse, to coin money with your inkstand. I do not pass judgment on your poems; they are much superior to all the volumes of poetry that crowd the shelves of the bookshops. Those charming *rossignols*, sold at a little higher price than others because of the vellum they’re printed on, almost always light on the banks of the Seine, where you can go and study their songs, if you choose some day to make an instructive pilgrimage along the quays of Paris, from the show windows of Père Jérôme on Pont Notre-Dame, to Pont Royal. You will find there all the *Essais poétiques, Inspirations, Elevations, Hymnes, Chants, Ballades, Odes*, in short, all the broods that have been hatched in seven years, muses covered with dust, spattered

by passing cabs, handled by all the passers-by who want to see the vignettes on the title-page. You know no one, you have access to no newspaper: your *Marguerites* will remain chastely folded as you have them now; they will never bloom in the sunshine of publicity, in the fertile field of wide margins, embellished with the decorative borders that are so lavishly employed by the illustrious Dauriat, publisher for all the celebrities and king of the wooden galleries.

“My poor boy, I came to Paris as you did, with my heart full of illusions, spurred on by love of art, impelled by an irresistible impulse to seek renown: I soon found out the realities of the business, the obstacles to be overcome in the book trade, and learned what it is to be in want. My exalted ardor, now cooled, my first effervescence hid from my eyes the mechanism that keeps the world in motion; it is necessary to see it, to rub against the wheels, wound yourself on the shafts, besmear yourself with grease, and listen to the din of the chains and fly wheels. You will discover, as I did, that, beneath all the lovely things you have dreamed, men and passions and necessities are always at work. You will be compelled to take part in horrible struggles, work against work, man against man, faction against faction, and you must fight with some system in order not to be abandoned by your friends. These ignoble conflicts disenchant the mind, deprave the heart, and weary one to no purpose; for your efforts often help to confer the

crown upon a man whom you hate, a man with talents of a secondary order put forward as a genius in spite of you.

“Literary life has its wings and its greenrooms. Success, whether extorted or deserved, is what the pit applauds; the methods, always shocking, the painted supernumeraries, the *claqueurs*, the scene-shifters, those are what are hidden behind the wings. You are still in the pit. There is still time for you to draw back before you set foot on the first step of the throne for which so many ambitious men are contending; do not dishonor yourself as I am doing, in order to make a living.”—A tear moistened Etienne Lousteau’s eyes.—“Do you know how I live?” he continued fiercely. “The little money my family could give me was soon gone. I found myself penniless after I had had a play accepted at the Théâtre-Français. At the Théâtre-Français, the patronage of a prince or of one of the king’s first gentlemen of the chamber is not enough to procure one a share of favor: the actors yield only to those who threaten their self-esteem. If you had the power to spread a report that the *jeune premier* has the asthma, that the *jeune première* has a fistula wherever you choose to locate it, that the *soubrette*’s breath will kill flies on the wing, your play would be given to-morrow. I don’t know if I, I who speak to you, shall be able to obtain that power in two years’ time; it requires too many friends. Where, how and by what means to earn my bread? was the question I put to myself when

I felt the first pangs of hunger. After many attempts, after writing an anonymous novel for which Doguereau paid me two hundred francs,—and he didn't make much out of it,—I was satisfied that journalism alone could feed and clothe me. But how to gain a foothold in those regions? I will not describe my fruitless applications and solicitations, or the six months I passed working as a spare hand and being told that I would frighten away subscribers, when, on the contrary, I attracted them.

“Let us pass over those insults. To-day I write up what is going on at the theatres on the boulevard, almost gratis, in the paper that belongs to Finot, the fat fellow who breakfasts two or three times a month at the Café Voltaire—but you don't go there! Finot is editor-in-chief. I live by selling the tickets the managers of the theatres give me to pay for my secondary good words in the paper; also the books the publishers send me, which I am supposed to review. Lastly, when Finot's requirements are satisfied, I traffic in various things brought to me as tribute by tradesmen for or against whom he permits me to write articles. The *Carminative Water*, the *Sultana Paste*, the *Cephalic Oil*, the *Brazilian Mixture* pay twenty or thirty francs for a flattering article. I am compelled to bark at the publisher who sends only a few copies to the paper: the paper takes two which Finot sells, and I must have two to sell. The man who publishes a genuine masterpiece and is stingy with copies, is fairly torn to pieces. It's a low business, but I live by it, as

many other men do! Don't imagine that the political world is much more attractive than the literary world: in both worlds everything is corrupt, every man is either corrupter or corrupted; when there is some important undertaking in the publishing line in contemplation, the publisher pays me for fear of being attacked.

"Thus my income varies in proportion to the prospectuses. When the prospectuses come thick and fast, the money flows into my fob in streams, and then I treat my friends. When the publishers are doing nothing, I dine at Flicoteaux's. The actresses also pay for puffs, but the shrewdest of them pay the critics; silence is what they dread most. A criticism, written so that it can be revised later, you know, is worth more and brings a higher price than an undisguised puff, which is forgotten the next day. Discussion, my dear fellow, is the pedestal of celebrity. At this trade of hired assassin of ideas and of industrial, literary and dramatic reputations, I earn fifty crowns a month; I can sell a novel for five hundred francs, and I am beginning to be looked upon as a man to be feared. When, instead of living with Florine at the expense of an apothecary who gives himself the airs of a nobleman, I am living in apartments of my own, when I change to one of the great newspapers and have a *feuilleton*, on that day, my dear fellow, Florine will become a great actress; as for myself, I don't know what I may become then: minister or honest man, anything is possible."—He raised his humiliated

head and gazed despairingly at the trees of the park, with a self-accusing expression terrible to see.—“And I have a beautiful tragedy that has been accepted! And I have among my papers, a poem that will not live! And I was once a good man! My heart was pure; and now I, who dreamed of glorious intrigues with the most distinguished women in society, have an actress at the Panorama-Dramatique for my mistress! And because a publisher refuses to give my paper an extra copy, I speak slightly of a book that I admire!”

Lucien, moved to tears, pressed Etienne's hand.

“Outside of the world of letters,” continued the journalist, rising and leading the way to the broad Avenue de l'Observatoire, where the two poets walked back and forth as if to take more air into their lungs, “outside of the world of letters, there is not a single person who realizes the ghastly progress by which a man attains what we must call, according to the talent displayed, vogue, fashion, reputation, renown, celebrity or public favor, the different rungs of the ladder that leads to glory but never take its place. This striking moral phenomenon is made up of innumerable accidents, which change so swiftly that no two men were ever known to attain success by exactly the same means. Canalis and Nathan are two utterly dissimilar examples, neither of which will ever be duplicated. D'Arthez, who is wearing himself out with work, will become famous by virtue of still another accident.



“The reputation so earnestly desired is almost always a crowned harlot. Yes, in the case of literary works of the lowest class, it represents the poor girl who stands shivering at street corners; in literature of secondary rank, it is the kept woman who comes from the unsavory haunts of journalism, and whom I assist in supporting; in successful literature it is the brilliant, insolent courtesan, who has her own domicile, pays taxes to the state, receives great noblemen, treats them well or ill as she chooses, has her liveried servants, her carriage, and can keep her thirsty creditors waiting. Ah! they to whom reputation is, as it was once to me and is now to you, an angel with glistening wings, clad in a white tunic, holding a green palm branch in one hand and a flaming sword in the other, partaking at one and the same time of the characteristics of a mythological abstraction that lives at the bottom of a well, and of the poor virtuous girl living in exile in a faubourg, enriching itself only in the bright light of virtue by nobly courageous efforts, and flying back to Heaven with unspotted character, when it does not go to the grave, disgraced, trampled under foot, outraged and forgotten, in the pauper’s hearse; such men, with bronze-encircled brains, with hearts still warm beneath the snowdrifts of experience, are rare in the region which you see at your feet,” he said, pointing to the great city that lay before them, enveloped in smoke, in the light of the setting sun.

A vision of the club passed suddenly before

Lucien's eyes and stirred his pulses; but he was carried on by Lousteau, who continued his pitiful lamentation.

"They are rare and widely-scattered in this fermenting vat, rare as true lovers in the world of love, rare as honest fortunes in the financial world, rare as a clean man in journalism. The experience of the first man who ever told me what I have told you was wasted, as mine will undoubtedly be of no service to you. Year after year the same ardent longing drives to Paris from the provinces an equal, not to say increasing, number of ambitious, beardless youths, who rush forward with head erect and swelling heart to the assault upon Fashion, a sort of Princess Tourandocte of the *Thousand and One Days*, whose Prince Calaf everyone is eager to be! But no one guesses the riddle. They all fall into the ditch of misfortune, into the mire of journalism, into the swamps of the book trade. The beggars glean a few sous with biographical articles, *tartines*, short news items in the papers, or with books ordered by sensible dealers in manuscript, who prefer a parcel of trash produced in a fortnight to a masterpiece that requires time to sell. The moths, crushed before they become butterflies, live upon shame and infamy, ready to snarl at or to praise a rising talent at the order of a pacha of *Le Constitutionnel*, *La Quotidienne*, or *Les Debats*, at a signal from the publishers, at the request of a jealous comrade, often to procure a dinner. They who overcome the obstacles, forget the miseries of their

beginning. I who speak to you, have written articles for six months, articles upon which I exerted all the mind I have, for a wretch who claimed them as his, and who, on the strength of those specimens of his work, was promoted to the editorship of a *feuilleton*: he didn't take me for his assistant, he didn't even give me a hundred sous, and yet I am obliged to offer him my hand and to take his."

"Why so?" said Lucien proudly.

"I may want some time to put ten lines in his *feuilleton*," replied Lousteau coolly. "In fact, my dear fellow, hard work is not the secret of making your fortune in literature; you must make the most of the work of other people. The proprietors of the newspapers are contractors, we are masons. The more mediocre a man's talent, the more quickly he succeeds; he can swallow live frogs, resign himself to endure anything, or flatter the base, petty passions of our literary sultans, like a newcomer from Limoges, Hector Merlin, who has already written political articles in an organ of the Right Centre, and who works on our little paper; I have seen him stoop and pick up an editor-in-chief's hat. By dint of offending nobody, that fellow will slip in between rival ambitions while they are fighting for supremacy. I feel sorry for you. I see myself in you as I used to be, and I am sure that, in a year or two, you will be what I am. You will think that some secret jealousy, some selfish interest, prompts this bitter advice; but it is prompted by the despair of the damned soul, who can not leave hell. No

one dares to say what I cry out to you with the agony of a man wounded to the heart, like another Job upon his dung-heap: 'Behold my sores!'

"Fight I must, on this field or on some other," said Lucien.

"Then understand this!" rejoined Lousteau; "the fight will be without quarter, if you have talent; your best chance would be to have none. Your stern conscience, as yet unstained, will bend before those men upon whom you see that your success depends; who, with a word, can give you life, and who will not say it: for, believe me, the popular author is more insolent and harsher to newcomers than the most brutal of publishers. Where the publisher sees only a possible loss of money, the author dreads a rival: one shows you to the door, the other crushes you. In order to produce great works, my poor boy, you will exhaust in penfuls of ink the tenderness, the vigor, the energy of your heart, and you will display them in passion, in sentiment, in fine phrases! Yes, you will write instead of acting, you will sing instead of fighting, you will love, you will hate, you will live in your books; but when you have reserved your treasures for your style, your gold and purple for your characters, when you walk in rags through the streets of Paris, happy at having created, in rivalry with the married state, a creature named Adolphe, Corinne, Clarisse, René or Manon, when you have ruined your life and your stomach in order to give life to that creature, you will see it slandered,

betrayed, sold, banished to the swamps of oblivion by journalists, buried by your best friends. Will you be able to await the day when your creation will arise again, aroused—by whom? when? how? There is a magnificent book, the *pianto* of unbelief, *Obermann*, which is wandering alone in the desert of back shelves, and which the booksellers ironically call a *rossignol*: when will its Easter dawn? No one can say! Above all things, try to find a publisher with sufficient courage to print *Les Marguerites*. It's not a question of getting any money for them, but of having them printed. Then you will see some curious sights."

This unfeeling tirade, delivered with the varying accents of the passions it expressed, fell like an avalanche of snow into Lucien's heart and left it as cold as ice. He stood for a moment without speaking. At last his heart burst forth, as if spurred on by the array of terrible difficulties to be overcome. He pressed Lousteau's hand and cried:

"I will triumph!"

"Good!" exclaimed the journalist, "another Christian goes down into the arena to be sacrificed to the wild beasts.—My dear fellow, there is a first performance to-night at the Panorama-Dramatique; it doesn't begin until eight o'clock and it is now six; go and put on your best coat, in a word, make yourself presentable. Call for me. I live on Rue de la Harpe, over the Café Serval, on the fourth floor. We will go to Dauriat's first. You are determined, aren't you? Very good, I will introduce

you to-night to one of the kings of the book trade and a few newspaper men. After the play we will have supper at my mistress's with some friends, for our dinner can hardly be reckoned as a meal. You will find Finot there, the editor-in-chief and proprietor of my newspaper. Have you heard Minette of the Vaudeville's latest: *Time is a great faster?* Well, to us, luck is the same, and we must try it."

"I shall never forget this day," said Lucien.

"Bring your manuscript and wear your best clothes, less on Florine's account than the publisher's."

\*

This outburst of good-fellowship, succeeding the fierce cry of the poet describing literary warfare, touched Lucien as deeply as he had, not long before, been touched by D'Arthez's grave and devout words in the same place. Excited by the prospect of an immediate conflict between mankind and himself, the inexperienced youth had no suspicion of the reality of the moral evils the journalist had described to him. He did not know that he stood between two distinct paths, between two systems represented by the club and by journalism, one of which was long but honorable and safe; the other dangerous and bristling with pitfalls, full of miry sloughs in which his conscience was certain to be befouled. His nature led him to choose the shorter and apparently the pleasanter road, to adopt rapid, decisive methods. At that moment he saw no difference between D'Arthez's noble friendship and Lousteau's ready good-comradeship. His fickle mind saw in journalism a weapon ready to his hand, he felt able to wield it, he determined to seize it. Dazzled as he was by the offers of his new friend, whose hand grasped his with a cordiality that seemed most gracious to him, could he guess that, in the army of the press, every one needs friends, just as generals need soldiers? Lousteau, seeing that he was a man of resolution, enlisted

him, hoping to make him his personal follower. The journalist took him for his first friend, as Lucien took him for his first patron: one wished to become a corporal, the other to be a common soldier.

The neophyte returned to his hotel in high spirits and made his toilet as carefully as on the ill-fated day when he was to appear in the Marquise d'Espard's box at the Opéra; but his clothes fitted him better now, he had grown used to them. He donned his fine, close-fitting, light-colored trousers, his dainty boots with tassels, which had cost him forty francs, and his dress-coat. He had his abundant, silky, blond hair curled and perfumed and arranged in glossy locks. His forehead gleamed with audacity attributable to his belief in his talents and in his future. His womanish hands were carefully looked to, and the almond-shaped nails had become smooth and pink. His round, white chin glistened above his black satin stock. Never did a more comely youth descend the mountain of the Latin Quarter.

Lucien, as handsome as a Greek god, took a cab, and was at the door of the Café Serval at a quarter to seven. The concierge bade him go up four flights, giving him some decidedly complicated topographical directions. Guided by these directions, he found, not without difficulty, an open door at the end of a long, dark corridor, and recognized the classic chamber of the Latin Quarter. The poverty of young men pursued him there as on Rue de Cluny, at D'Arthez's, at Chrestien's, everywhere! But everywhere it bore the stamp of the character



of the sufferer. In this case, it produced an unpleasant effect. A walnut bedstead without curtains, at whose foot was a wretched second-hand rug; at the windows, curtains turned yellow by the smoke from a fireplace that would not draw, and by cigar smoke; on the mantelpiece a Carcel lamp, presented by Florine, which had thus far escaped the Mont-de-Piété; a shabby mahogany commode, a table covered with papers, two or three worn-out quill pens, and no books except those brought home the night before or during the day; such was the furniture of that room, which was entirely without any objects of value, but contained a disgraceful collection of gaping boots, of old socks whose holes simulated lacework, in one corner, in another, cigar-stubs, soiled handkerchiefs, shirts in two, cravats in three editions. It was, in short, a literary bivouac, furnished with things of no value and producing the most extraordinary effect of bareness that can be imagined. On the night-table, laden with books read during the morning, shone the red roll of Fumade. A razor, a pair of pistols and a cigar-box were tossed carelessly on the mantelpiece. Against a panel of the wall, Lucien saw a pair of foils crossed behind a mask. Three common chairs and two armchairs, hardly worthy of the most wretched furnished lodging-house on the street, completed the furnishing. The dirty, gloomy room indicated a life without repose and without dignity; the occupant slept there and did his work there in hot haste; he occupied it by compulsion, as it were,

and felt a constant longing to get away from it. What a contrast between that cynical disorder and D'Arthez's clean, dignified poverty!—But Lucien did not listen to the good counsel suggested by that fleeting memory, for Etienne welcomed him with a jest to cover the nudity of vice.

“This is my kennel; I appear in state on Rue de Bondy in the new suite our apothecary has furnished for Florine, which we are to dedicate this evening.”

Etienne Lousteau wore black trousers, well-polished boots, a coat buttoned to the chin; his shirt was hidden from sight behind a velvet collar—Florine was probably expected to have a change of linen ready for him—and he was brushing his hat to make it look like a new one.

“Let us be off,” said Lucien.

“Not yet; I'm waiting for a publisher to bring me some money; we shall play cards perhaps, and I haven't a sou; besides, I must have some gloves.”

At that moment they heard a man's step in the corridor.

“That's he,” said Lousteau. “Now you will see, my dear fellow, the aspect Providence adopts when it manifests itself to poets. Before contemplating Dauriat, the fashionable publisher, in all his glory, you shall have a look at the publisher from Quai des Augustins, the bill-discounting publisher, the dealer in literary junk, the Norman ex-vender of salads.—Come in, you old Tartar!” he cried.

“Here I am,” replied a voice as harsh as the note of a cracked bell.

“With money?”

“Money? there’s no more money in the book trade,” replied a young man, entering the room with an inquisitive glance at Lucien.

“In the first place, you owe me fifty francs,” rejoined Lousteau. “Then here are two copies of *Un Voyage en Egypte*, which is wonderfully good, they say; it’s stuffed full of engravings and will sell readily; Finot has been paid for two articles I am to write about it. *Item*, two of the last novels of Victor Ducange, an illustrious author of the Marais. *Item*, two copies of the second book of a beginner, Paul de Kock, who works on the same lines. *Item*, two copies of *Yseult de Dôle*, a charming provincial tale. In all, one hundred francs at retail prices. So you owe me a hundred francs, my little Barbet.”

Barbet looked over the books, examining the edges and the covers with great care.

“Oh! they’re in a perfect state of preservation,” cried Lousteau. “The *Voyage* hasn’t been cut, nor the Paul de Kock, nor the Ducange, nor that one on the mantel, *Considérations sur la Symbolique*; I’ll throw that in; myths are so tiresome that I’ll give it away and avoid seeing millions of mites crawl out of it.”

“But how will you write your articles?” queried Lucien.

Barbet gazed at him in profound amazement, then looked at Etienne once more, saying with a sneering laugh:

"It's easy to see that monsieur hasn't the misfortune to be a man of letters."

"No, Barbet, no. Monsieur is a poet, a great poet who will run Canalis, Béranger and Delavigne to earth. He'll go a long way, unless he jumps into the river, and even then he'll go as far as Saint-Cloud."

"If I might offer monsieur a piece of advice," said Barbet, "it would be to let verse alone and try his hand at prose. We don't want any more verses on the quay."

Barbet had a wretched frockcoat buttoned with a single button, his stock was greasy, he kept his hat on, he wore shoes, his yawning waistcoat afforded a view of a coarse, cotton shirt. His round face, pierced by two miser's eyes, did not lack good humor; but there was in his expression the vague restlessness of people who have money and are accustomed to listen to constant demands upon them for a share of it. He had the appearance of being frank and easy of access, his shrewdness was so thoroughly sheathed in fat. He was originally a salesman, but had taken, two years before, a wretched little shop on the quay, from which he made incursions upon newspaper men, authors and printers, purchasing at a low price the books that were given them, and making in that way from ten to twenty francs a day. He had saved enough to make him a rich man; he scented everyone's necessities and was always on the watch for a good bargain; he would discount at fifteen to twenty per

cent a publisher's note in the hands of an embarrassed author, and the next day would go to the publisher, buy at a low price for cash some good books for which he had orders, and pay him with his own notes instead of money. He had been a student in his day, and his education warned him to shun absolutely all poetry and modern novels. He was fond of little enterprises, buying up useful books which he could buy outright for a thousand francs and put on the market in his own way; such books as the *History of France for Children*, *Book-keeping in Twenty Lessons*, and *Botany for Girls*. He had let two or three good books slip through his hands, after sending for the authors to call upon him time and time again, being unable to make up his mind to buy their manuscripts. When he was reproached for his cowardice, he would point to the report of a famous lawsuit, the copy of which, being taken from the newspapers, had cost him nothing, and which had brought him in two or three thousand francs.

Barbet was the timid publisher, who lives on bread and nuts, signs few notes, cuts down all his bills, carries his books himself no one knows where, but succeeds in selling them and gets the money for them. He was the terror of printers, who never knew how to take him; he would insist on a discount and pare their bills down, shrewdly guessing that they were in urgent need of money; and he would cease to employ those whom he had shorn, fearing that they would set some trap for him.

"Well, shall we go on with our business?" said Lousteau.

"You see, my boy," said Barbet familiarly, "I have six thousand volumes for sale in my shop. Now, as I once heard an old publisher say, *books* are not *francs*.\* The book trade is in a bad way."

"If you should go to his shop, my dear Lucien," said Etienne, "you would find on an oak desk, purchased at the sale of some insolvent wine merchant's effects, an unsnuffed candle—a device to make it burn more slowly. You would see rows of empty shelves, scarcely lighted by the feeble glimmer. To watch over that void, there is a small boy in a blue jacket, who breathes on his fingers, stamps his feet, or thrashes his arms about like a cab driver on his box. Look! no more books than I have here. No one can guess at the business that is carried on there."

"Here's a note for a hundred francs at three months," said Barbet, unable to restrain a smile as he took a piece of stamped paper from his pocket, "and I'll take your trash away with me. You see I can't pay cash any more, sales are too slow. I thought that you might need me and I hadn't a sou, so I signed a note just to oblige you, for I don't like to have my signature in circulation."

"So you do still care for my esteem and my gratitude?" said Lousteau.

\*"Les livres ne sont pas des francs." The point of this remark lies in the fact that *livre* (book) was formerly used as a measure of value equivalent to the franc.

"Although notes can't be paid with sentiments, I will accept your esteem all the same," Barbet replied.

"But I must have some gloves and the dealers will be base enough to refuse your paper," said Lousteau. "I tell you—there's a superb engraving in the first drawer of the commode yonder; it's worth eighty francs; it's before the letter,—and after the article, for I wrote a comical one about it. There was a lot in it about *Hippocrates refusing Artaxerxes' gifts*. Ha! ha! that fine plate will suit all the doctors who decline the exaggerated presents of our Parisian satraps. You'll find thirty or forty more novels under the engraving. Come, take the lot and give me forty francs."

"Forty francs!" said the bookseller, with a screech like a frightened hen, "twenty at most. Even then I may be throwing them away."

"Where are the twenty francs?" said Lousteau.

"Faith, I don't know if I have them," said Barbet, fumbling in his pockets. "Here they are. You're robbing me; you have great influence over me—"

"Come, let's be off," said Lousteau, taking up Lucien's manuscript and making an ink mark under the string.

"Have you anything else?" inquired Barbet.

"Nothing, my little Shylock, I will put you in the way of an excellent stroke of business,—in which you shall lose a thousand crowns to teach you to rob me like this," added Etienne in an undertone to Lucien.

"But what about your articles?" said Lucien, as they walked toward the Palais-Royal.

"Pshaw! you don't know how those things are managed. As for the *Voyage en Egypte*, I opened the book and read a few words here and there without cutting the leaves, and I discovered eleven mistakes in grammar. I shall write a column, saying that although the author has learned the language of the ducks carved on the Egyptian stones, called obelisks, he doesn't know his own language, and I'll prove it to him. I shall say that, instead of prating about the natural history of antiquities, he ought to have confined himself to the future of Egypt, the progress of civilization there, the means of bringing Egypt back to France which, after having conquered and lost it, may still regain possession of it by moral influence. And on top of that a patriotic *tartine*, the whole interlarded with tirades upon Marseilles, the Levant and our commerce."

"But if he had done all that, what would you say?"

"Oh! then I would say that, instead of boring us with politics, he ought to have turned his attention to art and to have described the country on its picturesque and territorial side. Thereupon the critic falls into lamentation. We are overrun with politics, he says; it bores us to death, we find it everywhere. I should refer regretfully to those delightful books of travel in which we were told all about the difficulties of navigation, the pleasure of sailing through narrow channels, the sport of crossing the Line, everything, in short, that they who



never travel need to know. Even while we approve them, we laugh at travelers who celebrate as important events, a passing bird, a flying fish, an hour's fishing, geographical landmarks pointed out and shoals avoided. We call for a repetition of those perfectly unintelligible scientific facts, which fascinate the reader like everything that is profound, mysterious, incomprehensible. The subscriber laughs and is satisfied. As for the novels, Florine is the most insatiable novel reader in the world, she gives me an abstract of them, and I turn my article according to her opinion. When she has been bored by what she calls the *author's phrases*, I keep the book under consideration and send to the publisher for a copy, and he sends it at once, delighted to have a favorable notice."

"Great God! but criticism, sacred criticism?" exclaimed Lucien, who was imbued with the doctrines of his club.

"Criticism, my dear fellow," said Lousteau, "is a brush that mustn't be used on light materials, for it would brush them away entirely. Come, let us not talk shop any more.—Do you see that mark?" he said, pointing to the manuscript of *Les Marguerites*. "I have joined the string to the paper with a little ink. If Dauriat reads your manuscript, he certainly will not be able to replace the string just as it is. So your manuscript is sealed, as it were. That is of some importance in the experiment you are about to make. Again, please notice that you do not come alone and without a sponsor to this

shop, like the young fellows who call upon ten publishers before they find one who offers them a chair."

Lucien had already experienced the truth of that detail. Lousteau paid for the cab, giving the driver three francs, Lucien being amazed beyond measure at such extravagance following so close upon such utter destitution. Then the two friends entered the wooden galleries where the so-called bookshop of novelties was established in all its glory.

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At the time of which we are writing, the wooden galleries constituted one of the most famous objects of interest in Paris. It will not be inappropriate to describe that ignoble bazaar, for it played so great a part in Parisian life for thirty-six years that there are few men of forty to whom such a description, incredible as it may appear to the younger generation, will not afford some pleasure.

In the place now occupied by the cold, broad and lofty Galerie d'Orléans, a sort of greenhouse without flowers, there were barracks or, to speak more accurately, huts built of boards, only partially covered, small, badly-lighted on the courtyard and garden by peep-holes called windows, which resembled the dirtiest casements to be found in the low gin-shops outside the barrier. A triple row of shops formed two galleries about twelve feet high. The shops in the middle row looked upon both galleries, which supplied them with poisonous air, and whose roofs admitted very little light through skylights that were never cleaned. These cells had acquired such a value on account of the flocking thither of tradesmen, that, although some of them were barely six feet wide and eight to ten feet long, they let for three thousand francs.

The shops that looked on the courtyard and garden were protected by little green lattices, perhaps

to prevent the crowd from pressing against the walls of old plaster that formed the rear of the shops, and demolishing them. This left a space of some two or three feet overgrown with remarkable vegetable growths unknown to botanists, mingled with the products of various industries in an equally flourishing condition. A waste sheet of printed paper was twined about a rose bush, so that the flowers of rhetoric were perfumed by the stunted flowers of that ill-kept garden, abundantly watered with fetid streams. Ribbons of all colors and prospectuses bloomed among the foliage. Odds and ends of millinery stifled the vegetation: you would find a knot of ribbons on a tuft of grass, and you would find yourself sadly mistaken as to the flower you were about to admire when you saw that it was only a bit of satin shaped like a dahlia.

On the courtyard side as well as on the garden, the aspect of this nondescript palace presented the most extraordinary effects ever produced by Parisian filth: paint badly worn, patched plastering, old paintings, fantastic scribbling. Moreover, the Parisian public sadly soiled the green lattices on both courtyard and garden sides. Thus, there was on each side a disgusting, disgraceful border of filth that seemed to forbid persons of refined sensibilities from approaching the spot; but such persons no more recoiled from those horrible things than the princes in fairy tales recoil from the dragons and other obstacles interposed by wicked fairies between them and the princesses. These galleries

were, as they are to-day, crossed in the middle by a passage, and, as to-day, entrance was gained by the two peristyles, still in existence, which were begun before the Revolution and abandoned for lack of funds. The fine stone gallery leading to the Théâtre-Français was at that time a narrow passage of disproportionate height, and so poorly covered that it often rained there. It was called the glass gallery, to distinguish it from the wooden galleries. The roofs of all these hovels were in such a wretched condition that the Orléans family had a lawsuit with a celebrated dealer in dry goods whose stock was seriously damaged in a single night. The dealer won the suit. In some places the roof consisted of two thicknesses of tarred canvas. The floor of the glass gallery—where Chevet laid the foundation of his fortune—and that of the wooden galleries as well, was the natural soil of Paris, with such extra dirt as was brought in by the boots and shoes of the public. In all weathers the feet stumbled over mountains and valleys of hardened mud, constantly swept into the galleries by the shopkeepers, so that one needed to be accustomed to the place to walk there with safety.

This disgusting mass of filth, the windows encrusted with mud, the flat huts covered with rags without, the filthy appearance of the unfinished walls, the whole misshapen aspect of the place, which resembled a gypsy camp, the booths at a fair, or the temporary structures built about monuments that are never finished, was admirably in keeping

with the different trades that swarmed beneath that reeking shed, overflowing with voluble effrontery and wild gayety, where, from the Revolution of 1789 to the Revolution of 1830, an immense amount of business was transacted. For twenty years the Bourse was located directly opposite, on the ground floor of the palace. Thus public opinion and reputations were made and unmade there just as political and financial affairs were discussed. Men made appointments to meet in the galleries before and after the Bourse. The Paris of bankers and tradesmen often filled the courtyard of the Palais-Royal, and sought shelter in these places in rainy weather. The peculiar construction of the building, which rose upon that spot, no one knows how, made it remarkably resonant. A peal of laughter was repeated again and again. A dispute could not arise at one end that its subject was not instantly known at the other. The only occupants of the place were publishers,—of poetry, prose and political works,—milliners, and street-walkers who came there only in the evening. There flourished novels and all kinds of books, young and old reputations, conspiracies of the tribune and lies of the book trade. There novelties were sold to the public, which persisted in buying them nowhere else. There were sold in a single evening several thousand of this or that pamphlet of Paul-Louis Courier, or the *Adventures of a King's Daughter*, the first shot fired by the house of Orléans at the Charter of Louis XVIII.

At the time when Lucien made his first appearance there, some shops had show windows of fairly respectable appearance; but they belonged to the rows that looked on the garden or courtyard. Down to the day when this strange colony perished under the hammer of the architect Fontaine, the shops between the two galleries were entirely open, supported by pillars like the shops at provincial fairs, and the eye could look from one gallery to the other through piles of merchandise and glass doors. As it was impossible to have stoves there, the shopkeepers had only foot-warmers, and they themselves acted as a fire patrol, for the slightest carelessness might cause a fire that would destroy in a quarter of an hour this republic of sun-dried boards, already scorched, as it were, by prostitution, filled to overflowing with gauze, muslin and paper, and with currents of air constantly blowing through. The milliners' shops were filled with hats of most extraordinary shape, which seemed to be intended less for sale than for show, hanging by the hundred on iron brackets with mushroom-shaped ornaments, and decorating the gallery with their bright colors. For twenty years, all the loungers had wondered upon whose heads those dusty hats would end their days. Salesgirls, generally ugly, but pert and sprightly, hooked the ladies with cunning speech, in the manner and with the language of the Market. One grisette, whose tongue was as unruly as her eyes were bright, sat upon a stool and hailed everybody who passed: "Buy a pretty

hat, madame!—Do let me sell you something!”— Their rich and picturesque vocabulary was varied by inflections of the voice, by meaning glances and by criticisms upon the passers-by. The publishers and milliners lived on the best of terms.

In the passage, so pompously called the glass gallery, were established industries of the strangest sort. There were ventriloquists there, charlatans of every variety, panoramas in which they show you the whole world. For the first time, a man had recently taken up his quarters there who had made seven or eight hundred thousand francs traveling about from fair to fair. His sign was a sun revolving in a black frame surrounded by these words in bright scarlet: *Here man can see what God can never see. Price: two sous.* The doorkeeper would never admit one person alone and never more than two. When you had entered, you found yourself staring into a large mirror. Suddenly a voice that would have frightened Hoffman of Berlin himself, burst forth like the voice of a mechanical toy set in motion by touching a spring:

“You see there, messieurs, what God will never see in all eternity, that is to say, your like. God has not His like!” Whereupon you would go forth ashamed to confess your stupidity. From all the little doors issued similar voices, singing the praises of cosmoramas, views of Constantinople, troupes of marionettes, chess-playing automata and dogs that would pick out the loveliest woman in the company. The ventriloquist Fitz-James did a thriving



business there, in the Café Borel, before he went to Montmartre to die among the pupils of the Ecole Polytechnique. There were fruit sellers and flower girls, a famous tailor whose military embroideries gleamed in the evening like suns.

In the morning and until two in the afternoon, the wooden galleries were silent, dark and deserted. The tradespeople talked together as if they were in their own houses. The population of Paris did not begin to assemble there until about three o'clock, the hour for closing the Bourse. As soon as the crowd came, young men, thirsty for literature and without money, indulged in reading that cost them nothing, at the publishers' counters. The clerks who were employed to keep watch on the exposed books, charitably allowed the poor fellows to turn the pages. When one of them fell in with a duodecimo of two hundred pages, like *Smarra*, *Pierre Schlémilh*, *Jean Sbogar* or *Jocko*, he would devour it in two sittings. In those days circulating libraries did not exist, and you must buy a book if you wished to read it; so it was that novels were sold in numbers that would seem fabulous to-day. There was something distinctively French in this bestowal of alms, so to speak, upon youthful, hungry, penniless intelligence. The real poetry of this ghastly bazaar burst out at nightfall. From all the adjacent streets came throngs of women who were allowed to walk there without molestation. A prostitute would come from the most distant quarters of Paris *to take her turn at the palace.*

The stone galleries belonged to privileged establishments, which paid for the right of exhibiting creatures dressed like princesses between some of the arches and at a corresponding point in the garden; whereas the wooden galleries were a public resort for prostitutes, the *palace par excellence*, the word then signifying the temple of prostitution. A woman could come in there, go out again accompanied by her victim, and take him where she chose. Therefore these women attracted so great a throng to the wooden galleries that one was obliged to walk very slowly, as in a procession or at a *bal masqué*. This slow progress, which annoyed no one, afforded an opportunity for examination. The women dressed in a fashion that has gone out of existence; the way in which they wore their dresses cut down to the middle of their backs and very low in front also; their remarkable head-dresses invented to attract attention, this one *en Cauchoise*, that one *en Espagnole*; one curled like a poodle, another with her hair in smooth bands; their legs encased in white stockings, and displayed, no one knows by what means but always at the opportune moment—all those infamous details are lost to us. The license of questions and replies, the public cynicism so in harmony with the place, are no longer to be found, either at the *bal masqué* or at the other famous balls that are given to-day. It was ghastly and joyous. White necks and shoulders gleamed amid the sombre garments of the men and produced the most startling contrasts. The

murmuring of many voices and the sound of many footsteps could be heard in the middle of the garden, like a continuous bass, above which rose at intervals peals of laughter from the women or the clamor of shrill voices quarreling. People in the best society, men of the greatest note, rubbed elbows there with men of hangdog aspect. There was something indefinably stimulating to the imagination in those enormous crowds; even the most indifferent men were moved by them. So it was that all Paris frequented the place down to the last moment; people walked back and forth there upon the plank flooring that the architect built over the cellars while he was constructing them. Great and unanimous regret was felt for the destruction of those vile bits of wood.

Ladvocat the publisher had established himself within a few days at the corner of the passage that crossed the galleries in the centre, opposite Dauriat, a young man now forgotten, but an audacious fellow who opened up the way in which his rival afterward distinguished himself. Dauriat's shop was in the row that looked on the garden, and Ladvocat's on the courtyard. It was divided into two parts, affording a roomy wareroom for his books and an office. Lucien, who had never before visited the Palais-Royal in the evening, was made giddy by the sight, which neither provincial nor young man was ever known to resist. He soon lost his guide.

"If you were as handsome as that fellow, I'd give

you something," said a damsel to an old man, pointing to Lucien.

Lucien was as ashamed as a blind man's dog; he followed the torrent in a state of bewilderment and excitement difficult to describe. Annoyed by the glances of the women, solicited by round white shoulders, by insolent bosoms that dazzled him, he clung to his manuscript and put it in his pocket for fear it might be stolen, the stupid!

"Well, monsieur!" he cried, as he felt a hand on his arm, thinking that his poetry had tempted some author. But he recognized his friend Lousteau, who said:

"I knew that you would pass here sooner or later!"

The poet was in front of Dauriat's shop, into which Lousteau led the way; it was full of people awaiting an opportunity to speak with the sultan of the book trade. Printers, paper-makers, illustrators were grouped about the clerks, questioning them as to enterprises already in progress or in contemplation.

"Look, there's Finot, the manager of my paper; he's talking with a man who has some talent, Félicien Vernou, a little rascal as troublesome as a secret disease."

"So you have a first performance to-night, old fellow," said Finot, walking up to Lousteau with Vernou. "I've disposed of the box."

"You sold it to Brulard, didn't you?"

"What then? you will find a place for yourself.

What do you want of Dauriat? By the way, it's agreed that we are to give Paul de Kock a boost; Dauriat has taken two hundred copies of his book and Victor Ducange has refused to let him have a novel. Dauriat proposes, he says, to bring forward a new author in the same line. You must put Paul de Kock above Ducange."

"But I have a play with Ducange at the Gaieté," said Lousteau.

"Oh well, you can say that the article is mine; it will be supposed that I made it very savage and you softened it, so he will be indebted to you."

"Couldn't you get Dauriat's cashier to discount this little note for a hundred francs for me?" Etienne asked Finot. "We're to sup together, you know, to dedicate Florine's new suite."

"Oh! yes, you're to treat us," said Finot, apparently making an effort of memory. "Here, Gabusson," he continued, taking Barbet's note and handing it to the cashier, "give this man ninety francs for me.—Indorse the note, old fellow!"

Lousteau took the cashier's pen while the cashier was counting out the money, and wrote his name. Lucien, all eyes and ears, did not lose a syllable of this conversation.

"That isn't all, my dear friend," continued Etienne, "I don't thank you, we are friends for life and death. I want to present monsieur to Dauriat, and I want you to put him in the humor to listen to us."

"What's up?" queried Finot.

"It's about a collection of poems," Lucien replied.

"Oho!" said Finot with a shrug.

"Monsieur," said Vernou, looking at Lucien, "evidently hasn't much experience of publishers, or he would have hidden his manuscript away before this in the most unfrequented corner of his abode."

At that moment a handsome young man, Emile Blondet, who had just made his first appearance as an author by several articles of great weight in the *Journal des Débats*, entered the shop, shook hands with Finot and Lousteau and bowed slightly to Vernou.

"Come and take supper with us at Florine's at midnight," said Lousteau.

"I'm your man," said the newcomer. "But who's to be there?"

"Oh! there'll be Florine and Matifat the drug dealer," said Lousteau; "Du Bruel, the author who wrote Florine a part for her début; a little old fellow, Père Cardot, and his son-in-law Camusot; then Finot—"

"Does your druggist do things in good style?"

"He won't give us drugs," said Lucien.

"Monsieur is very bright," said Blondet seriously, looking at Lucien. "Will he be of the party, Lousteau?"

"Yes."

"Then we shall have plenty of sport."

Lucien blushed to his ears.

"Are you engaged for long, Dauriat?" said

Blondet, knocking on the window that opened over Dauriat's desk.

"I am at your service, my friend."

"Good!" said Lousteau to his protégé. "That young man, who is hardly older than you, is on the *Débats*. He is one of the princes of criticism: he is feared, Dauriat will come out and wheedle him; then we shall be able to talk over our business with the pacha of vignettes and printing offices. Otherwise our turn wouldn't have come at eleven o'clock. The audience will increase every moment."

Lucien and Lousteau thereupon joined Blondet, Finot and Vernou once more, and they stood together at the end of the shop.

"What's he doing?" said Blondet to Gabusson, the cashier, who left his seat to come forward and salute him.

"He is buying a weekly journal which he intends to resuscitate as a means of resisting the influence of *La Minerve*, which is too exclusively devoted to Eymery, and *Le Conservateur*, which is too blindly romantic."

"Will he pay a big price for it?"

"Why, as he always does—too much!" said the cashier.

At that moment a young man entered, who had just produced a magnificent novel, which had sold rapidly and achieved a most triumphant success; the second edition was being printed for Dauriat. The young man in question, having that unusual and noticeable bearing which indicates an artistic nature, made a profound impression upon Lucien.

"That's Nathan," said Lousteau in the provincial poet's ear.

Nathan, despite the almost savage pride of his countenance, then in all the bloom of youth, approached the journalists, hat in hand, and adopted an almost humble demeanor before Blondet, whom he as yet knew only by sight. Blondet and Finot kept their hats on their heads.

"Monsieur, I am very happy for the opportunity chance offers me—"

"He is so confused that he's making a pleonasm," said Félicien to Lousteau.

"—To express my gratitude for the complimentary article you were kind enough to give me in the *Journal des Débats*. You are more than half responsible for the success of my book."

"No, my dear man, oh! no," said Blondet, with a patronizing air ill-concealed beneath his affability. "You have talent, deuce take me, and I am enchanted to make your acquaintance."

"As your article has appeared, I shall no longer have the appearance of flattering the powers that be: we may now be at our ease with each other. Will you give me the honor and pleasure of your company at dinner to-morrow? Finot will be there.—Lousteau, old boy, you'll not disappoint me?" added Nathan, shaking hands with Etienne.—"Ah! you are on a glorious road, monsieur," he said to Blondet, "you are a fitting successor to Dussault, Fiévée, Geoffroi! Hoffman has spoken about you to Claude Vignon, his pupil and a friend of mine; he told him



that he could die in peace, for the *Journal des Débats* would live forever. Do they pay you at a very high rate?"

"A hundred francs the column," replied Blondet. "That's a small matter when one has to read all the books published, to read a hundred or more in order to find one that one cares to spend time upon, like yours. Your book gave me a great deal of pleasure, on my honor."

"And it was worth fifteen hundred francs to him," Lousteau whispered to Lucien.

"But you write on political subjects too?" said Nathan.

"Oh! yes, now and then," replied Blondet.

Lucien, who felt like a dwarf in that company, had admired Nathan's book, he revered the author as a sort of god, and he was stupefied at such cringing before the critic, whose name and influence were unknown to him.

"Shall I ever act in that way? must one lay aside one's dignity altogether?" he said to himself. "Put on your hat, Nathan! you have written a great book and the critic has only written an article."

These thoughts stirred the blood in his veins. From moment to moment he noticed timid young men, needy authors who wanted to speak to Dauriat, come into the shop and go out again at once, in despair of an audience when they saw the crowd, saying: "I will come again." Two or three politicians were talking about the convocation

of the Chambers and public affairs generally in the centre of a group composed of political celebrities. The weekly newspaper for which Dauriat was in treaty had the right to talk politics. In those days newspapers which enjoyed that privilege were becoming rare. A license to publish a newspaper was as eagerly sought for as a license to run a theatre.

One of the most influential stockholders in *Le Constitutionnel* happened to be in the group. Lousteau performed the functions of cicerone to perfection. Thus, the more he heard, the greater Dauriat grew in Lucien's mind, for politics and literature seemed to come together in his shop. When he saw an eminent poet prostituting his muse to a journalist, debasing art thereby, as the woman was debased who prostituted her body under those vile galleries, the provincial great man learned a terrible lesson. Money! that was the key to every riddle. Lucien felt that he was alone, unknown, connected by the thread of a doubtful friendship with success and fortune. He accused his affectionate, his real friends of the club of having described the world under false colors, of having prevented him from plunging into the hurly-burly, pen in hand.

"Why, I should be a Blondet already!" he cried within himself.

Lousteau, who had just been shrieking on the house tops of the Luxembourg like a wounded eagle, and who had then seemed to him so great, was reduced to infinitesimal proportions in his eyes. The

fashionable publisher, the arbiter of all existences, seemed to him the only man of importance. The poet, manuscript in hand, had a feeling of trepidation that resembled fear. He saw, scattered about the shops on wooden pedestals painted in imitation of marble, busts of Byron and Goethe and of Canalis, from whom Dauriat hoped to obtain a volume of poems, and who, when he first entered the shop, was able to gauge the estimation in which he was held by the publishing trade. Lucien unconsciously began to fall in his own esteem, his courage weakened, he foresaw the influence Dauriat might exert upon his future, and he impatiently awaited his appearance.

"Well, boys," said a short, stout man, with a face like that of a Roman proconsul, softened by the good-natured expression that superficial people adopt, "here I am proprietor of the only weekly newspaper that can be bought—a paper with two thousand subscribers."

"Wag! the Stamp Office only charges it for seven hundred, and that's a good many," said Blondet.

"Upon my sacred honor there are twelve hundred. I said two thousand," he added in a low voice, "for the benefit of the paper-makers and printers who are here. I thought you had more tact, my boy," he continued, aloud.

"Do you propose to take any partners?" asked Finot.

"That depends," said Dauriat. "Do you want a third at forty thousand francs?"

“Agreed, if you’ll take for editors Emile Blondet here, Claude Vignon, Scribe, Théodore Leclercq, Félicien Vernou, Jay, Jouy, Lousteau—”

“And why not Lucien de Rubempré?” said the provincial poet boldly, interrupting Finot.

“And Nathan,” Finot concluded.

“And why not all the people who are walking in the galleries?” said the publisher with a frown, turning to the author of *Les Marguerites*. “To whom have I the honor of speaking?” he added with an impertinent stare.

“One moment, Dauriat,” interposed Lousteau. “I brought monsieur here. While Finot is thinking over your proposition, listen to me.”

Lucien felt the cold perspiration break out on his back when he saw the cold, displeased air of this redoubtable padishah of the book trade, who called Finot *thou*, although Finot called him *you*, who addressed the dreaded Blondet as *my boy*, and who gave his hand in kingly fashion to Nathan, with a familiar nod.

“Something new, my boy?” cried Dauriat. “But I have eleven hundred manuscripts on hand, you know!—Yes, messieurs, I have had eleven hundred manuscripts offered me; ask Gabusson! Indeed, I shall soon need to establish a department to take charge of manuscripts and a reading committee to examine them; they will have meetings to vote on their merits, with checks to show who are present, and a perpetual secretary to draw up reports for me. It will be a branch of the

Académie Française, and academicians will be better paid at the wooden galleries than at the Institute."

"That's an idea," said Blondet.

"A bad idea," Dauriat rejoined. "It's not my business to proceed to steal the lucubrations of those of you who become men of letters because they can't be capitalists or cobblers or corporals or servants or managers or bailiffs! No one comes here whose reputation isn't all made! Become famous and you will find streams of gold here. Why, within two years I have made three men great in my way, and they are all three ungrateful! Nathan talks about six thousand francs for the second edition of his book, which has cost me three thousand francs for newspaper articles and hasn't brought me in a thousand. I paid a thousand francs and a dinner that cost five hundred for Blondet's two articles."

"But, monsieur, if all publishers talk as you do, how can anyone publish a first book?" inquired Lucien, in whose estimation Blondet fell tremendously when he learned what Dauriat paid for the *Débats* articles.

"That doesn't concern me," said Dauriat with a crushing glance at the handsome poet, whose face wore an affable expression. "I don't publish books for amusement or risk two thousand francs to make two thousand; I speculate in literature; I publish forty volumes of ten thousand copies each, as Panckoucke and the Beaudouins do. My influence

and the newspaper articles I obtain carry my undertakings up to hundreds of thousands of francs, instead of dealing with a single volume at two thousand francs. It takes as much trouble to make an author and his book take a new name, as to make a success of the *Théâtres Etrangers*, *Victoires et Conquêtes*, or the *Mémoires sur la Révolution*, a book that is a fortune in itself. I am not here to make myself a stepping-stone to further renown, but to make money and to give money to famous men. The manuscript I buy for a hundred thousand francs is cheaper than one for which an unknown author asks me six hundred! If I am not exactly a Mæcenas, I have earned the gratitude of literary men: I have already doubled the value of manuscripts. I tell you all these things because you're Lousteau's friend, my boy," said Dauriat, bringing his hand down on the poet's shoulder with offensive familiarity. "If I talked with all the authors who want me to publish their books, I should have to close my shop, for I should pass all my time in conversation, extremely agreeable of course, but much too expensive. I am not rich enough yet to listen to the monologues of everybody's vanity. Such things are done only on the stage, in the classic tragedies."

The magnificence of the redoubtable Dauriat's costume added greatly to the effect produced upon the provincial poet by this cruelly logical harangue.

"What have you there?" he said to Lousteau.

“A volume of magnificent poetry.”

At the last word, Dauriat turned to Gabusson with a gesture worthy of Talma.

“Gabusson, my man, after to-day, when anyone, whoever it may be, comes here to offer me manuscript—Do you hear this, you fellows?” he added, addressing three clerks, who emerged from behind the piles of books on hearing the wrathful tone of their patron, who was looking at his nails and his shapely hand. “When anyone comes here with manuscript, you will ask him if it’s prose or poetry. If he says poetry, send him away at once. Poetry will ruin the publishing trade.”

“Bravo! well said, Dauriat!” cried the journalists.

“It is true,” said the publisher, pacing up and down the shop with Lucien’s manuscript in his hand; “you have no idea, messieurs, of the harm done by the success of Lord Byron, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Casimir Delavigne, Canalis and Béranger. Their fame has brought an invasion of savages upon us. I am within bounds in saying that there are in publishers’ hands to-day a thousand volumes of poetry beginning with interrupted narratives, without head or tail, in imitation of the *Corsair* and *Lara*. On the pretext of originality, young men indulge in the most incomprehensible strophes, descriptive poems in which the younger school believes that it is creating something new by simply imitating Delille! For two years past, poets have multiplied like cockchafers.

I lost twenty thousand francs by them last year! Ask Gabusson! There may be immortal poets in the world, I know of some fresh pink and white ones that have no beards as yet," he said to Lucien; "but in the book trade, young man, there are only four poets: Béranger, Casimir Delavigne, Lamartine, Victor Hugo; as for Canalis—he's a poet made by newspaper reviews."

Lucien did not feel the courage to stand erect and show his pride before these men of influence who were laughing so heartily. He realized that ridicule would ruin him, and he fairly itched to jump at the publisher's throat, to destroy the insolent symmetry of the knot in his cravat, to break the gold chain that shone on his chest, to trample on his watch and to tear him to pieces. Wounded self-esteem opened the door to vengeance; he vowed everlasting hatred to the publisher, at whom he smiled sweetly.

"Poetry is like the sun, which makes the everlasting forests grow and which begets gnats, gadflies and mosquitoes," said Blondet. "There is no virtue that hasn't its corresponding vice. Literature begets publishers."

"And journalists!" said Lousteau.

Dauriat laughed heartily.

"What is this?" he said, pointing to the manuscript.

"A collection of sonnets that would make Petrarch hang his head," said Lousteau.

"How do you mean that?" queried Dauriat.



"As everybody else would," said Lousteau, noticing a sly smile on every face.

Lucien could not be angry, but he sweated in his harness.

"Very well, I'll read it," said Dauriat, with a royal gesture expressive of the enormity of that concession. "If your sonnets come up to the level of the nineteenth century, I'll make a great poet of you, my boy."

"If he's as clever as he is handsome, you won't take any great risk," said one of the most famous orators of the Chamber, who was talking with one of the editors of *Le Constitutionnel* and the manager of *La Minerve*.

"General," said Dauriat, "glory consists of twelve thousand francs' worth of reviews and three thousand in dinners; ask the author of *Le Solitaire*. If Monsieur Benjamin Constant will write an article on this young poet, it will not take me long to strike a bargain with him!"

When he heard the title of *general* and the name of the illustrious Benjamin Constant, the shop assumed the proportions of Olympus in the provincial great man's eyes.

"I have something to say to you, Lousteau," said Finot; "but I'll see you at the theatre. Dauriat, I accept your offer, but on conditions. Let's go into your office."

"Come on, my boy!" said Dauriat, standing aside for Finot to precede him, and making a gesture as of a man full of business to half a score of men who were waiting.

He was about to disappear when Lucien, with some impatience, stopped him.

“You keep my manuscript; when shall I have a reply?”

“Oh! come again in three or four days, my little poet, and we’ll see.”

\*

Lucien was hurried away by Lousteau, who gave him no time to take leave of Vernou or Blondet or Raoul Nathan or General Foy or Benjamin Constant, whose work on the Hundred Days was just about to appear. Lucien hardly caught a glimpse of the shapely, blond head, the oblong face, the bright eyes, the attractive mouth of the man who for twenty years had been Madame de Staël's Potemkin and who made war on the Bourbons after making war on Napoléon, but was destined to die dismayed by his victory.

"What a place!" cried Lucien, when he was seated in a hired cab beside Lousteau.

"To the Panorama-Dramatique, and be quick about it! you can earn thirty sous!" said Etienne to the driver.—"Dauriat is a rascal who does a business of fifteen or sixteen hundred thousand francs a year; he is a sort of Minister of Literature," continued the journalist, whose self-esteem was pleasantly flattered and who chose to pose as a superior being before Lucien. "His greed, which is as great as Barbet's, is exercised on the masses. Dauriat has his peculiarities, he is generous, but he is vain; as for his wit, that consists of what he hears people about him say; his shop is an excellent place to frequent. One can talk there with all the

leading men of the time. A young man can learn more there in an hour, my dear fellow, than by poring over books for ten years. You discuss reviews there, start fresh subjects and form connections with famous or influential men who may be of service to you. In order to succeed to-day, one must have connections. It's all luck, you see. The most dangerous thing that can happen to a bright man is to be all alone in his corner."

"But such impertinence!" said Lucien.

"Pshaw! we all laugh at Dauriat," Etienne replied. "You need him, so he will walk over you; he needs the *Journal des Débats*, so Emile Blondet twirls him around like a top. Oh! if you go into literature, you'll meet all sorts and kinds! What did I tell you?"

"Yes, you were right," said Lucien; "I suffered even more cruelly in that shop than I expected after what you said."

"Well, why subject yourself to such suffering? The thing that costs us our lives, the subject that has tormented our brains during long nights of study, all our journeys through the fields of thought, the monument we have constructed with our blood, is considered by publishers simply as a good or bad bargain. The publishers can or cannot sell your manuscript. That's the whole question from their standpoint. A book, to them, represents so much capital to be risked. The better the book, the less chance there is of its selling well. Every man of superior intellect rises above the heads of the masses ;

his success, therefore, is directly proportioned to the time required for the book to be appreciated. No publisher wants to wait. The book published to-day must be sold to-morrow. Upon that theory, publishers refuse substantial works which are sure to be appreciated by men of discernment, but only after a time."

"D'Arthez is right," cried Lucien.

"Do you know D'Arthez?" said Lousteau. "I can imagine no men more dangerous than the solitary creatures who think, as that fellow does, that they can draw the world to them. By dint of imbuing youthful imaginations with a belief that flatters the immense power which we always feel sure at first that we possess, these men of posthumous fame prevent them from bestirring themselves at an age when activity is possible and profitable. I believe in Mahomet's system: after he had bade the mountain come to him, he cried: 'If you don't come to me, I'll go to you!'"

This sally, in which argument assumed an incisive form, was calculated to make Lucien hesitate between the doctrine of resigned poverty preached by the club and the militant doctrine put forward by Lousteau. So the poet of Angoulême held his peace until they reached Boulevard du Temple.

The Panorama-Dramatique, on whose site a dwelling-house stands to-day, was a charming little theatre situated on Boulevard du Temple opposite Rue Charlot, where two managements went to the wall without scoring a single success, although

Vignol, one of the actors who shared the succession to Potier, made his first appearance there, as did Florine, an actress who became famous five years later. Theatres, like men, are subject to fatalities. The Panorama-Dramatique had to sustain a rivalry with the Ambigu, the Gaieté, the Porte-Saint-Martin and the vaudeville theatres; it was unable to resist their manœuvres, the restriction of its privileges and the lack of good plays. Authors did not care to get into trouble with flourishing theatres for one whose existence seemed problematical. However, the management relied upon the new piece, a sort of comic melodrama by a young author, who had previously worked in collaboration with several celebrities—one Du Bruel, who declared that it was all his own work. The play had been written for Florine's début; she had hitherto been a supernumerary at the Gaieté, where she had, for a year past, been playing unimportant parts, in which she attracted favorable notice, but without succeeding in obtaining an engagement; so that the Panorama had stolen her from its neighbor. Coralie, another actress, was also to make her début there. When the two friends arrived, Lucien was struck dumb by the mighty power of the press.

"Monsieur is with me," said Etienne to the door-keeper, who bowed to the ground.

"You will find it very difficult to find a place," said the chief door-keeper. "There's nothing left but the manager's box."

Etienne and Lucien wasted some time wandering

through the corridors and parleying with the box-openers.

“Let’s go into the green-room; we will speak to the manager and he’ll take us into his box. And then I’ll present you to Florine, the heroine of the evening.”

At a sign from Lousteau, the usher of the orchestra stalls took a small key and opened an invisible door in a thick wall. Lucien followed his friend and passed suddenly from the brightly lighted corridor into the dark hole, which, in almost all theatres, serves as a means of communication between the auditorium and the wings. After ascending several damp steps, the provincial poet found himself behind the scenes, where a most extraordinary spectacle met his eyes. The narrowness of the passages, the height of the stage, the ladders with lamps attached, the decorations, so ghastly when seen at close quarters, the paint-besmeared actors, their strange costumes of the coarsest materials, the machinists with their greasy jackets, the hanging ropes, the manager walking about with his hat on, the supernumeraries seated in groups, the canvases hanging at the rear, the firemen, in short, the whole collection of absurd, ghastly, dirty, shocking, bright-colored things and persons bore so little resemblance to what Lucien had seen from his seat in the theatre, that his amazement knew no bounds. They were just finishing a good honest melodrama called *Bertram*, an adaptation of a tragedy by Maturin which Nodier, Byron and Walter Scott

greatly admired, but which was never a success in Paris.

"Don't release my arm unless you want to fall down a trap door, pull a forest about your ears, upset a palace or get entangled with a hut," said Etienne to Lucien. "Is Florine in her dressing-room, my pet?" he asked an actress who was preparing to go on the stage and was listening for her cue.

"Yes, my love. Thank you for what you said about me. You're so much kinder since Florine came here."

"Look out, don't miss your effect, my child," said Lousteau. "Run, up you go! say: *Stop, unhappy man!* in good form, for there's a two thousand franc house."

Lucien looked on in amazement as the actress composed her features and cried: *Stop, unhappy man!* in a tone that made his blood run cold. She was not the same woman.

"So this is the theatre," he said to Lousteau.

"It's what the shop in the wooden galleries, and the newspapers are to literature, a genuine cook shop," answered his new friend.

Nathan appeared.

"On whose account are you here?" Lousteau asked him.

"Why, I do the small theatres for the *Gazette*, pending something better," Nathan replied.

"Well, sup with us to-night and say a good word for Florine in return."



## FLORINE'S DRESSING-ROOM

---

*A lady's maid was just putting the finishing-touches to the actress's Spanish costume. The play was a complicated affair, in which Florine played the part of a countess.*

*"That creature will be the finest actress in Paris five years hence," said Nathan to Vernou.*

*"Ah! my loves," said Florine, turning to the three journalists.*

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"Yes, my love.—Thank you for what you said about me. You're so much kinder since Florine came here. A lady's mind was just putting the finishing touch on her education. I look out, don't I?—I don't affect, my child," said Lousteau. "Run up you say: Stop, unhappy man! In good luck, for there's a two thousand franc house."

Lucien looked on in amazement as the actress composed her features and said: "Stop, unhappy man!" in a tone that made his heart melt.

"Ah! my love," said Nathan to Nathan.

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XAVIER Le SUEUR 21





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"At your service," said Nathan.

"She lives on Rue de Bondy now, you know."

"Who's this handsome young man with you, my little Lousteau?" inquired the actress, returning from the stage to the wings.

"Ah! my dear, a great poet, a man who will be famous some day. As you are to sup together, Monsieur Nathan, let me present Monsieur Lucien de Rubempré."

"You bear a fine name, monsieur," said Raoul to Lucien.

"Lucien, Monsieur Raoul Nathan," said Etienne to his new friend.

"Faith, monsieur, I was reading your book two days ago, and I cannot imagine how, when you have written such a book and such a collection of poems, you can humble yourself so before a newspaper man."

"I will wait and see how you behave after your first book," replied Nathan, with a sly smile.

"Well, well, so the ultras and the liberals are shaking hands, eh?" cried Vernou when he saw the trio together.

"In the morning my opinions are my paper's," said Nathan; "but at night I think what I choose: *at night, all editors are drunk.*"

"Etienne," said Félicien, addressing Lousteau, "Finot came with me and is looking for you. And—there he is."

"How's this? aren't there any places?" said Finot.

"You always have a place in our hearts," retorted the actress with her most captivating smile.

"So, my little Florville, you're cured of your love. They said you had been abducted by a Russian prince."

"Are women ever abducted nowadays?" said La Florville, the *Stop, unhappy man!* actress. "We stayed ten days at Saint-Mandé, and then my prince was let off for a fine paid to the management. The manager," laughed La Florville, "is praying for a large invoice of Russian princes, for their fines add to his receipts without extra expense."

"Look you, little one," said Finot to a pretty peasant girl who was listening, "where did you steal those diamond earrings? Have you *caught* an Indian prince?"

"No, but a dealer in blacking, an Englishman, who has left Paris already! Everyone can't have a millionaire tradesman tired of his family, like Florine and Coralie; aren't they lucky?"

"You'll miss your cue, Florville," cried Lousteau; "your friend's blacking has gone to your head."

"If you want to make a hit," said Nathan, "instead of shrieking: *He is saved!* like a Fury, go in quietly, walk to the footlights and say in a deep voice: *He is saved!* as Pasta says: *O patria*, in *Tancred*.—Go on," he added, pushing her toward the stage.

"It's too late, she's missed her chance!" said Vernou.

"What's she doing? they're applauding as if they'd pull the house down," said Lousteau.

"She has shown them her neck as she falls on her knees; that's her great resource," said the blacking dealer's actress-relict.

"The manager gives us his box, you will find me there," said Finot to Etienne.

Lousteau thereupon led Lucien behind the stage, through a labyrinth of wings, corridors and staircases, to a small room on the third floor, whither they were followed by Nathan and Félicien Vernou.

"Good-morning or good-evening, messieurs," said Florine.—"Monsieur," she added, turning to a short, stout man who was standing in a corner, "these gentlemen are the arbiters of my fate, my future is in their hands; but they will be under our table to-morrow morning, I hope, if Monsieur Lousteau has forgotten nothing—"

"Why, you will have Blondet of the *Débats*," said Etienne, "the real Blondet, Blondet himself, Blondet!"

"Oh! my dear Lousteau, I must kiss you," she said, throwing her arms about his neck.

At that demonstration Matifat, the stout man, assumed a serious air. Florine, at sixteen years, was undeveloped. Her beauty, like a rosebud full of promise, would please none but artists who prefer sketches to pictures. The charming actress's features bore the stamp of the delicacy that characterized her, and she resembled at that time Goethe's Mignon. Matifat, a rich drug merchant on

Rue des Lombards, imagined that an inferior actress from the boulevards would be inexpensive; but Florine cost him sixty thousand francs in eleven months. Nothing could have surprised Lucien more than to find that upright and honest tradesman planted like a statue of the god Terminus in a corner of the ten-feet-square apartment, which was hung with a pretty paper and provided with a mirror, a divan, two chairs, a carpet, a fireplace and several closets. A lady's maid was just putting the finishing touches to the actress's Spanish costume. The play was a complicated affair in which Florine played the part of a countess.

"That creature will be the finest actress in Paris five years hence," said Nathan to Vernou.

"Ah! my loves," said Florine, turning to the three journalists, "you must have a kind word for me to-morrow: in the first place, I have given orders to keep some carriages to-night, for I'll send you home as tipsy as on Mardi-Gras. Matifat has bought some wine, oh! wine worthy of Louis XVIII., and he's hired the Prussian minister's cook."

"We expect great things from meeting monsieur," said Nathan.

"But he knows he is to treat the most dangerous men in Paris," said Florine.

Matifat glanced uneasily at Lucien, for the young man's great beauty aroused his jealousy.

"But there's some one I don't know," said Florine, as her eye fell upon Lucien. "Which of

you brought the Apollo Belvidere from Florence? Monsieur is as handsome as one of Girodet's faces."

"Mademoiselle," said Lousteau, "monsieur is a poet from the provinces, whom I forgot to introduce to you. You are so lovely this evening that it was impossible to think of commonplace civility—"

"Is he rich, that he writes poetry?" queried Florine.

"Poor as Job," Lucien replied.

"That's very tempting for us," said the actress.

Du Bruel, the author of the play, a short, slight man in a frockcoat, suggesting at once the government clerk, the landed proprietor and the broker, suddenly burst into the room.

"My little Florine, you know your lines perfectly, don't you? no failure of memory. Look out for the scene in the second act; you must be cutting and sarcastic. Say: *I don't love you*, as we agreed it should be said."

"Why do you take parts in which there are such lines?" Matifat asked Florine.

A burst of laughter greeted the drug dealer's question.

"What do you care," retorted Florine, "when I don't say them to you, you foolish old thing?—Oh! he delights me with his nonsense," she added, turning to the authors. "Upon my word as a virtuous girl, I'd pay him so much for every idiotic remark if it wouldn't ruin me."

“Yes, but you will look at me when you say it just as you do at rehearsals, and that frightens me,” said the druggist.

“Very well, I’ll look at my little Lousteau,” she retorted.

A bell rang in the corridor.

“Begone, all of you,” said Florine; “let me read over my part and try to understand it.”

Lucien and Lousteau went out last. Lousteau kissed Florine’s shoulder and Lucien heard her say:

“Impossible for to-night. The old fool told his wife he was going to the country.”

“Do you think she’s pretty?” said Etienne to Lucien.

“But, my dear fellow, this Matifat—” cried Lucien.

“Oh! my child, you know nothing of Parisian life,” replied Lousteau. “There are necessities that must be submitted to! It’s just as if you were in love with a married woman, that’s all. One finds arguments enough to justify one’s self.”

The friends entered one of the proscenium boxes on the stage floor, where they found the manager of the theatre and Finot. Matifat was in the opposite box with a dealer in silks named Camusot, Coralie’s patron, accompanied by his father-in-law, a respectable little old man. The three bourgeois were cleaning the glass in their opera-glasses and watching the pit, whose excited state disturbed them. The boxes presented the curious mixture usual at

first performances: newspaper men and their mistresses, kept women and their lovers, some old theatre-goers, persistent first-nighters, and persons in good society who love excitement of that sort. In one of the second tier of boxes was the general manager and his family; he had found a place for Du Bruel in a bureau of the treasury, where the writer of vaudevilles received a salary for doing nothing. Lucien, since his dinner, had journeyed from surprise to surprise. Literary life that, for two months past had seemed to him so poor, so destitute, that was so horrible in Lousteau's room, at once so humble and so insolent in the wooden galleries, unfolded itself before him with extraordinary magnificence and in curious aspects. This mixture of things high and low, of compromises with the conscience, of grandeur and baseness, of treachery and pleasure, of superiority and slavery, bewildered him as if he were intently watching some hitherto unheard-of spectacle.

"Do you imagine Du Bruel's play will make money for you?" Finot asked the manager.

"It's a play of intrigue in which Du Bruel has undertaken to copy Beaumarchais. The public of the boulevards don't care for that sort of thing, they want to be stuffed full of excitement. Wit isn't appreciated here. Everything to-night depends on Florine and Coralie, who are lovely and charming beyond words. They wear very short skirts, they dance a Spanish dance, and they may carry the audience off its feet. This performance is a throw

of the dice. If the newspapers give me a few readable articles, in case of success, I may make three hundred thousand francs."

"Ah! I see it will only be a moderate success," said Finot.

"There is a clique organized by the three neighboring theatres, and they're going to hiss, I fancy; but I have taken measures to defeat their evil intentions. I have bought up the claqueurs sent here to injure me, and they will hiss in a bungling way. There are two tradesmen who have taken a hundred tickets each to assure a triumph for Florine and Coralie, and they have given them to acquaintances of theirs who are quite capable of turning the hostile clique out. The clique, having been paid twice, will allow themselves to be put out, and such an episode always puts the audience in good humor."

"Two hundred tickets! what invaluable patrons!" cried Finot.

"Yes, with two other pretty actresses kept as handsomely as Florine and Coralie, I should come out all right."

For the last two hours every subject Lucien had heard mentioned had resolved itself into a question of money. At the theatre as at the bookshop, at the bookshop as at the newspaper office, there was no thought of art or of glory. These strokes of the great stamping hammer of the Mint, renewed again and again upon his head and his heart, made them sore. While the orchestra was playing the overture, he could not forbear to contrast with the mingled



applause and hisses of the pit the scenes of poetic tranquillity and purity he had so enjoyed in David's printing office, when they contemplated together the marvels of art, the splendid triumphs of genius, and fame soaring on snow-white wings. As he recalled the evenings at the club, a tear glistened in the poet's eye.

"What's the matter?" Etienne asked him.

"I see poetry wallowing in the mire," he replied.

"Oho! my dear fellow, so you still have illusions?"

"Is it necessary for you to crawl and cringe and put up with that vulgar Matifat and Camusot, as actresses put up with journalists, and as we put up with publishers?"

"My boy," whispered Etienne, pointing to Finot, "you see that dull, heavy creature, without wit or talent; but greedy for fortune at any price and clever in business, who charged me forty per cent interest in Dauriat's shop as if he were doing me a favor?—well, he has letters in which several embryo geniuses go on their knees to him for a hundred francs."

Lucien's heart contracted in disgust as he remembered the sketch left on the green cloth of the editorial table, with the legend: *Finot, my hundred francs!*

"Better to die," he said.

"Better to live," Etienne retorted.

As the curtain rose, the manager left the box and went into the wings to give some orders.

“My dear fellow,” said Finot thereupon to Lous-teau, “I have Dauriat’s word that I shall have a third interest in the weekly paper. I agreed to pay thirty thousand francs cash on condition of being made editor-in-chief and manager. It’s a magnificent opportunity. Blondet tells me that restrictive laws against the press are in contemplation and that none but existing papers will be tolerated. Six months hence, it will take a million to start a new paper. So I made the bargain, although I haven’t more than ten thousand francs at hand. Now listen. If you can induce Matifat to buy a half of my share, that is one-sixth, for thirty thousand francs, I will make you editor-in-chief of my small paper with a salary of two hundred and fifty francs a month. You will be my substitute. I mean to reserve the right to supervise the editing, to retain all my interest, but to have no interest at all in appearance. You will be paid for all the articles at a hundred sous a column; so you can make a bonus of fifteen francs a day by paying only three francs for them and taking advantage of the gratuitous editing. That makes four hundred and fifty francs more a month. But I propose to remain in control with regard to attacking or defending particular men or undertakings in the paper, while allowing you to gratify any grudges or any friendships that don’t interfere with my own plans. I may be a ministerialist or an ultra, I don’t yet know, but I mean to retain my liberal connections, under the rose. I tell you everything, for you’re a

good fellow. Perhaps I shall let you report the Chambers in the paper in which I now do them, for I probably shall not be able to keep them. So just set Florine at work on this little scheme, and tell her to press the druggist hard: I have only forty-eight hours option if I can't pay the money. Dauriat has sold the other third for thirty thousand to his printer and paper dealer. He gets his own third for nothing and makes ten thousand francs, as he paid only fifty thousand in all. But, a year hence, the plant will be worth two hundred thousand francs to sell to the court, if they have the good sense to buy up the newspapers, as they are said to intend doing."

"What a lucky fellow you are!" cried Lous-teau.

"If you had passed through such days of poverty and misery as I have known, you wouldn't say that. But, at present, you see, I enjoy a disadvantage which cannot be remedied; I am the son of a hat-maker who still sells hats on Rue du Coq. Nothing but a revolution can ever put me where I belong; and, in default of a social overturning, I must have millions. I am not sure that, of those two things, the revolution isn't the easier of accomplishment. If I bore your friend's name, I should be well on the road to success. Hush, here's the manager. Adieu!" added Finot, rising. "I am going to the Opéra; I may have a duel on my hands to-morrow: I have written and signed with an F., a crushing article against two dancers who

have generals for friends. I have attacked the Opéra without gloves."

"Nonsense!" said the manager.

"Yes, everyone is stingy with me," continued Finot. "One takes away my boxes, another refuses to take fifty subscriptions. I have given the Opéra my ultimatum: I propose now to have a hundred subscriptions and four boxes a month. If they accept, my paper will have eight hundred subscribers to be supplied and a thousand subscriptions paid for. I know a way to get two hundred more; we shall reach twelve hundred in January—"

"You will end by ruining us," said the manager.

"You're very badly off with your ten subscriptions! I got two good articles put in *Le Constitutionnel* for you."

"Oh! I don't complain of you," cried the manager.

"Until to-morrow night, Lousteau," said Finot. "You can give me an answer at the Français, where there's a first performance; and, as I shan't be able to write the criticism, you can take my box. I give you the preference, for you have worked hard for me and I am grateful. Félicien offers to give up his salary for a year and to give me twenty thousand francs for a third of the paper; but I propose to remain absolute master of it. Adieu."

"That man's name isn't Finot for nothing," said Lucien to Lousteau.

"Oh! he's a rascal who will make his way," replied Etienne, apparently not caring whether he

was or was not overheard by the man who was just then closing the door of the box.

“He?” said the manager. “He’ll be a millionaire; he will be generally esteemed and perhaps he will have friends—”

“Good God,” said Lucien, “what a bottomless pit! And you propose to have that sweet girl enter into such a negotiation as that?” he added, pointing to Florine, who was making eyes at them.

“And she will succeed. You don’t know the devotion and the shrewdness of the dear creatures,” Lousteau replied.

“They atone for all their defects, they wipe out all their sins by the infinite extent of their love,” said the manager, joining in the discussion. “An actress’s passion is the more admirable because it is in such violent contrast with her surroundings.”

“It is as if you should find in the mud a diamond worthy to adorn the most magnificent crown,” added Lousteau.

“But Coralie is absent-minded,” continued the manager. “Our friend is making a conquest of Coralie without suspecting it, and will make her miss all her opportunities; she isn’t ready for her cues and twice already she has failed to hear the prompter. I beg you, sit in this corner, monsieur,” he said to Lucien. “If Coralie has fallen in love with you, I must go and tell her that you have gone.”

“Oh! no,” cried Lousteau, “tell her that monsieur will be at the supper and that she shall do

whatever she wants with him, and she'll act like Mademoiselle Mars."

The manager left the box.

"Do you really mean, my friend," said Lucien, "that you have no scruples about making Mademoiselle Florine ask that old druggist to pay thirty thousand francs for half of something Finot has bought at that price?"

Lousteau did not give him time to give full expression to his argument.

"Where do you come from, my dear child? This druggist isn't a man, he's a cash-box, presented by love."

"But where's your conscience?"

"Conscience, my dear fellow, is one of the clubs with which every one beats his neighbor and never uses on himself. What the devil do you expect? Chance performs for you in a single day a miracle that I have waited two years for, and you amuse yourself discussing the means! What! do you, who seem to me to have some commonsense, who have almost attained the independence of thought that intellectual adventurers must have in the world we live in—do you dabble in such scruples as a nun would have who was accused of having eaten her egg lustfully! If Florine succeeds, I shall be editor-in-chief. I shall have two hundred and fifty francs assured, I shall take the great theatres and leave Vernou the vaudevilles, and you will put your foot in the stirrup by taking my place in all the boulevard theatres. You will

have three francs a column and you can write a column a day, thirty a month, which will give you ninety francs ; you will have at least sixty francs' worth of books to sell Barbet ; then you can ask your theatres for ten tickets a month each, in all, forty tickets, which you will sell for forty francs to the Barbet of the theatres, a man to whom I will introduce you. In that way I count up two hundred francs a month for you. By making yourself useful to Finot, you could get a hundred francs for an article in his new weekly paper, in case you display transcendent talent ; for, in that paper the articles are all signed and you can't slight anything, as you can in the small paper. Thus you would have a hundred crowns a month. My dear fellow, there are men of talent, like poor D'Arthez, who dines at Flicoteaux's every day, who work ten years before they earn a hundred crowns. You can make four thousand francs a year with your pen, without counting income from booksellers if you write for them. Now a sub-prefect's salary is only three thousand, and he has no more sport in his arrondissement than a sedan-chair pole. I say nothing of the pleasure of going to the play for nothing, for that pleasure will soon become a bore ; but you will have your entrée behind the scenes of four theatres. Be cruel and witty for a month or two and you will be overwhelmed with invitations from actresses ; you will be fawned on by their lovers ; you will dine at Flicoteaux's only on the days when you

haven't thirty sous in your pocket and aren't invited to dine out. This afternoon at five o'clock in the Luxembourg you didn't know which way to turn, and now you are on the eve of becoming one of the hundred privileged persons who impose their opinions on France. Three days hence, if we succeed, you can, with thirty *bons mots*, at the rate of three a day, make a man curse life; you can make sure of a fixed income of enjoyment from all the actresses in your theatres; you can ruin a good play and make all Paris run to see a poor one. If Dauriat refuses to print *Les Marguerites* and gives you nothing for them, you can bring him to your feet, humble and submissive, and make him pay you two thousand francs for them. Show your talent and insert three articles in three different papers, threatening to ruin some of Dauriat's speculations or a book he relies upon, and you'll see him climbing up to your attic and clinging there like a clematis vine. And then your novel—the publishers, who to-day would all show you to the door more or less politely, will stand in line outside your door, and the manuscript Père Doguereau valued at four hundred francs will be bid up to four thousand among them! Those are the advantages of the journalist's trade. That is why we try to keep all newcomers away from the newspapers; you must have not only enormous talent but great luck to get into the business. And you haggle over your good luck!—Consider that, if we hadn't met to-day at Flicoteaux's, you



might have had to stand waiting for three years to come or have died of hunger, like D'Arthez, in a garret. When D'Arthez has become as learned as Bayle and as great a writer as Rousseau, we shall have made our fortunes, we shall be the arbiters of his fortune and his fame. Finot will be a deputy, owner of a great newspaper; and we shall be whatever we have chosen to be: peers of France or imprisoned for debt at Sainte-Pélagie."

"And Finot will sell his great newspaper to the ministers who will give him the most money for it, as he sells his puffs to Madame Bastienne and cries down Mademoiselle Virginie, proving that the hats made by the former are superior to those his paper praised first!" cried Lucien, remembering the scene he had witnessed at the office.

"You're an idiot, my dear fellow," retorted Lousteau sharply. "Three years ago Finot was walking on his uppers, dined at Tabar's for eighteen sous, wrote prospectuses for ten francs, and how his coat stayed on his back was a mystery as impenetrable as that of the Immaculate Conception; now Finot is the sole owner of his paper valued at a hundred thousand francs; with the subscriptions paid and not supplied, the genuine subscriptions and the indirect contributions levied by his uncle, he makes twenty thousand francs a year; he has the most sumptuous dinners imaginable every day, he has had a cabriolet for a month; and to-morrow he will be at the head of a weekly newspaper, owning one-sixth free of cost, with five hundred

francs a month salary to which he will add a thousand francs for editorial matter obtained gratis, for which he will make his partners pay. If Finot agrees to pay you fifty francs a page you will be as happy as anybody to give him three articles for nothing. When you are in a similar position, then you can pass judgment on Finot: a man can be tried only by his peers. What a great future you have before you, if you obey blindly the orders induced by hatred or friendship, if you attack when Finot says: 'Attack!' if you praise when Finot says: 'Praise!' When you want to be revenged upon anyone, you can goad your friend or foe by a phrase inserted every morning in our paper, saying to me: 'Lousteau, let's make an end of that fellow!' You can murder your victim over again by a long article in the weekly paper. In fact, if it's a matter of great importance to you, Finot, to whom you will have made yourself necessary, will allow you to deal him a final knock-down blow in a great newspaper with ten or twelve thousand subscribers."

"So you think Florine will be able to induce her druggist to make the investment?" inquired the bewildered Lucien.

"Do I think so! The act is just ending. I'll go out and mention it to her, and it will be all arranged to-night. Once she has learned her lesson, Florine will display all my shrewdness and her own."

"And what about yonder honest tradesman, who

sits there with his mouth open, admiring Florine, with no suspicion that he's going to be done out of thirty thousand francs ! ”

“ Still another absurd remark ! Wouldn't anyone say he was to be robbed ? ” cried Lousteau. “ Why, my dear fellow, if the minister buys the paper, the druggist may have fifty thousand francs for his thirty thousand inside of six months. And then Matifat won't think of the newspaper, but simply of Florine's interests. When it is known that Matifat and Camusot—for they will go shares—are owners of a review, all the newspapers will publish pleasant articles about Florine and Coralie. Florine is going to become famous, perhaps she will get a twelve thousand franc engagement at another theatre. In that way, Matifat will save the thousand francs a month he pays for presents and for dinners to newspaper men. You know nothing about men or business. ”

“ Poor man ! ” said Lucien, “ he's looking forward to a pleasant evening. ”

“ And he will be tormented by arguments until he has shown Florine the papers to prove that he has bought one-sixth of the paper from Finot. And to-morrow I shall be editor-in-chief, and I shall earn a thousand francs a month. This is the end of my poverty ! ” cried Florine's lover.



\*

Lousteau went out, leaving Lucien utterly bewildered, lost in a confused maze of thoughts, flying above the world as it is. After having seen in the wooden galleries the wires that control the publishing trade and the cookshop of fame, after having walked about behind the scenes at the theatre, the poet now had a glimpse of the reverse side of men's consciences, of the play of the machinery of Parisian life, of the mechanism by which everything was set in motion. He had envied Lousteau's good-fortune as he admired Florine on the stage. For a few moments he had forgotten Matifat. He remained there for a very short time, perhaps five minutes. It seemed an eternity. Burning thoughts set his mind on fire, as his senses were inflamed by the sight of the actresses with their lascivious, deftly-rouged eyes and gleaming necks, voluptuously clad in short skirts with seductive folds, displaying their legs encased in red stockings with green clocks in a way to cause a commotion in the pit. Two varieties of corruption assailed him upon parallel lines, like two streams of water striving to join after a freshet; they devoured the poet as he sat in a corner of the box, his arms resting on the red velvet rail, his hands hanging down, his eyes

fixed on the curtain, and the more accessible to the enchantments of that life, composed of alternate lightning flashes and clouds, because it was like a display of fireworks after the profound darkness of his laborious, obscure, monotonous life. Suddenly the amorous gleam of an eye through a hole in the curtain arrested Lucien's wandering glances. Awakened from his torpor, he recognized Coralie's eye, which burned him through and through; he turned away and glanced at Camusot who was just returning to the opposite box. Camusot was a stout, vulgar little man, a dealer in silks on Rue des Bourdonnais, judge of the Tribunal of Commerce, father of four children, married for the second time, and with an income of eighty thousand francs; but he was fifty-six years old, had a sort of cap of gray hair on his head and the hypocritical air of a man who was making the most of what time he had left, and who did not propose to leave the world without his fair share of pleasure, after swallowing the thousand and one gudgeons of trade. His forehead, of the color of fresh butter, and his bloated, monastic cheeks seemed narrow in proportion to the expansiveness of his supreme enjoyment. He was there without his wife and he heard Coralie applauded to the echo. Coralie represented the sum of all this rich tradesman's vanities, with her he seemed to be treading in the footsteps of the great noblemen of other days. At that moment he believed that he was largely responsible for the actress's success, and he believed it the more firmly because

he had paid for it. His conduct was sanctioned by the presence of his father-in-law, a little old man with powdered hair and sparkling eyes, but very dignified withal. Lucien's repugnance revived; he remembered the pure, exalted love he had felt for Madame de Bargeton for a whole year. Instantly the genuine poet's love spread its white wings, and a thousand memories enveloped the great man of Angoulême in their bluish haze; he relapsed into reverie.

The curtain rose. Coralie and Florine were on the stage.

"My dear, he's no more thinking of you than of the Grand Turk," said Florine in an undertone, while Coralie was repeating her first lines.

Lucien could not restrain a smile, and glanced at Coralie. That young person, one of the most charming and loveliest actresses in Paris, the rival of Madame Perrin and Mademoiselle Fleuriet, whom she resembled and whose fate was similar to her own, was the perfect type of those girls who fascinate men at will. Hers was one of those sublime Jewish faces, a long oval, of light ivory tint, with a mouth as red as a pomegranate, and a chin as delicately turned as a cup. Beneath eyelids scorched by pupils of jet, beneath drooping lashes, one could divine a languishing glance, in which the ardor of the desert gleamed on occasion. The eyes, surrounded by an olive circle, were surmounted by thick, gracefully arched eyebrows. The dark forehead, crowned by two ebon bands in which the

light glistened as upon a varnished surface, suggested a wealth of thought which might have given rise to a belief that genius lay behind. But, like many actresses, Coralie, without wit despite her facility in the repartee of the wings, without education despite her boudoir experience, possessed only the intelligence of the senses and the good-nature of amorous women. Moreover, how could one turn one's mind to moral considerations when she dazzled the eyes with her smooth, round arms, her taper fingers, her snow-white shoulders, with the breast glorified in the Song of Songs, with her mobile, graceful neck, with legs of adorable shape encased in red silk. These truly Oriental, poetic charms were enhanced by the conventional Spanish costume adopted in our theatres. Coralie was the joy of the audience, and every eye followed her graceful figure in its basquine, and applauded the Andalusian grace with which she imparted a highly suggestive motion to her skirts. There was a moment when Lucien, as he saw that creature playing to him alone, thinking as little of Camusot as the urchin in paradise thinks of the core of an apple, placed sensual love above pure love, enjoyment above desire, and the demon of lust breathed atrocious thoughts into his ear.

"I know nothing of the love that revels in good cheer, in wine, in material delights," he said to himself. "I have lived more in thought than in action. A man who wishes to describe everything, ought to know everything. This is my first lux-



urious supper, my first revel in an unfamiliar world; why should not I taste for once the celebrated pleasures in which the great nobles of the last century indulged, living with impure women? Even if it were only for the purpose of transporting them into the fair regions of true love, must one not learn to know the delight, the perfect bliss, the transports, the expedients and the shrewd devices of the love of harlots and actresses? Is it not, after all, the poetry of the senses? Two months ago these women seemed to me divinities guarded by unconquerable dragons; there is one whose beauty surpasses Florine's, on whose account I envied Lousteau: why not take advantage of her whim, when the greatest nobles purchase a night with such women with their most valuable treasures? Ambassadors, when they step into an abyss of this sort, never think of yesterday or tomorrow. I should be a fool to be more squeamish than princes, especially as I now love no woman."

Lucien had forgotten Camusot. After expressing to Lousteau the most profound disgust for the most odious of partnerships, he fell into the same pit; he was swimming in a sea of desire, drawn on by the Jesuitism of passion.

"Coralie is mad over you," said Lousteau, entering the box. "Your beauty, worthy of the most admirable Grecian statues, is making unheard-of ravages in the wings. You're very lucky, my boy. Coralie is only eighteen, and in a few days she may be able to sell her beauty for sixty

thousand francs a year. She is very virtuous as yet. She was sold by her mother three years ago for sixty thousand, and has as yet reaped nothing but disappointment, so she is in search of happiness. She took to the stage in desperation; she had a horror of De Marsay, her first purchaser, and when she was relieved from that yoke—for the king of our dandies soon let her go—she fell in with honest Camusot, whom she can hardly be said to love; but he is like a father to her, so she endures him and lets him love her. She has already refused the handsomest offers, and clings to Camusot, who doesn't annoy her. So you are her first love. She felt as if a bullet had pierced her heart when she saw you, and Florine has gone to reason with her in her dressing-room, where she is weeping over your coldness. The play is going to be a failure. Coralie has forgotten her part, so it's good-bye to the engagement at the Gymnase that Camusot is trying to secure for her!"

"Really? Poor girl!" said Lucien, whose vanity was flattered at every point by these words, and who felt his heart swelling with self-esteem. "More things have happened to me in one evening, my dear fellow, than in the first eighteen years of my life."

He went on to describe his love-affair with Madame de Bargeton and his hatred for the Baron du Châtelet

"Look you, the paper hasn't any *bête noire* just at present, we'll take him up. The baron is a

dandy of the Empire, he's a ministerialist and just the man for us ; I've often seen him at the Opéra. I can see your great lady from here, she is in the Marquise d'Espard's box very often. The baron is paying court to your ex-mistress, who's a regular cuttle-fish. Wait ! Finot has just sent me a messenger to say that the paper is without *copy* ; that's a trick of one of our editors, Hector Merlin, the little rascal, because he wouldn't pay for his blank spaces. Finot, in despair, is scribbling an article against the Opéra. Now, my dear fellow, just write an article on this play ; listen to it and put your mind on it. Meanwhile, I'll go to the manager's office and think out three columns or so about your man and the disdainful fair, who won't enjoy themselves to-morrow."

"So this is where and how the newspaper is made up, is it ?" said Lucien.

"It's always like this," Lousteau replied. "In the ten months that I've been there, the paper has never failed to lack copy at eight o'clock in the evening."

In typographical parlance, copy is the name given to manuscript to be set up, probably because authors are supposed to send only a fair copy of their work. Or perhaps it is a satirical rendering of the Latin word *copia*—abundance—for the supply of copy is forever running short.

"The great scheme, which will never be realized, is to have two or three numbers printed in advance," said Lousteau. "Here it is ten o'clock, and not a line. I'm going to ask Vernou and

Nathan to lend us a score of epigrams on the deputies, Chancellor *Cruzoë*, the ministers, and our friends if need be, in order to bring the number to a brilliant close. In such a case, a man would murder his own father; he's like a pirate who loads his guns with the gold pieces he has taken from his prize in order to save his ship. Make your article clever and witty and you will have taken a long step forward in Finot's estimation: he is grateful as a matter of business. It is the best and most reliable form of gratitude, next to that of the *Mont-de-Piété*, of course!" \*

"What fellows journalists are!" cried Lucien. "What! one must sit down at a table and be witty?"

"Just exactly as one burns a lamp—until the oil gives out."

As Lousteau opened the door of the box, Du Bruel and the manager appeared.

"Monsieur," said the author of the play to Lucien, "let me tell Coralie from you that you will go with her after supper, or my play is a failure. The poor girl doesn't know what she is saying or doing; she laughs when she ought to cry and cries when she ought to laugh. There has been some hissing already. You can save the play even now. Besides, it is pleasure that awaits you, not anything unpleasant."

"I am not accustomed to rivals, monsieur," Lucien replied.

\* *Reconnaissance* (gratitude) also means a pawn-ticket.

“Don’t say that again,” cried the manager with a glance at the author. “Coralie is just the girl to throw Camusot over and ruin herself altogether. The worthy proprietor of the *Cocon d’Or* gives her two thousand francs a month and pays for all her costumes and her *claqueurs*.”

“As your promise binds me to nothing, save your play,” said Lucien with the air of a sultan.

“But don’t act as if you would have nothing to do with the charming girl,” said Du Bruel in a supplicating tone.

“Well, well, it seems that I must write the article on your play and smile on your *jeune première*; so be it,” cried the poet.

The author disappeared after making a sign to Coralie, who acted wonderfully well from that time on. Vignol, who took the part of an old alcade, in which he displayed for the first time his talent for making up as an old man, came forward amid thunders of applause, and said :

“Messieurs, the play we have had the honor to present is by Messieurs Raoul and De Cursy.”

“Oho! so Nathan had a hand in it!” exclaimed Lousteau; “I am no longer surprised at his presence.”

“Coralie! Coralie!” cried the pit in a tumult.

“And Florine!” came in a voice of thunder from the box where the two tradesmen were sitting.

“Florine and Coralie!” echoed a number of voices.

The curtain rose and Vignol appeared with the two actresses, to whom Matifat and Camusot each threw a wreath ; Coralie picked up hers and held it out to Lucien. The two hours passed in the theatre were like a dream to him. The wings, despite their horrors, had begun the work of fascination. The still innocent poet had inhaled there the breath of dissipation and debauchery. In the filthy corridors filled with machinery, and lighted by greasy, smoking lamps, there was a sort of pestiferous air that poisoned the mind. Life there is neither holy nor real. You laugh at all serious things and impossibilities seem true. It was like a narcotic to Lucien, and Coralie completed his joyous intoxication. The lights were put out. No one remained in the hall but box-openers, who made a curious noise taking away the little benches and closing the boxes. The footlights, blown out like a single candle, gave forth a noisome odor. The curtain rose. A lantern descended from the arch. The firemen began their round with the machinists. The fairy-like appearance of the stage, the spectacle of the boxes filled with pretty women, the dazzling lights, the gorgeous effect of the decorations and new costumes were succeeded by a dark, ghastly void. It was hideous. Lucien's surprise was beyond words.

“Well, my boy, are you coming?” said Lous-teau from the stage. “Jump down here from the box”

With one leap Lucien found himself on the stage. He hardly recognized Florine and Coralie, who had changed their clothes and were arrayed in ordinary silk dresses and cloaks, like butterflies returned to their cocoons.

"Will you do me the honor to give me your arm?" said Coralie in a trembling voice.

"With pleasure," said Lucien, who felt the actress's heart beating against his like a bird's when it is snared.

The actress nestled against the poet with the delight of a cat rubbing softly against its master's leg.

"We are going to have supper together!" she said.

The four left the theatre together and found two cabs at the stage door on Rue des Fossés-du-Temple. Coralie led Lucien to the cab in which Camusot and his father-in-law, Goodman Cardot, were already seated. She also offered Du Bruel a seat. The manager rode with Florine, Matifat and Lousteau.

"These cabs are horrid things!" said Coralie.

"Why don't you have a carriage of your own?" queried Du Bruel.

"Why don't I?" she cried in a wrathful tone. "I don't want to say why before Monsieur Cardot, who undoubtedly trained his son-in-law—Would you believe that Monsieur Cardot, small and old as he is, gives Florentine only five hundred francs a month, just enough to pay for her

board and lodgings and stockings! The old Marquis de Rochegude, who has six hundred thousand a year, has been offering me a coupé for two months. But I'm an artist, not a prostitute."

"You shall have a carriage the day after to-morrow, mademoiselle," said Camusot affably; "you never asked me for one."

"Does one ask for such things? When a man loves a woman, does he leave her to wallow about in the mud and risk breaking her legs by walking? It's only knights of the yardstick that like to see mud on the bottom of a dress."

As she uttered these words in a sharp tone that broke Camusot's heart, Coralie found Lucien's leg and squeezed it between her own; she took his hand and pressed it. Then she held her peace and seemed absorbed in one of those dreams of infinite pleasure which compensate the poor creatures for all their past disappointments and misery, and develop in their minds a strain of poesy unknown to other women, whose lives, luckily for them, are devoid of such violent contrasts.

"You ended by acting as well as Mademoiselle Mars," said Du Bruel to Coralie.

"Yes," said Camusot, "Mademoiselle seemed to have something bothering her at first; but, from the middle of the second act, she was entrancing. Your success is largely due to her"

"And hers is largely due to me," said Du Bruel.



“You’re fighting about a matter of small consequence,” said she, in an uncertain voice.

She took advantage of a moment of darkness to carry Lucien’s hand to her lips, and kissed, it moistening it with her tears. Lucien was moved to the very marrow of his bones. The humility of the lovelorn courtesan has a touch of grandeur that approaches the angels.

“Monsieur is to write the article,” said Du Bruel to Lucien, “he can put in a charming paragraph about our dear Coralie.”

“Oh! do us that little service,” said Camusot, in the tone of a man kneeling at Lucien’s feet, “and you will find me only too anxious to serve you at all times.”

“Pray let monsieur alone,” cried the actress in a pet; “he shall write what he pleases. Papa Camusot, buy me carriages and not newspaper puffs.”

“You shall have them cheap,” observed Lucien politely. “I have never written in the newspapers, I am entirely unfamiliar with their customs; you will have the first effort of my virgin pen——”

“That will be amusing,” said Du Bruel.

“Here we are at Rue de Bondy,” said little Père Cardot, whom Coralie’s outbreak had dismayed beyond measure.

“If I have the first fruits of your pen, you shall have those of my heart,” said Coralie, as she was left alone with Lucien in the carriage for an instant

Coralie joined Florine in her bedroom, to put on the dress she had sent thither. Lucien had no conception of the extravagance displayed by rich tradesmen who wish to enjoy life, in the establishments provided for their mistresses or for actresses. Although Matifat, whose means were not so great as his friend Camusot's, had done things rather shabbily, Lucien was amazed to see a dining-room artistically decorated, upholstered in green cloth with gilt nails, lighted by handsome lamps and furnished with jardinières full of flowers, and a salon hung with yellow silk with bronze ornaments, resplendent with furniture of the prevailing style, a Thomire chandelier and a carpet of a Persian pattern. The clock, the candelabra, everything was in good taste. Matifat had left everything to Grindot, a young architect who was building him a house, and who, knowing for whom the suite was intended, had taken especial pains with it. But Matifat, always the shop-keeper, was careful to inspect the smallest thing, he seemed to have always in his mind the amount of the bill, and looked upon all these magnificent objects as so many jewels imprudently taken from their cases.

“And this is what I shall be compelled to do for Florentine!” was a thought that could be read in Père Cardot's eyes.

Lucien suddenly understood why the condition of the room in which Lousteau lived caused Florine's favored lover but little anxiety. As the secret king

of the festivities, Étienne enjoyed all these lovely things. So it was that he planted himself in front of the fireplace like the master of the house, as he talked with the manager, who was congratulating Du Bruel.

“Copy! copy!” cried Finot, hurriedly entering the room. “Nothing in the box. The composers have my article and it will soon be in type.”

“We are just going to work,” said Étienne. “We shall find a table and a fire in Florine’s boudoir. If Monsieur Matifat will give us some paper and ink, we’ll attend to the newspaper while Florine and Coralie are dressing.”

Cardot, Camusot and Matifat disappeared, eager to find quills, knives and whatever the two writers needed. At that moment one of the loveliest dancers of the day, Tullia, rushed into the salon.

“My dear boy,” she said to Finot, “they agree to your hundred subscriptions; they won’t cost the management anything for they’re already placed, distributed among the chorus, orchestra and corps de ballet. Your paper is so clever that no one will complain at being compelled to subscribe. You shall have your boxes. Lastly, here is the price of the first quarter,” she said, handing him two bank notes. “So don’t pester me to death!”

“I am lost!” cried Finot. “I haven’t any leading article now, for I must go and suppress my infamous diatribe.”

“What a bewitching gesture, my divine Lais!” cried Blondet, following the dancer into the room

with Nathan, Vernou and Claude Vignon, whom he had brought with him. "You will stay to supper with us, dear love, or I'll crush you like the butterfly that you are. Being a dancer, you'll arouse no rivalry in the matter of talent here. As for beauty, you know too much to be jealous in public.

"Great God! my friends, Du Bruel, Nathan, Blondet, save me!" cried Finot. "I need five columns."

"I will make two out of the play," said Lucien.

"My subject will supply one," said Lousteau.

"Very good; Nathan, Vernou, Du Bruel, give me the jokes to come in at the end. Our excellent Blondet can surely look after the two short columns on the first page. I am off to the printer's. Luckily you came in your carriage, Tullia."

"Yes, but the duke is there with a German minister," said she.

"Let's invite the duke and the minister," said Nathan.

"A German always drinks hard and listens; we'll say so many audacious things to him that he will write to his court about it," cried Blondet.

"Which one of us all will be the serious-minded individual to go down and speak to him?" said Finot. "Come, Du Bruel, you're a bureaucrat. Give Tullia your arm and bring up the Duc de Rhétoré and the minister. Great heaven, how lovely Tullia is to-night!"

"There will be thirteen of us!" said Matifat, turning pale.

"No, fourteen!" cried Florentine, appearing on the scene, "I want to keep an eye on Milord Cardot."

"At all events," said Lousteau, "Blondet has Claude Vignon with him."

"I brought him here to drink," said Blondet, taking possession of an inkstand. "I say, you fellows, muster up wit enough for the fifty-six bottles we're going to drink," he continued, addressing Nathan and Vernou. "Above all things, wake up Du Bruel; he's a vaudevillist and capable of making some wretched puns; keep at him till he says something bright."

Lucien, inspired by the wish to acquit himself creditably before such a notable assemblage, wrote his first article on the round table in Florine's boudoir, by the light of the pink candles supplied by Matifat.

#### PANORAMA-DRAMATIQUE.

First performance of *L'Alcade dans L'Embarras*, Imbroglia in Three Acts.—Début of Mademoiselle Florine.—Mademoiselle Coralie.—Vignol.

"People rush on and off the stage, talk, run about, seek something and find nothing; everything is in confusion. The alcade has lost his daughter and finds his cap; but the cap does not fit him, it must be a robber's cap. Where is the robber? People rush on and off, they talk and run about and look with all their eyes. At last the alcade finds a man without his daughter and his daughter without a man, which is satisfactory to the magistrate but not to the public. Quiet is restored and the alcade proceeds to question the man.

The old fellow takes his seat in a great alcade's armchair, arranging the sleeves of his alcade's gown. Spain is the only country where they have alcades attached to enormous sleeves and where they have around their necks the ruffs that form half of their functions in the theatres of Paris. This alcade, who trots about so much in a broken-winded sort of way, is Vignol—Vignol, the successor of Potier, a young actor who plays old men's parts so well that he made the oldest men laugh. There is the promise of a future of a hundred such parts in that bald head, that quavering voice, in those spindle legs trembling beneath a G ronte's body. The young actor is so old that he frightens you, you are afraid that you may catch his old age like a contagious disease. And what an admirable alcade! What a delicious, uneasy smile! What self-important idiocy! what stupid dignity! what magisterial hesitation! How well the man knows that everything may become alternately false and true! How worthy he is to be the minister of a constitutional king! To each of the alcade's questions, the unknown replies by a question; Vignol answers, so that, being questioned by the replies made to him, the alcade makes everything clear by his questions. This eminently comic scene, which has a distinct flavor of Moli re, put the audience in good humor. Everybody on the stage seemed in perfect accord; but I am in no condition to tell you what is clear and what is obscure; the alcade's daughter was there, represented by a veritable Andalusian, a Spaniard with Spanish eyes, Spanish complexion, Spanish figure, Spanish gait, a Spaniard from top to toe, with her dagger in her garter, her love in her heart, her cross at the end of a ribbon on her bosom. At the end of the act, someone asked me how the play was going and I said: 'She has red stockings with green clocks, a foot no larger than that, in a varnished shoe, and the prettiest leg in Andalusia!' Oh! that alcade's daughter brings the love to your lips, she arouses painful yearnings, you long to leap on the stage and offer her your cottage and your heart, or thirty thousand francs a year and your pen. The fair Andalu-

sian is the loveliest actress in Paris. Coralie, if we must call her by name, is equally competent to play the countess or the grisette. You cannot say in which character she would give the more pleasure. She will be whatever she chooses to be, she was born to reach the top of the ladder—can anything more be said of an actress of the boulevards?

“In the second act appeared a Spaniard from Paris, with her cameo-like face and killing eyes. I asked whence she came and was told that she came from the wings and that her name was Mademoiselle Florine; but, on my word, I could not believe it, there was so much fire in her movements, such fierce passion in her love. This rival of the alcade’s daughter is the wife of a nobleman wrapped in an Almaguero cloak, in which there is enough material for a hundred great noblemen of the boulevard. If Florine had not red stockings with green clocks and varnished shoes, she had a mantilla and a veil that she managed admirably, the great lady that she is! She proved to demonstration that the tigress may become a cat. I understood that there was some drama of jealousy involved by the cutting words the two Spaniards addressed to each other. Then, when everything was on the point of adjustment, the alcade’s stupidity tangled everything up again. That whole world of torches, rich men, valets, Figaros, nobles, alcaides, girls and women, began to go and come and turn about and hunt once more. The plot thereupon thickened again and I let it thicken, for those two women, Florine the jealous and the lucky Coralie had entangled me anew in the folds of their skirts and mantillas, and thrust their little feet into my eyes.

“I succeeded in reaching the third act without mishap, without requiring the intervention of the police or scandalizing the audience, and from this time forth I believe in the power of the public and religious morality, over which the Chamber of Deputies is spending so much time that one would say there is no morality left in France. I succeeded in understanding that the play has to do with a man who loves two women but is not loved by them, or who is loved by

them but does not love them ; who does not love alcades, or whom alcades do not love, but who is, beyond controversy, a gallant nobleman who loves somebody, himself or God, a last resort, for he turns monk. If you want to know more about it, go to the Panorama-Dramatique. You are sufficiently advised that you must go there once at least to have a glimpse of those triumphant red stockings with green clocks, of that little foot, full of promise, of those eyes through which a sunbeam filters, of the refined acting of a Parisian disguised as an Andalusian, of an Andalusian disguised as a Parisian ; then you must go a second time to enjoy the play, which will make you roar with laughter apropos of the old man, and weep for the lovelorn nobleman. The play succeeded in both respects. The author, who, they say, has one of our great poets for collaborator, has aimed at success with a pretty girl in each hand : wherefore he has just missed killing his excited pit with pleasure. The legs of the two young women seemed to have more wit than the author. Nevertheless, when the two rivals left the stage, the dialogue was seen to be clever, which proves conclusively the excellence of the play. The author was called by name amid thunders of applause which caused the architect of the building some uneasiness ; but the author, accustomed to the peculiarities of the wine-seasoned Vesuvius that boils beneath the chandelier, did not tremble : he is Monsieur de Cursy. As for the two actresses, they danced the famous Seville bolero, which once found favor with the fathers of the Council, and which the censorship did not prohibit, despite the perilous suggestiveness of the poses. The bolero is enough to attract all graybeards who know not what to do with their remains of love, and I am charitable enough to warn them to keep their opera glasses very clear."

While Lucien was writing this page, which made a revolution in journalism by introducing a new and original style, Lousteau was engaged upon an



article said to relate to public morals, and entitled *The Ex-Beau*, which began thus :

“The beau of the Empire is always a tall, thin man, well-preserved, who wears corsets and has the cross of the Legion of Honor. His name is something like Potelet; and, to put himself on a good footing at the present court, the baron of the Empire has indulged himself with a *du!* he is now Du Potelet prepared to become plain Potelet once more in case of revolution. Being a man with two ends like his name, he pays his court in Faubourg Saint-Germain after having been the glorious, affable and useful train-bearer of a sister of that man whom modesty forbids me to name. Although Du Potelet may deny having been in the service of her Imperial Highness, he continues to say romanzas written by his fond benefactress.”

The article was a tissue of absurd personalities, such as were much in vogue at that time—a style of writing that was afterward vastly improved, notably by *Le Figaro*. Lousteau drew an imaginary parallel between Madame de Bargeton, to whom the Baron du Châtelet was paying court, and a cuttle-fish—a comparison that amused people whether they did or did not know the two persons at whom the ridicule was aimed. Châtelet was likened to a heron. The love of this heron, trying unavailingly to swallow the cuttle-fish, which broke in three pieces when he let it fall, was an irresistible provocation of laughter. This burlesque, which ran through several articles, made, as everyone knows, a tremendous sensation in Faubourg Saint-Germain, and was one of the thousand and one causes of the rigorous measures enacted against the press.

An hour later, Blondet, Lousteau and Lucien returned to the salon, where all the guests, the duke, the minister, the four women, the three tradesmen, the manager and Finot were talking together. An apprentice in his paper cap had already come for copy for the paper.

"The men will leave if I don't carry back something," he said.

"Here are ten francs, and tell them to wait," said Finot.

"If I give them the money, monsieur, they'll get drunk, and good-bye to the paper."

"This child's common sense frightens me," said Finot.

It was just at the moment when the minister was predicting a brilliant future for the *gamin*, that the three authors entered. Blondet read an exceedingly clever article against the romanticists. Lousteau's article raised a laugh. The Duc de Rhétoré recommended the insertion of a little indirect flattery for Madame d'Espard, in order not to offend Faubourg Saint-Germain too deeply.

"Now read us what you have written," said Finot to Lucien.

When Lucien, who was trembling with fright, had finished, the salon rang with applause, the actresses kissed the neophyte, the three tradesmen embraced him until they took his breath away, Du Bruel, with tears in his eyes, grasped his hand, and the manager invited him to dinner.

"There are no children nowadays," said Blon-

det. "As Monsieur de Chateaubriand has already called Victor Hugo the *sublime child*, I am compelled to tell you plainly that you are a man of wit, of heart and of style."

"Monsieur is on the staff of our paper," said Finot, with a grateful glance at Étienne, and the shrewd inquiring look of the speculator.

"What have you written?" Lousteau asked Blondet and Du Bruel.

"Here are Du Bruel's," said Nathan.

\* \* \* Monsieur le Vicomte Démosthène said yesterday, seeing how completely Monsieur le Vicomte d'A— fills the public eye:—"Perhaps they will leave me in peace."

\* \* \* A lady said to a radical who was censuring Monsieur Pasquier's speech as a continuation of the system of De-cazes:—"Yes, but his calves are very monarchical."

"If that is a fair sample of his work, I ask nothing better; everything is all right," said Finot. "Here, run and carry them this," he said to the apprentice. "The paper will be a sort of patch-work, but it will be our best number," he added, turning to the group of writers, who were already looking askance at Lucien.

"The boy has wit," said Blondet.

"His article is very good," said Claude Vignon.

"Let us adjourn to the table," cried Matifat.

The duke gave his arm to Florine, Coralie took Lucien's, and the dancer had Blondet on one side and the German minister on the other.

"I don't understand why you attack Madame de Bargeton and the Baron du Châtelet, who is to be

prefect of the Charente, they say, and master of requests."

"Madame de Bargeton turned Lucien out of doors like a thief," said Lousteau.

"Such a handsome young man!" exclaimed the minister.

The supper, served upon new silver plate, Sèvres china and the finest linen, was magnificent and substantial. Chevet prepared the dishes and the wines were selected by the most famous dealer on Quai Saint-Bernard, a friend of Camusot, Matifat and Cardot. Lucien, who saw Parisian luxury at close quarters for the first time, went from surprise to surprise, and concealed his amazement like the man of wit and heart and style that he was, according to Blondet.

As they crossed the salon, Coralie whispered to Florine:

"Make Camusot so tipsy that he will have to stay here and sleep."

"So you have *made* your journalist, have you?" replied Florine, using an expression peculiar to women of her class.

"No, my dear, I love him!" Coralie retorted, with a fascinating little shrug of the shoulders.

Her words echoed in Lucien's ears, wafted to them by the fifth capital sin. Coralie was beautifully dressed, and her costume was cunningly arranged to set off her special attractions, for every woman has points of perfection peculiar to herself. Her dress, like Florine's, had the merit of being

made of a charming material, not yet in the market, called *mousseline de soie*; the first samples had been sent some days before to Camusot, who, as proprietor of the *Cocon d'Or*, was one of the Parisian deities of the manufacturers of Lyons. Thus love and the toilet, woman's rouge and perfume, enhanced the happy Coralie's seductions. Anticipated pleasure, which cannot escape us, exerts a tremendous fascination over young people. It may be that certainty has in their eyes all the attraction of bad places, perhaps it is the secret of untiring fidelity. Pure, sincere love, first love in fact, combined with one of the attacks of frenzy that assail such unfortunate creatures, and also the admiration caused by Lucien's great beauty, gave Coralie a sort of intelligence of the heart.

"I would love you if you were ill and ugly!" she said in Lucien's ear as they sat down at the table.

What words to a poet! Camusot disappeared, and Lucien saw him no more as he looked at Coralie. Was there a man, emotional, fond of pleasure, wearied to death by the monotony of provincial life, attracted by the bottomless pit of Paris, tired of poverty, harassed by his enforced continence, fatigued by his monastic life on Rue de Cluny, by his unfruitful toil,—was there such a man who could have turned his back upon that brilliant scene? Lucien had one foot in Coralie's bed and another in the snare of the newspaper, which he had pursued so far but had been unable to over-

take. After so many weary hours of sentry duty on Rue du Sentier, he found the newspaper sitting at table with him, drinking freely, good-humored and affable. He was about to be revenged for all his sorrows by an article which would, the very next morning, pierce two hearts in which he had tried, but in vain, to pour the grief and rage that they had forced him to drink. As he looked at Lousteau, he said to himself: "There is a friend indeed!" having no suspicion that Lousteau already dreaded him as a dangerous rival. Lucien had made the mistake of displaying all his talent; a dull article would have served his purpose admirably. Blondet counterbalanced the envy that was consuming Lousteau by saying to Finot that it was best to make terms with such talent as that. That remark determined Lousteau's conduct; he resolved to remain Lucien's friend and to come to an understanding with Finot to make the most of so dangerous a newcomer by keeping him poor. This course was rapidly decided upon and perfectly understood between the two men as the result of a whispered word or two.

"He has talent!"

"He will be exacting."

"Oho!"

"You will see!"

"I never sup with French journalists without a feeling of terror," said the German diplomatist, with calm and dignified affability, glancing at Blondet whom he had met at the Comtesse de Mont-

cornet's. "Blücher once made a remark, which you have undertaken to prove true."

"What was that?" said Nathan.

"When Blücher arrived on the heights of Montmartre with Saacken, in 1814,—forgive me, messieurs, for reminding you of that fatal day,—Saacken, who was an outspoken fellow, said to him: 'So we're going to burn Paris!'—'God forbid! France will die of *that* and nothing else,' Blücher replied, pointing to the great cancer that lay smoking at their feet in the valley of the Seine.—I praise God that there are no newspapers in my country," continued the minister after a pause. "I haven't yet recovered from the fright caused me by that little fellow in the paper cap who, at ten years, possesses the commonsense of an old diplomat. So it seems to me to-night as if I were supping with lions and panthers who do me the honor of covering their claws with velvet."

"It is perfectly plain," said Blondet, "that we can say and prove to all Europe that your Excellency has vomited a snake this evening and failed to inoculate Mademoiselle Tullia, the loveliest of our dancers, and thereupon we can comment on Eve, the Bible, the first and last sin. But you are our guest."

"That would be amusing," said Finot.

"We could have scientific dissertations printed on all the snakes found in the heart and human body, and continue with the diplomatic body," said Lousteau.

“We could find a snake of some sort in that jar of brandied cherries,” said Vernou.

“You will end by believing it yourself,” said Vignon to the minister.

“Do not awaken your sleeping claws, messieurs!” cried the Duc de Rhétoré.

“The power and influence of the press are only at their dawn,” said Finot; “journalism is in its infancy, it will grow and grow. Ten years hence everything will be subjected to publicity. Thought will enlighten everything, it—”

“Will blight everything,” interposed Blondet.

“That’s a *bon mot*,” said Claude Vignon.

“It will make kings,” said Lousteau.

“It will unmake monarchies,” said the diplomat.

“If the press did not exist,” said Blondet, “we could get along without it; but it’s here, so we live on it.”

“You will die of it,” said the diplomat. “Don’t you see that the superiority of the masses, assuming that you enlighten them, would make individual greatness the more difficult of attainment; that, if you sow reasoning power in the heart of the lower classes, you will reap revolution, and that you will be the first victims? What do the mob break in Paris when there’s an *émeute*?”

“The street lanterns,” said Nathan; “but we are too modest to be afraid, we shall only be cracked.”



“You are too clever as a people to permit any government whatever to attain its full development,” said the minister. “Otherwise you would begin with your pens the conquest of Europe, which your sword could not keep.”

“Newspapers are an evil,” said Claude Vignon. “It would be possible to turn the evil to a good use, but the government chooses to fight it. There will be a struggle. Which will go to the wall? That’s the question.”

“The government!” said Blondet; “I am wearing myself out shouting it from the housetops. In France intellectual cleverness is stronger than anything else, and the newspapers have, in addition to the wit of all bright men, the hypocrisy of Tartuffe.”

“Blondet, Blondet, you go too far!” exclaimed Finot; “there are subscribers here.”

“You are the proprietor of one of those store-houses of venom and you may well be afraid; but I snap my fingers at all your shops although I make my living by them!”

“Blondet is right,” said Claude Vignon. “The newspaper, instead of being a priest, has become an organ of faction; from being an organ, it has degenerated into a trade; and like all trades, it is faithless and lawless. Every newspaper office is, as Blondet says, a shop where words are sold to the public of whatever color it wants them. If there were a hunchback’s newspaper, it would demonstrate morning and night the beauty, the

virtue, the necessity of humps. Newspapers are no longer published to enlighten the public, but to flatter certain people's opinions. Therefore all newspapers are sure to be, sooner or later, cowardly, hypocritical, base, lying assassins; they will murder ideas, systems and men, and will flourish for that very reason. They will have the advantage of all reasoning beings; the evil will be done and no one will be guilty. I, Vignon, you, Lousteau, you, Blondet, you, Finot, will be all Aristides, Platos, Catos, the men that Plutarch writes about; we shall all be innocents, we can wash our hands of every infamous act. Napoléon explained this phenomenon, moral or immoral as you choose, by a sublime sentence inspired by his studies of the Convention: 'Collective crimes involve nobody.' The newspaper can indulge in the most atrocious conduct, and no one deems himself individually sullied thereby."

"But the government will enact repressive laws," said Du Bruel; "they are already in preparation."

"Bah!" said Nathan, "what can the law do against French wit, the most subtle of all solvents?"

"Ideas can be neutralized only by ideas," continued Vignon. "Terror and despotism alone can stifle French genius, whose language is so admirably adapted to veiled allusion and double meaning. The harsher the law, the more surely the French spirit will find a vent, like the steam in a machine

without a safety-valve. Therefore the king does well : if the press is against him, the minister will be responsible for everything, and *vice versa*. If a newspaper invents an infamous slander, why, somebody told it to the editor. All he need do is to apologize for the great liberty to the person who complains. If he is summoned before the courts, he complains because he was not asked to rectify the error ; but ask him to do it, and he refuses and laughs in your face ; he treats his crime as a mere trifle. When his victim triumphs he laughs at him. If he is punished, if he has too heavy a fine to pay, he will stigmatize the complainant as a foe to liberty, enlightenment and the country. He will say that Monsieur So-and-so is a thief, while explaining that he is the most honest man in the kingdom. Thus his crimes are mere nothings, his aggressors monsters ! and he succeeds, sooner or later, in making the people who read him every day believe what he chooses. Then, too, nothing that he doesn't like is patriotic, and he is never wrong. He will make use of religion against the religion, of the Charter against the king ; he will revile the magistrates when the magistrates discipline him ; he will praise them when they cater to popular passions. To secure subscribers he will invent the most touching fables, he will strut about like Bobèche. The newspaper would serve up its father raw and seasoned with the salt of its witticisms, rather than fail to interest or amuse its readers. It is like the actor putting his son's ashes

into the urn in order to weep genuine tears, or the mistress sacrificing everything to her lover."

"In short, it is the people in folio," Blondet interrupted.

"The hypocritical, ungenerous people," continued Vignon; "it will banish talent from its bosom, as Athens banished Aristides. We shall see the newspapers, managed originally by honest men, fall eventually under the control of the most ordinary minds that possess the patience and elastic baseness which great minds lack, or of grocers who have money enough to buy quills. Such things have happened already! But, in ten years, every urchin fresh from college will think he's a great man, he will bestride the columns of a newspaper to belabor his predecessors, and will pull them down by the feet so as to get their place. Napoléon was quite right to muzzle the press. I would wager that, under a government set up by them, the opposition sheets would fight that same government to the death, with the same arguments and the same articles which are put forward to-day against the existing government, the moment it refused to accede to any one of their demands. The more concessions you make to the newspapers, the more exacting they will be. Upstart journalists will be replaced by penniless, half-starved journalists. The wound is incurable, it will become more and more inflamed, more and more insolent; and the greater the evil, the more quietly it will be endured, until the day when confusion is sown among

the newspapers by their very abundance, as in Babylon of old. We know, every one of us, that they will go farther than kings in ingratitude, farther than the lowest trades in speculation and scheming, that they will consume our intellects to supply their daily trade in cerebral alcohol; but we shall all go on writing for them, like the people who work quicksilver mines, knowing that it will be their death. There's a young man yonder beside Coralie—What's his name? Lucien!—he is handsome, he's a poet, and what is better still for him, a man of mind; very good, he will enter some of those vile haunts of thought called newspaper offices, he will waste his noblest ideas upon them, he will dry up his brain and corrupt his mind, he will be guilty of those dastardly anonymous acts which, in the war of ideas, take the place of stratagems, pillage, burning, rapine in the war of *condottieri*. When he has, like a thousand others, wasted his great talents for the benefit of the stockholders, those dealers in poison will let him die of hunger if he's thirsty, of thirst if he's hungry."

"Thanks," said Finot.

"*Mon Dieu*, but I knew it all," said Vignon; "I am in the galleys, and the advent of a new victim pleases me. Blondet and I are better men than Monsieur This and Monsieur That who speculate on our talents, and yet we shall continue to be worked by them for all we are worth. We have hearts under our intellects, we lack the bloodthirsty quali-

ties of the prospector. We are lazy, contemplative, meditative, critical; they will drink our brains dry and accuse us of misconduct!"

"I thought you men would be more amusing," cried Florine.

"Florine is right," said Blondet; "let us leave the cure of public ills to those charlatans of statesmen. As Charlet says: 'Spit on good wine? Never!'"

"Do you know what Vignon reminds me of?" Lousteau asked Lucien. "Of one of those fat women on Rue du Pélican saying to a student: 'My boy, you're too young to come here.'"

This sally raised a general laugh, but it pleased Coralie. The tradesmen were eating and drinking with their eyes and ears open.

"What a nation, where one sees so much that is good and so much that is bad," said the minister to the Duc de Rhétoré. "Messieurs, you are spendthrifts who cannot ruin yourselves."

Thus, by the blessing of chance, Lucien was spared no form of warning as to the precipice yawning at his feet. D'Arthez had started the poet upon the noble pathway of toil by arousing the feeling under which obstacles disappeared. Lousteau himself, through selfishness, had tried to warn him away by describing literature and journalism to him in their true light. Lucien had refused to believe in so much hidden corruption; but at last he heard journalists crying shame upon themselves, he saw them at work, disembowelling their nurse

in order to read the future. In the course of that evening he had seen things as they really are. Instead of being horror-stricken by the aspect of the very heart of the Parisian corruption so aptly suggested by Blücher, he experienced a delirious delight in that clever company. In his eyes, those extraordinary men, in the damascened armor of their vices and the gleaming helmets of their cold analysis, were superior to the grave, serious-minded men of the club. And then he tasted for the first time the delights that wealth affords, he was under the spell of luxury, under the empire of good cheer; his capricious instincts awoke, for the first time in his life he drank choice wines, he made acquaintance with the exquisite dishes of artistic cookery; he saw a minister, a duke and his ballet-dancer hobnobbing with journalists, admiring their fiendish power; he was conscious of an unendurable itching to dominate that circle of kings, he felt that he was strong enough to vanquish them. Lastly, he had scrutinized, by the light of innumerable candles, this Coralie whom he had made happy by a few whispered sentences, and through the smoke from the dishes and the mists of drunkenness she seemed to him sublime, love made her so lovely! She was the prettiest, the finest actress in Paris. Even the club, that heaven of exalted intelligence, would have yielded to such a temptation. In Lucien, the vanity characteristic of authors was flattered by connoisseurs, he had been praised by his future rivals. The success of his article and

his conquest of Coralie were two triumphs well-calculated to turn an older head than his.

During the discussion, everybody had eaten with remarkable heartiness and drunk freely. Lousteau, Camusot's next neighbor, poured kirsch in his wine several times, unnoticed by any one, and incited him to drink by appealing to his vanity. The manœuvre was executed so skilfully that the tradesman did not notice it and fancied himself, in his way, as cunning as the newspaper men. Pointed witticisms began to circulate with the sweetmeats and wines at dessert. The diplomatist, like a man of sense, motioned to the duke and the dancer as soon as he heard the first outbursts of noisy vulgarity which, among those men of intellect, signified the approach of the grotesque scenes with which these orgies end, and all three disappeared.

As soon as Camusot had lost his wits, Coralie and Lucien, who had behaved throughout the supper like lovers of fifteen, rushed down the stairs and leaped into a cab. As Camusot was under the table, Matifat supposed that he had disappeared with the actress; he left his guests smoking, drinking, laughing and disputing, and followed Florine when she retired. Daybreak surprised the combatants, or rather Blondet, an invincible drinker, the only one who could speak, who proposed to his sleeping companions a toast to rosy-fingered Aurora.

Lucien was not used to Parisian orgies; he was



IN THE RUE DE BONDY

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ADRIEN MOREAU

Leveur, 25





IN THE RUE DE BONDY

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ADRIEN MOREAU





still in possession of his faculties when he went downstairs, but the fresh air turned the scale ; he was hideously drunk. Coralie and her maid were obliged to carry him up to the first floor of the fine house where the actress lived, on Rue de Vendôme. On the stairs Lucien almost fainted and was ingloriously ill.

“Quick, Bérénice,” cried Coralie, “tea! make some tea!”

“It’s nothing, it’s the air,” groaned Lucien ; “I never drank so much before.”

“Poor child! he’s as innocent as a lamb,” said Bérénice, a stout Norman girl as ugly as Coralie was pretty.

Lucien was finally deposited in Coralie’s bed without his knowledge. With Bérénice’s assistance, the actress had undressed her poet with the loving care of a mother for her child.

“It’s nothing! it’s the air! Thanks, mamma!” he said.

“How sweetly he says mamma!” cried Coralie, kissing his hair.

“What pleasure to love such an angel, mademoiselle! And where did you fish him up? I didn’t suppose there could be a man as lovely as you are,” said Bérénice.

Lucien wanted to sleep; he had no idea where he was and could see nothing, so Coralie made him swallow several cups of tea and left him asleep.

“Didn’t the concierge or any one see us?” Coralie asked.

“No, I was sitting up for you.”

“Victoire knows nothing?”

“Certainly not!” said Bérénice.

Ten hours later, about noon, Lucien awoke to meet the eyes of Coralie, who had been watching him while he slept! The poet understood what had happened. The actress was still in her lovely dress which was terribly soiled and which she proposed to keep as a relic. Lucien realized the devotion, the delicacy of true love that desired its reward: he looked at Coralie. In a twinkling Coralie was undressed and twined about Lucien like a snake.

At five o'clock the poet was asleep, cradled by visions of divine bliss; he had caught a glimpse of the actress's chamber, a ravishingly beautiful creation in white and pink, a collection of dainty and coquettish treasures surpassing what Lucien had already admired at Florine's. Coralie was standing beside him. She must be at the theatre at seven o'clock to play the part of the Andalusian. Once more she had gazed upon her sleeping poet and had drunk until she was intoxicated, but without satisfying her thirst, of that noble passion which united the senses to the heart and the heart to the senses, to exalt them together. This deification, which permits two creatures to be two on earth in feeling and to be as one in heaven to love, was her absolution. Furthermore, who would not have been excused in view of Lucien's superhuman beauty. Kneeling at the bedside, happy in her

love, the actress felt sanctified. Her ecstatic reverie was disturbed by Bérénice.

“Here’s Camusot! he knows you are here,” she cried.

Lucien sprang to his feet, thinking with innate generosity that he must not injure Coralie. Bérénice raised a curtain. Lucien entered a fascinating dressing-room, whither she and her mistress brought his clothes with incredible celerity. Just as the tradesman appeared, Coralie’s eyes fell upon Lucien’s boots: Bérénice had put them in front of the fire to dry after polishing them in secret. Both servant and mistress had overlooked the incriminating boots. Bérénice went out after exchanging an anxious glance with her mistress. Coralie buried herself in an easy-chair and bade Camusot take his seat in a chair facing her. The honest fellow, who adored Coralie, glanced at the boots and dared not meet his mistress’s eye.

“Ought I to take offence at the pair of boots and leave Coralie? That would be making a fuss about a small matter. There are boots everywhere. Those would be more appropriately placed in a boot-maker’s show window or on a man’s feet on the boulevards. However, here, without feet inside of them, they have much to say that suggests infidelity. I am fifty years old, to be sure; I ought to be as blind as Cupid.”

This cowardly monologue was inexcusable. The boots were not the half-boots in common use to-day, which, at a certain distance, an absent-minded man

might not notice ; they were of the style that the prevailing fashion obliged gentlemen to wear, high boots very elegant and with tassels, which gleamed resplendent over skin-tight trousers, almost always light-colored, and in which objects were reflected as in a mirror. So the boots tortured the worthy silk merchant's eyes, and, let us say it, they tortured his heart as well.

"What's the matter ?" Coralie asked him.

"Nothing," said he.

"Ring," said Coralie, smiling at his cowardice—"Bérénice," she said to the Norman as soon as she appeared—"bring me some hooks so that I can put on those infernal boots again. You mustn't forget to bring them to my dressing-room to-night."

"What!—are those your boots ?" said Camusot, beginning to breathe more freely.

"Eh ! what do you suppose, pray ?" she demanded haughtily. "You great idiot, you don't think ?—Oh ! he did think so !" she said to Bérénice. "I have a man's part in Chose's play, and I never dressed as a man. The boot-maker at the theatre brought me these boots so that I could try walking in them until I get the pair he measured me for ; he put them on me, but they hurt me so that I took them off ; however, I must put them on again."

"Don't put them on if they hurt you," said Camusot, whom the boots had hurt so keenly.

"Mademoiselle would do better," said Bérénice, "instead of making a martyr of herself as she did

just now—why she fairly cried with the pain, monsieur! and, if I was a man, a woman I loved should never cry!—she would do better to have a pair made of very thin morocco. But the management is so stingy! You ought to go and order some for her, monsieur.”

“Yes, yes,” said Camusot. “Are you just up?” he asked Coralie.

“This instant, I didn’t come home till six o’clock, after looking everywhere for you; you made me keep my cab seven hours. That’s the way you take care of me! forget me for your bottles. I had to look after myself, I, who am to play every evening as long as the *Alcade* makes money. I don’t propose to give the lie to that young man’s article!”

“He’s a handsome boy,” said Camusot.

“Do you think so? I don’t care for men of that sort, they’re too much like women; and then they don’t know how to love like you old shopkeeping idiots. You are so bored at home, you know!”

“Does monsieur dine with madame?” Bérénice inquired.

“No, my mouth is all clammy.”

“You were royally drunk last night. Ah! Papa Camusot, let me tell you that I don’t like men who drink.”

“You must make that young man a present,” said the tradesman.

“Ah! yes, I prefer to pay them that way rather than do what Florine does. Come, you old wretch

whom I love all the same, begone, or else give me a carriage so that I needn't waste any more time."

"You shall have it to-morrow to go and dine with your manager at the *Rocher de Cancale*. They won't give the new play on Sunday."

"Come, I'm going to dinner," said Coralie, leading Camusot away.

An hour later Lucien was set free by Bérénice, Coralie's playmate in childhood, a young woman as clever and quick-witted as she was corpulent.

"Stay here. Coralie will come home alone; she even intends to dismiss Camusot altogether if he annoys you," she said to Lucien; "but, dear child of her heart, you are too much of an angel to ruin her. She told me that she has decided to stake everything, to leave this paradise and go and live in your garret. Oh! you may be sure that all the envious and jealous men have told her that you hadn't a sou and lived in the Latin Quarter! I would go with you, you see, and do your housekeeping. But I've just been comforting the poor child. It's true, monsieur, isn't it, that you have too much sense to do such silly things? Oh! you'll see plain enough that the other old fellow has nothing but the dead body and you are the dear one, the beloved, the divinity to whom she gives her soul. If you knew how sweet my Coralie is when I hear her repeat her parts!—a love of a child! She deserved to have God send her one of His angels, she was sick of life. She was so unhappy with

her mother, who beat her and sold her! Yes, monsieur, a mother, her own child! If I had a daughter, I would treat her like my little Coralie, whom I've taken for my child. This is the first time I've ever seen her make a hit, the first time she's been applauded. It seems that, on account of what you wrote, they've organized a tremendous *claque* for the second performance. While you were asleep, Braulard was here at work with her."

"Who's Braulard?" asked Lucien, who fancied that he had heard the name before.

"The chief of the *claqueurs*, and he and she agreed as to the places where she is to be looked after. Although she calls herself her friend, Florine might take it into her head to play her a mean trick and take it all for herself. The whole boulevard is talking about your article.—What a bed for the love of a prince!" she added, as she placed a lace coverlid on the bed.

She lighted the candles, and Lucien, dazzled by the light, believed that he had been translated to a fairy palace. The richest materials from the stock of the *Cocon d'Or* had been selected by Camusot for the hangings and window draperies. The poet walked upon a carpet fit for a royal palace. Rays of light shimmered and danced upon the carving of the violet wood furniture. The white marble mantel was covered with the costliest trifles. The rug by the bedside was of swan-skin with a border of sable. Black velvet

slippers lined with purple silk spoke of the pleasures that awaited the author of *Les Marguerites*. A charming lamp hung from the silk-draped ceiling. On all sides were beautiful *jardinières* filled with choice flowers, pretty white heather and odorless camellias. On all sides were the living images of innocence. How could one imagine an actress and the morals of the stage in that nest?

Bérénice noticed Lucien's bewilderment.

"Isn't this pretty?" she said in a wheedling tone. "Won't you be better situated here to love than in an attic? Prevent her from following her rash impulse," she continued, placing before Lucien a beautiful, small table laden with dishes stolen from her mistress's dinner, so that the cook might not suspect the presence of a lover.

Lucien dined very comfortably, served by Bérénice on chased silver plate and decorated plates worth a louis each. This magnificence had the same effect upon his mind that a girl of the streets with her bare flesh and her tight stockings has upon a student.

"What a lucky dog this Camusot is!" he cried.

"Lucky?" rejoined Bérénice. "Ah! he'd give his whole fortune to be in your place and to change his gray hairs for your fair ones."

She advised Lucien, whom she regaled with the most delicious wine that Bordeaux ever produced for the wealthiest Englishman, to go to bed pending Coralie's return and take a little



nap, and in truth Lucien longed to lie in the bed he admired so much. Bérénice, who had read that longing in the poet's eyes, was happy for her mistress.

At half-past ten Lucien awoke at the command of a glance overflowing with love. Coralie was there arrayed in the most fascinating night toilet. Lucien had slept, Lucien was now only drunk with love. Bérénice withdrew, asking:

“At what time to-morrow?”

“Eleven o'clock; you will bring us our breakfast in bed. I shall be at home to nobody until two.”

At two o'clock the next afternoon the actress and her lover were dressed and sitting together, as if the poet had come to call on his protégée. Coralie had bathed him and combed his hair and dressed him; she had sent out for a dozen fine shirts, a dozen cravats, a dozen handkerchiefs from Colliau's, and a dozen pairs of gloves in a cedar box. When she heard the sound of carriage wheels at her door, she rushed to the window with Lucien. They both saw Camusot alight from a magnificent coupé.

“I did not think,” said she, “that one could hate a man so bitterly, and the luxury—”

“I am too poor to consent that you should ruin yourself,” said Lucien, passing beneath the Caudine Forks.

“Poor little darling,” she said, pressing him to her heart, “do you really love me very much?—

I asked monsieur to come and see me this afternoon," she said to Camusot, referring to Lucien, "that we might drive in the Champs-Élysées to try the carriage."

"You two must go alone," said Camusot sadly; "I can't dine with you; it's my wife's birthday and I had forgotten all about it."

"Poor Musot, how bored you will be!" she said, throwing her arms about the tradesman's neck.

She was drunk with happiness, thinking that she would have her first enjoyment of the beautiful coupé with Lucien, that she could drive alone with him in the Bois; and in her outburst of delight, she seemed really to love Camusot and heaped caresses upon him.

"I would like to give you a carriage every day!" said the poor man.

"Come, monsieur, it's two o'clock," said the actress to Lucien, who, she saw, was ashamed, and whom she consoled with a fascinating gesture.

Coralie hurried down the stairs, drawing Lucien after her; he could hear the tradesman puffing like a porpoise behind them, unable to overtake them. The poet experienced the most intoxicating of delights; Coralie, made sublime by happiness, displayed to the enraptured eyes of all who saw her a toilet of unexampled good taste and elegance. The Paris of the Champs-Élysées gazed admiringly at the two lovers. In an avenue of the Bois de Boulogne their coupé passed the calèche of Mesdames d'Espard and De Bargeton, who gazed at Lucien

in amazement, but upon whom he bestowed the contemptuous glance of the poet who has a confident anticipation of glory in store and proposes to use his power. The moment when he with a glance hurled at those two women some of the revengeful thoughts they had planted in his heart to gnaw at it, was one of the happiest moments of his life and was perhaps decisive of his destiny. Lucien was seized upon once more by the fierce impulses of pride; he determined to reappear in the world and take a startling revenge, and all the petty social vanities, so recently trodden under foot by the toiler, by the friend of the club, resumed possession of his mind. He realized the full extent of the attack made by Lousteau in his behalf; Lousteau had ministered to his passions, while the club, that collective Mentor, sought to curb them to the profit of tiresome virtues and labors which Lucien began to consider useless. To work! does that not mean death to hearts greedy for pleasure? Wherefore how easily do writers glide into the *far niente*, into the good cheer and the luxurious life of actresses and women of easy virtue! Lucien felt an irresistible longing to continue the life of those two wildly happy days.

The dinner at the *Rocher de Cancale* was exquisite. Lucien found all Florine's guests there save the minister, the duke, the dancer and Camusot, whose places were filled by two famous actors and by Hector Merlin and his mistress, a charming woman who styled herself Madame du Val-Noble, the love-

liest and most refined of those women who then composed the exceptional class to-day politely known as *lorettes*. Lucien, who had been living in paradise for forty-eight hours, learned of the success of his article. When he saw that he was made much of and envied, he recovered all his self-possession: his wit sparkled, he was the Lucien de Rubempré who for several months shone resplendent in the literary and artistic world. Finot, a man of incontestable skill in divining talent, who scented it as an ogre scents fresh blood, cajoled Lucien and tried to enlist him in the squad of journalists commanded by himself. Lucien bit at his flattering remarks. Coralie saw the game of the great devourer of talent and tried to put Lucien on his guard against him.

“Don’t bind yourself, my love,” she said to her poet; “wait; they want to make all they can out of you. We’ll talk about it to-night.”

“Nonsense!” Lucien replied, “I feel that I can be as cunning and tricky as they.”

Finot, who had evidently not had any permanent difficulty with Hector Merlin concerning the blank spaces, introduced Merlin to Lucien. Coralie and Madame du Val-Noble fraternized and overwhelmed each other with caresses and attentions. Madame du Val-Noble invited Lucien and Coralie to dinner. Hector Merlin, the most dangerous of all the journalists present at the dinner, was a short, thin man with pinched lips, who was nursing an immoderate ambition; his jealousy went beyond all bounds, he was overjoyed at all the suffering he saw about

him, made the most of the quarrels he fomented, possessed much wit and little will, but had in place of the latter the instinct that leads parvenus to the regions lighted up by gold and power. Lucien and he made a mutually bad impression. It is not difficult to explain why. Merlin had the misfortune to speak very loud while Lucien thought very low. At dessert all these men, each of whom deemed himself superior to the others, seemed to be united by the most touching friendship. Lucien, the new comer, was the object of their cajoleries. They talked freely and frankly. Hector Merlin was the only one who did not laugh. Lucien asked the reason of his reserve.

“Why, I see you entering the world of literature and journalism with illusions. You believe in friends. We are all friends or foes according to circumstances. We strike one another first of all with the weapon we ought to use only against others. You will learn before long that you will obtain nothing by fine sentiments. If you are naturally kind-hearted, make yourself unkind. Be ill-natured on principle. If no one else has told you of this supreme law, I tell it you in confidence, and I would not have troubled you with any confidence of trifling importance. If you wish to be loved, never leave your mistress without having made her weep a little; to make your fortune in literature, always hurt everybody’s feelings, even your friends’, make their vanity weep: then everybody will fawn on you.”

Hector Merlin was happy when he saw, by Lucien's manner, that his words had entered the neophyte's mind as the dagger enters the heart.

They played cards. Lucien lost all his money. He was taken away by Coralie, and the joys of love banished all thought of the terrible excitement of the gaming-table, to which he was destined, at a later period, to fall a victim. The next day, when he left Coralie to return to the Latin Quarter, he found in his purse the money he had lost. This mark of affection distressed him at first; he determined to go back to the actress and return a gift which humiliated him; but he was already on Rue de la Harpe, so he kept on to the Hôtel de Cluny. As he walked along, his mind was busy with this act of kindness on Coralie's part, and he saw in it an exhibition of the maternal love which such women mingle with their passions. In their hearts, passion includes all the sentiments. By dint of much thinking, Lucien at last found an excuse for accepting, saying to himself:

"I love her; we will live together as husband and wife and I will never leave her!"

\*

Who, unless he were a Diogenes, could fail to understand Lucien's feelings as he ascended the grimy, reeking stairs at his hotel, turned the key in his door, and saw once more the unwashed floor and wretched fireplace of his chamber, ghastly in its poverty and bareness. He found on his table the manuscript of his novel and this note from Daniel d'Arthez :

“ Our friends are almost satisfied with your work, my dear poet. You can present it with more confidence, they say, to your friends and your foes. We have read your delightful article on the Panorama-Dramatique, and you are certain to arouse as much envy in literature as regret among us.

“ DANIEL.”

“ Regret ! What does he mean ? ” cried Lucien, taken aback by the tone of formal politeness in which the note was written.

Was he a stranger thenceforth to the club ? After he had devoured the luscious fruit the Eve of the green-room bestowed upon him, he thought more than ever of the esteem and friendship of his friends on Rue des Quatre-Vents. For some moments he was absorbed in thought, contrasting his present in that room with his possible future in Coralie's apartments. Tormented by hesitation

that was alternately honorable and dishonoring, he sat down and set about examining his work as his friends had returned it to him. What a surprise was in store for him! From chapter to chapter the clever, unselfish pen of those great men, still unknown, had changed his poverty to wealth. Compact, concise, nervous dialogue replaced his conversations, which he realized were simply idle chatter when he compared them with those pithy sentences instinct with the spirit of the time. His portraits, somewhat blurred in outline, had been vigorously retouched and colored; all were brought into relation with the strange phenomenon of human life by physiological observations due undoubtedly to Bianchon, and so cleverly expressed that they gave life to the characters. His verbose descriptions had become sparkling and keen. He had produced a deformed, poorly-clad child, and he found her transformed into a lovely white-robed maiden with pink scarf and girdle, a ravishing creature. Darkness surprised him with tears in his eye, overwhelmed by such greatness of soul, deeply impressed with the value of such a lesson, and marvelling over the emendations, which taught him more concerning literature and art than his four years of reading, study and comparison. The correction of an ill-conceived sketch, a masterful stroke, energetic, truthful, are always more effective than theories and remarks.

“What friends! what hearts! how fortunate I am!” cried he as he put away the manuscript.



Carried away by the natural impulse of poetic, impressionable natures, he hurried to Daniel's room. As he ascended the stairs, he was conscious of a feeling that he was less worthy than formerly of the affection of those noble hearts whom nothing could turn aside from the path of honor. A voice whispered to him that, if Daniel had loved Coralie, he would not have taken Camusot with her. He knew also the deep-rooted horror of the club for journalists, and he knew that he was already a journalist to some extent.

He found all his friends—except Meyraux, who had just left them—with the deepest dejection depicted on every face.

“What is the matter, my friends?” Lucien asked.

“We have just learned of a terrible catastrophe: the greatest mind of our age, our dearest friend, he who has been our guiding star for two years—”

“Louis Lambert?” said Lucien.

“Is in a cataleptic condition, which leaves no hope of recovery,” said Bianchon.

“He will die unconscious in body with his head among the stars,” added Michel Chrestien solemnly.

“He will die as he has lived,” said D'Arthez.

“Love, cast like a firebrand into the vast empire of his brain, kindled a conflagration there,” said Léon Giraud.

“Yes,” said Joseph Bridau, “and exalted him to a point where we lose sight of him.”

"We are the ones to be pitied," said Fulgence Ridal.

"Perhaps he can be cured," said Lucien.

"From what Meyraux tells us, he cannot possibly be cured," Bianchon replied. "His brain is the scene of phenomena over which medicine has no power."

"But there are drugs," said D'Arthez.

"True," said Bianchon, "he is only a cataleptic now, we can make him an imbecile."

"If one could only offer the genius of evil a head in place of that one! I would gladly give mine!" cried Michel Chrestien.

"And what would become of European federation?" said D'Arthez.

"True," rejoined Chrestien; "humanity has a prior claim."

"I came here with my heart overflowing with gratitude to you all," said Lucien. "You have changed my base coin into louis d'or."

"Gratitude! What do you take us for?" said Bianchon.

"The pleasure was ours," added Fulgence.

"Well, so you've become a newspaper man," said Léon Giraud. "The report of your début has reached even the Latin Quarter."

"Not yet," was Lucien's reply.

"Ah! so much the better!" said Michel Chrestien.

"I told you so," said D'Arthez. "Lucien is one of those true hearts who know the worth of a

pure conscience. Is it not as strengthening to the soul as the viaticum itself, to be able to say, as one lays one's head on the pillow at night: 'I have not criticised another's work, I have wounded nobody; my wit has not plunged, like a dagger, into any innocent creature's heart; my satire has destroyed nobody's happiness, it has not even disturbed any foolish infatuation, has not unjustly harassed genius; I have disdained the easily-won triumphs of the epigram; in a word, I have never been false to my convictions?'

"But," said Lucien, "it seems to me that one may be employed on a newspaper and still be able to say that. If I had absolutely no other means of existence than that, I must come to it."

"Oh! oh! oh!" said Fulgence, ascending one tone at each exclamation, "we are striking our colors."

"He will be a journalist," said Léon Giraud gravely.—"Ah! Lucien, if you chose to be one of us, who propose to publish a paper in which neither truth nor justice will ever be outraged, in which we shall put forth doctrines useful to humanity, perhaps—"

"You won't have a subscriber," Lucien interrupted him with a Machiavelian expression.

"We shall have five hundred who will be worth five hundred thousand," said Michel Chrestien.

"You will need a large capital," said Lucien.

"No, but devotion," rejoined D'Arthez.

"One would say he was just from a hair-

dresser's," cried Chrestien, sniffing at Lucien's head with a comical gesture. "You have been seen in a highly ornamental carriage, drawn by prancing horses, beside one Coralie, a prince's mistress."

"Well," said Lucien, "is there any harm in that?"

"You say that as if you thought there was," cried Bianchon.

"I could have wished for Lucien," said D'Arthez, "a Beatrice, a noble woman who would have been a support to him through life—"

"But, Daniel, isn't love always the same everywhere?" said the poet.

"Ah!" exclaimed the republican, "in that I am an aristocrat. I couldn't love a woman whom an actor kisses on the cheek in public, a woman who is treated with familiarity in the wings, who debases herself before a yelling pit and smiles at it, who dances with raised skirts, and who makes a man of herself in order to show what I want to be the only one to see. Or, if I did love such a woman, she should leave the stage, and I would purify her by my love."

"And suppose she couldn't leave the stage?"

"I should die of grief, of jealousy, of a thousand diseases. One cannot tear love from one's heart as one extracts a tooth."

Lucien became thoughtful and moody.

"When they learn that I tolerate Camusot, they will despise me," he said to himself.

“Look you,” said the pitiless republican with grim good-humor, “you might be a great writer, but you will never be anything more than a petty scribbler.”

He took his hat and went out.

“Michel Chrestien is rather harsh,” said the poet.

“Harsh and wholesome as the dentist’s forceps,” said Bianchon. “Michel foresees your future and perhaps he is weeping over you at this moment in the street.”

Daniel was gentle and comforting; he tried to encourage Lucien. An hour later the poet left the club, worried by his conscience, which said to him: “You will be a journalist!” as the witches cried to Macbeth: “You will be king!” From the street he looked up at the long-suffering D’Arthez’s dimly lighted windows, and returned home sad at heart and disturbed in mind. He had a sort of presentiment that told him he had been taken to the heart of his true friends for the last time.

As he turned into Rue de Cluny from Place de la Sorbonne, he spied Coralie’s equipage. The actress had driven all the way from Boulevard du Temple to the Sorbonne, just to see her poet for a moment to bid him good-evening. Lucien found his mistress in tears at the sight of his attic; she longed to be in as miserable a plight as her lover, and she wept bitterly as she arranged shirts, gloves, cravats and handkerchiefs in the wretched hotel commode. Her grief was so great and so genuine,

it disclosed such a wealth of love, that Lucien, who had been reproached for having relations with an actress, saw in Coralie a saint on the point of assuming the sackcloth of poverty. The adorable creature had come upon the pretext of informing her friend that the Camusot-Coralie-Lucien party were to return the supper given them by the Matifat-Florine-Lousteau party, and to ask him if he desired to invite anybody who might be of service to him. Lucien replied that he would talk it over with Lousteau. After a few moments the actress took her leave, concealing from Lucien the fact that Camusot was awaiting her below.

The next morning at eight o'clock, Lucien called at Étienne's room, did not find him there, and betook himself to Florine's apartments. The journalist and the actress received him in the pretty bedroom which they occupied as husband and wife, and the three breakfasted sumptuously together.

"Why, my boy," said Lousteau, when they were at table and Lucien had spoken of Coralie's proposed supper party, "I advise you to come with me to see Félicien Vernou and invite him, and to become as intimate with him as one can be with such a rascal. Perhaps he will find an opening for you to the political organ for which he writes the *feuilleton*, and there you can disport yourself at will in weighty articles on the plane of that paper. Like ours, it belongs to the liberal party, so you will be a liberal; that's the popular party; and then, if you should want to go over to the minis-

terial side, you could do it under the most favorable auspices, because you will have made yourself feared. Hector Merlin and his Madame du Val-Noble, who has some great nobles, dandies and millionaires among her acquaintances, have invited you and Coralie to dinner, haven't they ?”

“Yes,” replied Lucien, “and you and Florine are to be there.”

In the course of their Friday debauch and their Sunday dinner, Lucien and Lousteau had adopted the familiar style of address and called each other *thou*.

“Well, we shall find Merlin at the office ; he's a fellow who will follow Finot up closely. You will do well to cultivate him and invite him and his mistress to your supper : he may be of some service to you before long, for evil-disposed people need everybody's assistance and he'll do you a service so that he can call upon your pen at need.”

“Your first article has made such a sensation that you won't have any difficulty,” Florine said to Lucien ; “make haste and take advantage of it, or you will soon be forgotten.”

“The affair, the great affair is consummated !” continued Lousteau. This Finot, a man absolutely without talent, is manager and editor-in-chief of Dauriat's weekly review, owner of a sixth interest which costs him nothing, and has a salary of six hundred francs a month. From and after this morning, my dear fellow, I am editor-in-chief of

our little sheet. Everything went off as I prophesied the other evening. Florine was superb, she could give points to Prince de Talleyrand."

"We hold men by their pleasures," said Florine, "while diplomatists only attack them in their self-esteem; diplomatists see only their tricks, we see their follies, that's why we are the stronger."

"When the bargain was concluded," said Lousteau, "Matifat was guilty of the only *bon mot* he will ever utter in his apothecary's life; 'the affair isn't out of my line of business!'" said he.

"I suspect Florine suggested it to him," cried Lucien.

"Thus, my dear boy," said Lousteau, "you have your foot in the stirrup."

"You were born under a lucky star," said Florine. "How many young men do we see who prowl about Paris for years without succeeding in getting an article into a newspaper! It will be with you as it was with Émile Blondet. Six months from now you'll be giving yourself airs," she said, employing a phrase from her vocabulary of slang, and glancing at him with a mocking smile.

"Haven't I been three years in Paris," said Lousteau, "and only yesterday Finot began to pay me three hundred francs salary as editor-in-chief, a hundred sous a column, and a hundred francs a page in his weekly paper."

"Well, have you nothing to say?" cried Florine, looking at Lucien.

"We will see," was the reply.



"My dear fellow," rejoined Lousteau with an air of vexation, "I have arranged everything for you as if you were my brother; but I can't answer for Finot. Finot will be solicited within two days by sixty poor devils, who will make him all sorts of offers to work at a low rate. I have promised for you; you can say no, if you choose. You can't doubt your good fortune," continued the journalist after a pause. "You will be one of a coterie of good fellows who attack their enemies in several papers and mutually assist one another."

"First of all, let us go and see Félicien Vernou," said Lucien, who was intensely eager to ally himself with these redoubtable birds of prey.

"Lousteau sent for a cab and the two friends drove to Rue Mandar, where Félicien Vernou lived, on the second floor of a house in an alley. Lucien was amazed to find the sour, ill-natured, contemptuous critic in a dining-room of the most ordinary type, hung with a shabby paper in imitation of bricks, with daubs representing moss at equal intervals, and embellished with aquatints in gilt frames, sitting at table with a woman too ugly not to be a lawful wife, and two small children perched on very high chairs with bars designed to prevent the little rascals from falling out. Félicien, taken by surprise in a dressing-gown made from an old cotton dress of his wife's, greeted his visitors with little cordiality.

"Have you breakfasted, Lousteau?" he said, offering Lucien a chair.

"We have just come from Florine's," Lousteau replied; "we breakfasted there."

Lucien did not take his eyes from Madame Vernou, who resembled a stout cook; her complexion was fairly good, but she was superlatively common. She wore a silk handkerchief over a night-cap with strings which her fat cheeks hid from sight. Her dressing-gown, worn without a belt and fastened by a single button at the neck, hung in great folds and made her figure so shapeless that it was impossible not to compare it to a stone post. She enjoyed most robust health; her cheeks were almost purple and her fingers like ninepins. The woman's aspect suddenly afforded to Lucien's mind an explanation of Vernou's dejected manner in society. Disgusted with his married life, without courage to abandon wife and children, but enough of a poet to suffer constantly because of them, he could never forgive anybody for being successful, he was at odds with everybody else because he was always at odds with himself. Lucien understood the sour expression upon that envious face, the bitterness of the retorts with which the journalist interlarded his conversation, the acerbity of his speech, which was always keen-edged and as sharp as a dagger.

"Let us go into my study," said Félicien, rising, "you have come to see me concerning some literary matter, of course?"

"Yes and no," Lousteau replied. "There's a supper party on the carpet, old fellow. I have

come," said Lucien, "at Coralie's request, to ask you—"

At the name of Coralie, Madame Vernou raised her head.

"—To take supper with her a week from to-day," continued Lucien. You will find the same people who were at Florine's, with Madame du Val-Noble, Hector Merlin and a few others. We shall play cards."

"Remember, my dear, we are to go to Madame Mahoudeau's that day," said the wife.

"What difference does that make?" demanded Vernou.

"If we don't go, she will be offended, and you are very glad to have her to discount your publishers' notes."

"My dear fellow, here's a woman who doesn't understand that a supper that begins at midnight doesn't interfere with one's going to an evening party that ends at eleven! I work beside her," he added.

"You have so much imagination!" said Lucien, who made a mortal enemy of Vernou by that one remark.

"Very good," said Lousteau, "then you will come; but that's not all, Monsieur de Rubempré is to become one of us, so give him a lift in your paper; introduce him as a fellow who is capable of literary work of a high order, so that he can get at least two articles a month accepted."

"Very well; if he chooses to be one of us, to

attack our enemies as we will attack his, and defend our friends, I will speak about him to-night at the Opéra," replied Vernou.

"All right, until to-morrow, my boy," said Lousteau, pressing Vernou's hand with every demonstration of the warmest friendship. "When does your book appear?"

"Why, that depends on Dauriat," said the father of a family; "it is all finished."

"Are you satisfied with it?"

"Yes and no."

"We will celebrate your triumph," said Lousteau, rising and saluting his confrère's wife.

This abrupt departure was made necessary by the shrieks of the children who were quarrelling and pounding each other with their spoons, besmearing their faces with jam.

"You have just seen, my boy," said Etienne, "a woman who will, unconsciously, make great ravages in literature. Poor Vernou will never forgive us his wife. We ought to rid him of her, in the public interest of course. We should escape a deluge of savage articles, epigrams against everybody who is successful, everybody who has wealth. What can a man do with such a wife and those two disgusting brats in addition? You know the character of Rigaudin in *La Maison en Loterie*, Picard's play?—well, like Rigaudin, Vernou won't fight, but he will make others fight; he is capable of putting out one of his own eyes in order to put out both of his best friend's; you will see him

planting his foot on all the dead bodies, smiling at every misfortune, attacking princes, dukes, marquises, nobles, because he's a plebeian; because of his wife, attacking bachelors who have won renown, and always preaching morality, pleading for the joys of domesticity and the duties of a citizen. But this moral critic is kind to nobody, not even to children. He lives on Rue Mandar between a wife who might play *Mamamouchi* in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and two little Vernous as ugly as monkeys; he chooses to make sport of Faubourg Saint-Germain, where he will never set foot, and to represent duchesses as speaking as his wife speaks. And that's the man who goes shrieking after the Jesuits, insults the court, attributes to it a purpose to reëstablish feudal institutions and the right of primogeniture, and who is forever preaching a crusade in favor of equality, although he thinks no one his equal. If he were a bachelor, if he went into society, if he had the manners of a royalist poet, pensioned and decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honor, he would be an optimist. Journalism has a thousand such points of departure. It's a huge catapult set in motion by petty spite. Have you any desire to marry now? Vernou has no heart, the gall has overflowed his whole body. Therefore he is the journalist *par excellence*, a tiger with two hands, who tears everything to pieces as if his pen had gone mad."

"He's a woman-hater," said Lucien. "Has he any talent?"

“He hasn’t, he is distinctly a writer of articles. Vernou writes articles, will always write articles and nothing but articles. The most persistent toil will never be able to graft a book upon his prose. Félicien is incapable of conceiving an extended work, of arranging his material, of bringing his characters together harmoniously in a plot that begins, develops and moves steadily on to a climax; he has ideas, but he knows nothing of facts; his heroes would be philosophical or liberal Utopians; lastly, his style is studiously original, his inflated periods would collapse if criticism should prick them with a pin. Therefore he is tremendously afraid of the newspapers, as everybody is who needs bladders and humbug to keep his head above water.”

“What an article your remarks would make!” cried Lucien.

“Such things as those can be said, my child, but never written.”

“You are editor-in-chief,” Lucien rejoined.

“Where shall I drop you?” Lousteau asked him.

“At Coralie’s.”

“Aha! we are in love. What a mistake! Make of Coralie what I make of Florine, a house-keeper, but liberty upon the mountain!”

“You would make a saint curse,” laughed Lucien.

“We don’t curse devils,” retorted Lousteau.

His new friend’s light and airy tone, his way of

looking at life, his paradoxes scattered among the genuine maxims of Parisian Machiavelism, made an impression upon Lucien, without his knowledge. In theory the poet realized the danger of such thoughts, but he found them useful in practice. When they reached Boulevard du Temple the friends agreed to meet between four and five o'clock at the office of the newspaper, where they were likely to find Hector Merlin. Lucien was, in very truth, in the toils of the voluptuous true love of courtesans, who fasten their grappling irons to the most sensitive portions of the heart, adapting themselves with incredible facility to all desires, encouraging the indolent habits from which they derive their strength. He was already thirsting for the pleasures of Paris, he loved the easy-going, luxurious life that the actress led in her magnificent apartments. He found Coralie and Camusot intoxicated with delight. The Gymnase offered an engagement for the approaching Easter, upon conditions, clearly stated, which surpassed Coralie's hopes.

"We owe this triumph to you," said Camusot.

"Why, of course, if it hadn't been for him, the *Alcade* would have made a failure," cried Coralie; "there would have been no article at all, and I should have been planted on the boulevard for six years more."

She threw her arms about his neck before Camusot. There was something indefinably voluptuous in the actress's effusiveness, something

fascinating in her impulsive warmth; she was in love! Like all men in great grief, Camusot lowered his eyes and recognized the long seam in Lucien's boots, the color of the thread used by the celebrated bootmakers, a deep yellow which stood out against the glossy black of the leather. The color of the thread had monopolized his attention during his monologue upon the inexplicable presence of a pair of boots in front of Coralie's fireplace. He had read, in black letters printed on the soft white leather of the lining, the address of a celebrated bootmaker of that day: *Gay, Rue de la Michodière*.

"You have very fine boots, monsieur," he said to Lucien.

"Everything he has is fine," said Coralie.

"I should be very glad to patronize your bootmaker."

"Oh!" said Coralie, "what a regular Rue des Bourdonnais trick it is to ask the address of bootmakers! Do you propose to wear a young man's boots? You would make a pretty boy. Pray stick to your half-boots, which are more suitable for a man who has settled down and has a wife and children and a mistress."

"However, if monsieur would kindly take off one of his boots, he would do me a great favor," persisted Camusot.

"I couldn't put it on again without hooks," said Lucien, blushing.

"Bérénice will go and buy some, they won't be



CORALIE, CAMUSOT, AND LUCIEN

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*He found Coralie and Camusot intoxicated with delight.*

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ADRIEN-MOREAU.





out of place here," said the tradesman, with a horribly sly expression.

"Papa Camusot," said Coralie, bestowing a glance of withering scorn upon him, "have the courage of your baseness! Come, speak out your whole thought. You think that monsieur's boots resemble mine, I suppose?—I forbid you to take off your boots," she said to Lucien.—"Yes, Monsieur Camusot, those boots are precisely the same as those that rested so naturally in front of my hearth the other day, and monsieur was hiding in my dressing-room waiting for them; he had passed the night here. That's what you're thinking, isn't it? Think so, I want you to. It's the plain truth. I am deceiving you. What then? I choose to do it!"

She sat down without a sign of anger and with the most indifferent air imaginable, looking at Camusot and Lucien, who dared not look at each other.

"I will not believe what you want me to believe," said Camusot. "Don't jest; I am in the wrong."

"Either I am an abandoned creature who has fallen in love with monsieur all in a moment, or else I am a poor miserable creature who has felt for the first time the true love that all women seek. In either case, you must leave me or take me as I am," she said with a queenly gesture that completely crushed the silk merchant

"Can it be true?" said Camusot, who saw by

Lucien's face that Coralie was not joking, but who longed to be deceived.

"I love mademoiselle," said Lucien.

When she heard those words uttered in a voice that betrayed deep emotion, Coralie leaped upon her poet's neck, pressed him to her heart and turned her face to the tradesman as if to show him what an admirable picture of love she and Lucien made.

"Poor Musot, take back all you have given me; I want nothing from you, I love this boy like a madwoman, not for his wit, but for his beauty. I prefer poverty with him to millions with you."

Camusot fell into a chair, took his head in his hands and made no sound.

"Do you want us to go?" she said with incredible fierceness.

Lucien felt a cold chill run down his back at the idea of being saddled with a woman, an actress, a household to support.

"Stay here and keep everything, Coralie," said Camusot in a feeble, grief-stricken voice that came from his heart; "I don't choose to take anything back. There are sixty thousand francs' worth of furniture here, but I could not bear the idea of my Coralie in want. And yet you will be in want before long. However great monsieur's talent may be, it can't support you. This is what we old men have to expect! Give me the right to come and see you sometimes, Coralie; I may be of service to you. Besides, I confess that I can't live without you."

The poor man's meekness when he saw all his happiness snatched away from him at the moment when he believed himself to be happier than he had ever been, affected Lucien keenly, but not Coralie.

"Come as often as you please, my poor Musot," she said. "I shall like you better when I am not deceiving you."

Camusot seemed well pleased at not being turned out of his earthly paradise, where he would undoubtedly have to suffer torments, but to which he hoped to return later with flying colors, trusting to the hazards of Parisian life and the seductions by which Lucien would be surrounded. The sly old fellow believed that the handsome youth would indulge in acts of infidelity sooner or later, and he determined to remain their friend in order to spy upon him, to ruin him in Coralie's mind. Lucien was dismayed by this exhibition of the baseness of true passion. Camusot invited them to dine with him at Véry's in the Palais-Royal, and the invitation was accepted.

"What bliss!" cried Coralie when the tradesman had taken his leave; "no more attic rooms in the Latin Quarter; you will live here and we will never part again; to save appearances, you can take a small apartment on Rue Charlot, then come what may!"

She began to dance her Spanish bolero with a vigor that told of an indomitable passion.

"I can earn five hundred francs a month by working hard," said Lucien.

"I get as much more at the theatre, without counting extra pay. Camusot will still dress me, for he loves me! With fifteen hundred francs a month, we shall be as rich as Cræsus."

"And what about the horses and the coachman and the manservant?" queried Bérénice.

"I'll run into debt," cried Coralie.

She began to dance a jig with Lucien.

"I must accept Finot's offer now," said Lucien.

"Come on," said Coralie, "I'll dress and drive you to the office; I can wait in the carriage on the boulevard."

Lucien seated himself on a sofa, watched the actress making her toilet, and reflected long and seriously. He would have preferred to leave Coralie free, rather than be forced to assume the obligations of such a union; but she was so graceful, so lovely, so attractive, that he was captivated by the picturesque aspects of that Bohemian mode of life and threw down his gauntlet to fortune. Bérénice was ordered to attend to the moving of Lucien's effects and his installation in his new quarters. Then the lovely, blissful, triumphant Coralie carried away her lover, her beloved poet, and drove him all the way across Paris to Rue Saint-Fiacre.

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Lucien ran quickly upstairs and entered the office of the newspaper with a masterful air. Colloquinte, with his stamped paper on his head, and old Giroudeau, told him hypocritically that no one had come.

“But the editors must meet somewhere to arrange for the make-up of the paper,” said he.

“Probably, but I have nothing to do with the editing,” said the captain in the Garde Impériale; and he resumed his task of verifying subscription lists, keeping up his everlasting *broum! broum!*

At that moment, by chance—shall we call it a lucky or unlucky chance?—Finot came in to tell Giroudeau of his pretended abdication and to direct him to look out for his interests.

“No diplomacy with monsieur, he is on the paper,” said Finot to his uncle, taking Lucien’s hand and pressing it.

“Ah! monsieur is on the paper?” cried Giroudeau, amazed at his nephew’s action. “Well, well, monsieur, you had little difficulty in finding an opening.”

“I propose to put up a bed for you here so that you won’t be bamboozled by Étienne,” said Finot,

with a sly glance at Lucien. "Monsieur is to have three francs a column for all his copy, including the articles on the theatres."

"You never made those terms with anybody else," said Giroudeau, staring at Lucien in amazement.

"He will have the four theatres on the boulevard, and you will look to it that his boxes aren't purloined and that his tickets for the play are handed him.—I advise you, however, to have them sent to your own rooms," he added, turning to Lucien. "In addition to his criticisms, monsieur undertakes to write ten articles of *Variétés* of about two columns each at fifty francs a month for a year. Does that suit you?"

"Yes," said Lucien, whose hand was forced by circumstances.

"Uncle," said Finot to the cashier, "you will draw up the agreement and we'll sign it when we come down."

"What is monsieur's name?" asked Giroudeau, rising and removing his black silk cap.

"Monsieur Lucien de Rubempré, author of the article on the *Alcade*," said Finot.

"Young man," cried the old soldier, tapping Lucien on the forehead, "you have a mine of gold there. I am not literary, but I read your article and it pleased me. Talk to me! that's real humor. 'That will bring us subscribers!' I said. And sure enough they came. We sold fifty copies."

"Is my agreement with Étienne Lousteau copied

in duplicate and ready to sign?" Finot asked his uncle.

"Yes," said Giroudeau.

"Date the one I am to sign with monsieur yesterday, so that Lousteau's will be subject to these terms."

Finot took his new editor's arm, with a semblance of good-fellowship that won the poet's heart, and led him into the hall, saying:

"Thus you have a position all made. I will introduce you myself to *my* editors. Then this evening Lousteau will make you known at the theatres. You can earn a hundred and fifty francs on our little paper, which Lousteau is to manage; so try to keep on good terms with him. The rascal will take it ill of me that I have tied his hands in your regard; but you have talent, and I don't propose that you should be the plaything of an editor-in-chief's whims. Between ourselves, you can bring me copy up to two pages a month for my weekly review, and I will pay you two hundred francs for it. Don't mention that arrangement to any one, for I should be exposed on every side to the vengeance of wounded vanity, because of such good fortune having fallen to the lot of a newcomer. Make four articles of your two pages, sign two of them with your own name and two with a pseudonym, so that you may not seem to be eating other people's bread. You owe your position to Blondet and Vignon, who think that you have a great future. So don't lead a fast life. Above all things,

distrust your friends. As for ourselves, let us always maintain a good understanding. Serve me and I will serve you. You will have forty francs' worth of boxes and tickets to sell and sixty francs' worth of books to get rid of. That and your editorial work will give you four hundred and fifty francs a month. By keeping your eyes open, you will be able to make at least two hundred francs more among the publishers, who will pay you for reviews and prospectuses. But you are with me, aren't you? I can rely on you?"

Lucien pressed Finot's hand in an outburst of unspeakable joy.

"Let us not seem to have come to any understanding," Finot whispered to him, as he opened the door of an attic room at the end of a long corridor on the fifth floor of the building.

Lucien discovered Lousteau, Félicien Vernou, Hector Merlin and two other editors whom he did not know, sitting around a table covered with a green cloth, in front of a bright fire, on chairs of various patterns, smoking and laughing. The table was covered with papers; there was a genuine ink-stand filled with ink and a number of wretched pens, which were good enough for the editors, however. It was evident to the new journalist that that was where the great work was done.

"Messieurs," said Finot, "the object of this meeting is the installation in my stead and place of our dear Lousteau as editor-in-chief of the paper



which I am obliged to abandon. But although my opinions must necessarily undergo a transformation in order that I may become editor-in-chief of the review whose intended course is known to you, my convictions are unchanged and we remain friends. I am entirely at your service as you will be at mine. Circumstances change, but principles are fixed. Principles are the pivot upon which the needle of the political barometer turns."

All the editors roared with laughter.

"Who supplied you with those periods?" queried Lousteau.

"Blondet," Finot replied.

"Rain, wind, hurricane, fair weather," said Merlin, "we will face them all together."

"Let's not tangle ourselves up in metaphors," continued Finot; "all who have articles to bring me, will find me the same old Finot. Monsieur is one of you," he said, presenting Lucien. "I have made a bargain with him, Lousteau."

They all congratulated Finot on his elevation and his brighter prospects.

"Well, you're astride of us and the others too," said one of the editors Lucien did not know; "you're becoming a sort of Janus—"

"God grant he isn't a Janot," said Vernou.

"Can we all attack our own *bêtes noires*?"

"As sharply as you choose!" said Finot.

"Of course," said Lousteau, "the paper can't retract. Monsieur Châtelet is angry; we're not going to let him alone for a week."

“What has happened?” said Lucien.

“He came to demand satisfaction,” said Vernou. “The ex-beau of the Empire found Père Giroudeau, who, with most admirable presence of mind, named Philippe Bridau as the author of the article, and Philippe at once requested the baron to name a time and choose his weapons. The affair has gone no farther. We are engaged now in preparing an apology to the baron for to-morrow’s number. Every line is a dagger thrust.”

“Bite him hard and he will look me up,” said Finot. “I shall make a show of doing him a service by appeasing you; he is connected with the ministry and in that way we may hook something there—an assistant professorship or a tobacco agency. It’s very lucky for us that he felt the sting. Which of you wants to write a good strong article on Nathan for my new paper?”

“Give it to Lucien,” said Lousteau. “Hector and Vernou will furnish articles for their own papers.”

“Adieu, messieurs, ‘*we shall meet tête-à-tête at Barbin’s!*’” said Finot laughing.

Lucien received some congratulations on his admission to the redoubtable corps of journalists, and Lousteau presented him as a man to be relied upon.

“Lucien invites you in a body, messieurs, to sup with his mistress, the fair Coralie.”

“Coralie is going to the Gymnase,” said Lucien to Etienne.

“Well, messieurs, it’s understood that we are to push Coralie, eh? Put a few lines about her new engagement in all of your papers, and speak of her talent. You can give the management of the Gymnase credit for tact and good judgment; can we give it credit for intelligence?”

“We can give it credit for intelligence,” Merlin replied; “Frédéric has a play there with Scribe.”

“Oho! then the manager of the Gymnase is the most far-sighted and perspicacious of speculators,” said Vernou.

“By the way, don’t write reviews of Nathan’s books until we have talked it over,” said Lous-teau; “you shall know why. We must help along our new comrade. Lucien has two books to dispose of, a collection of sonnets and a novel. By virtue of the short paragraph, we must make him a great poet in three months. We will use his *Marguerites* to keep down the odes, ballads, meditations, all the romantic style of poetry.”

“That would be very amusing if the sonnets were good for nothing,” said Vernou. “What do you think of your sonnets yourself, Lucien?”

“Yes, what do you think of them?” said one of the editors who were strangers to him.

“They are very good, messieurs,” said Lous-teau, “on my word of honor.”

“Very well, I’m satisfied,” said Vernou: “I’ll throw them between the legs of these sacristy poets, who bore me to death.”

“If Dauriat doesn’t take the *Marguerites* to-

night, we will get even with him by article after article against Nathan."

"And what will Nathan say?" cried Lucien.

The five editors roared with laughter.

"He will be delighted," said Vernou. "You'll see how we'll arrange matters."

"So monsieur is one of us?" said one of the two editors whom Lucien did not know.

"Yes, yes, Frédéric, no nonsense. You see how we treat you, Lucien," said Étienne to the neophyte, "and you won't fail us when the time comes. We all love Nathan and we are going to attack him. Now, let us parcel out Alexander's empire—Frédéric, will you take the Français and the Odéon?"

"If these gentlemen agree," said Frédéric.

All bowed, but Lucien detected some envious glances.

"I will keep the Opéra, the Italiens and the Opéra-Comique," said Vernou.

"Very good, and Hector will take the vaudeville theatres," said Lousteau.

"And am I to have no theatres at all?" cried the other editor whom Lucien did not know.

"Oh! Hector will let you have the Variétés, and Lucien the Porte-Saint-Martin," said Étienne. "Give him the Porte-Saint-Martin, he's mad over Fanny Beaupré," he said to Lucien; "you can take the Cirque-Olympique in exchange. I shall have Bobino, the Funambules and Madame Saqui. What have we ready for the paper to-morrow?"

“ Nothing.”

“ Nothing ? ”

“ Nothing ! ”

“ Be brilliant, messieurs, for my first number. The Baron du Châtelet and his cuttle-fish won't last a week. The author of *Le Solitaire* is played out.”

“ *Sosthène-Démosthène* has ceased to be amusing,” said Vernou ; “ everybody has copied it from us.”

“ We need some new deaths,” said Frédéric.

“ Suppose we poke fun at the virtuous gentlemen of the Right ? ” cried Lousteau. “ Suppose we should say that Monsieur Bonald doesn't keep himself clean ? ”

“ Let's begin a series of portraits of the ministerial orators,” suggested Hector Merlin.

“ Do that, my boy,” said Lousteau ; “ you know them, they're of your party and you can satisfy any deep-seated grudges you may have. Lay hold of Beugnot, Syriéys de Mayrinhac and others. The articles can be ready in advance and we shan't need to worry about the paper.”

“ Suppose we should invent a case of refusal of Christian burial under more or less aggravated circumstances ? ” said Hector.

“ Let's not poach on the preserves of the great constitutional papers, which have their *cartons aux curés* full of *canards*,” said Vernou.

“ *Canards* ? ” queried Lucien.

“ We call a *canard*,” said Hector, “ a statement

which has an appearance of truth, but which is invented to give life to the Paris news when it is dull. The *canard* is a find of Franklin, who invented the lightning-rod, the *canard* and the republic. That famous journalist hoodwinked the encyclopædists so thoroughly by his *canards* from across the water, that Raynal, in his *Histoire Philosophique des Indes*, gives two of them as authentic facts."

"I didn't know that," said Vernou. "Which two are they?"

"The story of the Englishman who sold his rescuer, a negress, after having a child by her, in order to make all the money he could out of her. The second is the sublime appeal of the pregnant young woman who won her case. When Franklin came to Paris, he admitted his *canards* in Necker's salon to the great confusion of the French philosophers. And that is how the new world has twice corrupted the old."

"The newspaper assumes the truth of everything that seems probable," said Lousteau. "That is our starting-point."

"The criminal courts act on the same theory," said Vernou.

"Well, we will meet here at nine o'clock this evening," said Merlin.

They rose and shook hands, and the session came to an end amid most touching demonstrations of good-fellowship.

"What did you do to Finot, that he has made a

contract with you ? ” Étienne asked Lucien as they went down the stairs. “ You are the only one with whom he ever did such a thing. ”

“ What did I do ? Nothing. He proposed it to mé, ” said Lucien. ’

“ However, I am delighted if you have a definite arrangement with him ; we shall both be the stronger for it. ”

On the ground floor they found Finot, who took Lousteau aside into the ostensible editorial office.

“ Sign your agreement so that the new manager will think it was done yesterday, ” said Giroudeau to Lucien, handing him two stamped papers.

As he was reading over the agreement, Lucien heard an animated discussion between Finot and Lousteau, concerning the miscellaneous receipts of the paper, which were collected by Giroudeau. Étienne insisted upon having his share. They undoubtedly compromised the matter, for they came out upon the best of terms.

“ At Dauriat’s, in the wooden galleries, at eight o’clock, ” said Étienne to Lucien.

At that moment a young man applied for a position as editor, with the same timid, anxious manner Lucien had formerly exhibited. Lucien took a secret delight in hearing Giroudeau mystify the neophyte with the same jocose remarks with which he had pulled the wool over his eyes ; his interests made it easy for him now to understand the necessity of this manœuvring, which placed an

almost insurmountable barrier between would-be editors and the attic-room, to which only the elect were admitted.

“There’s none too much money for the editors now,” he remarked to Giroudeau.

“If there were more of you, each one would have so much less,” rejoined the captain. “And then?”

The old fellow swung his leaded cane and went out *broum-brouming*; he seemed dumfounded when he saw Lucien enter the handsome equipage that was standing on the boulevard.

“You are the soldiers now and we’re the civilians,” said the soldier to Lucien.

“Upon my word, those young men seem to me to be the best fellows in the world,” Lucien said to Coralie. “Here I am a journalist, with a certainty of earning six hundred francs a month by working like a horse; but I shall dispose of my two books, and I will write others, for my friends are going to arrange to make them a success! And so I say with you, Coralie: ‘Come what may!’”

“You will succeed, my dear; but don’t be as good-natured as you are handsome, or you will ruin yourself. Be churlish with men, that is the best way.”

Coralie and Lucien went to drive in the Bois de Boulogne, and again they met the Marquise d’Espard, Madame de Bargeton and the Baron du Chatelet. Madame de Bargeton looked at Lucien with a winning smile that might have been taken



for a salutation. Camusot had ordered the best dinner that money could buy. Coralie, knowing that she was rid of him, was so charming to the old fellow that he could not remember having seen her so gracious and attractive during the fourteen months of their liaison.

"Yes," he said to himself, "I'll stay with her, *no matter what happens!*"

He proposed to Coralie secretly to give her six thousand a year in the Funds, which his wife need know nothing about, if she would continue to be his mistress, and agreed to close his eyes to her intimacy with Lucien.

"What! be false to such an angel as he is! Why, just look at him, you poor fool, and then look at yourself!" she said, pointing to the poet, whom Camusot had plied with wine until he was slightly tipsy.

Camusot determined to wait until poverty should give him back the woman whom poverty had already driven to his arms once.

"Then I will be only your friend," he said, kissing her on the forehead.

Lucien left Coralie and Camusot to go to the wooden galleries. What a change his initiation into the mysteries of journalism had wrought in his mind! He mingled fearlessly with the crowd that flowed back and forth through the galleries, he adopted an impertinent manner because he had a mistress, he entered Dauriat's shop with a jaunty air because he was a journalist. He found a great

crowd there; he shook hands with Blondet, Nathan, Finot, with all the literary men he had been fraternizing with for a week past; he fancied himself a personage of note and flattered himself that he should surpass his comrades; the wine that he had taken warmed his blood and served him admirably; he was bright and witty, and showed that he could be "hail fellow well met." Nevertheless he did not receive the approbation, spoken or unspoken, that he anticipated; he detected the first symptoms of jealousy among these men, who were less anxious, perhaps, than curious to know what place the latest superior genius would take, and what share he would absorb in the general division of the profits of the press. Finot, who looked upon Lucien as a mine to be worked, and Lousteau, who thought that he had some claims upon him, were the only ones to greet the poet with a smiling face. Lousteau, who had already assumed the manners of an editor-in-chief, knocked loudly on the door of Dauriat's office.

"In a moment, my friend," said the publisher, looking out at him over the green curtains.

The moment lasted an hour, at the end of which time Lucien and his friend entered the sanctum.

"Well, have you thought over our friend's affair?" said the new editor-in-chief.

"To be sure," said Dauriat, leaning back like a sultan in his armchair. "I have run through the collection, and I have had the sonnets read by a man of taste, and a good judge, for I don't pretend

to any knowledge of such things. I, my friend, buy glory ready made, as the Englishman bought love. You are as great a poet as you are handsome, my boy," he continued. "On the word of an honest man—I don't say publisher, you will observe—your sonnets are magnificent; they haven't the flavor of hard work, which is quite natural when one has inspiration and enthusiasm. You know how to rhyme, too, which is one of the qualities of the new school. Your *Marguerites* will make a beautiful book, but there's no profit in them, and I don't go into anything but extensive undertakings. As a matter of conscience, I can't take your sonnets; it would be impossible for me to push them; there would not be profit enough to pay for the expense of purchasing success. Moreover, you won't continue to write poetry, your book is an isolated book. You are young, young man! You bring me the everlasting collection of verses that all youths of a literary turn write when they leave college; they think the world of them at first, but laugh at them later. Your friend Lousteau must have poems hidden away in his old stockings. Haven't you a poem you believed in once, Lousteau?" said Dauriat, with a sly glance at Étienne.

"Eh! how could I write prose?" Lousteau replied.

"There, you see, and he has never mentioned it to me; but our friend knows something about the publishing trade and business generally," continued

Dauriat. "The question with me is not to find out whether you are a great poet," he added, seeking to cajole Lucien; "you have much, very much merit; if I were just starting in business I should make the mistake of publishing you. But in the first place, my partners and the people I borrow money from would cut off supplies; my losing twenty thousand francs last year was enough to make them refuse to listen to any suggestion of poetry, and they are my masters. Nevertheless, that isn't the whole question. Admitting that you are a great poet, will you be productive? Will you lay sonnets regularly? Will you grow to ten volumes? Will you become a profitable speculation? Why, no, you will write delightful prose; you have too much wit to spoil it with halting verses; you can earn thirty thousand francs a year in journalism, and you won't exchange it for the three thousand that you could make with great difficulty with your couplets, your strophes and other trash!"

"You know, I suppose, Dauriat, that monsieur is on our paper?" said Lousteau.

"Yes," said Dauriat, "I read his article; and it's for his own good, understand, that I refuse *Les Marguerites*! Yes, monsieur, in six months I shall have paid you more money for the reviews I shall ask you to write than you would ever get for your unsalable poetry!"

"And the reputation?" cried Lucien.

Dauriat and Lousteau began to laugh.

“ Bless me ! ” said Lousteau, “ how he hugs his illusions ! ”

“ Reputation, ” replied the former, “ means ten years of persistent work and a loss or gain of a hundred thousand francs for the publisher. If you find a madman to print your poems, you will have a high regard for me a year hence when you learn the result of his operations. ”

“ You have the manuscript here ? ” said Lucien coldly.

“ Here it is, my friend, ” replied Dauriat, whose manner toward him had already become perceptibly milder.

Lucien took the package without looking at the string, he felt so certain from Dauriat’s manner that he had read *Les Marguerites*. He left the office with Lousteau without a sign of displeasure or discouragement. Dauriat accompanied them into the shop, speaking of his own newspaper and Lousteau’s. Lucien was toying carelessly with the package of manuscript.

“ Do you believe that Dauriat read your sonnets or had them read ? ” said Étienne in his ear.

“ Yes. ”

“ Look at the seal. ”

Lucien saw that the thread and the ink line were in perfect conjunction.

“ Which sonnet did you notice particularly ? ” Lucien asked the publisher, turning pale with anger.

“ They are all remarkable, my friend, ” was the

reply, "but the one on the marguerite is delightful; it ends with a very delicate and well-turned thought. I divined from that the success your prose is sure to obtain. And so I recommended you instantly to Finot. Write reviews for us and we will pay you well. Think of glory, if you will, it's very fine, but don't forget hard cash and take whatever comes in your way. When you are rich you can write poetry."

The poet went out abruptly into the gallery, in order not to give vent to his wrath; he was furious.

"Well, well, my child," said Lousteau, following him out, "be calm, take men for what they are—instruments. Do you want to take your revenge?"

"At any price," said the poet.

"Here's a copy of Nathan's book that Dauriat just gave me; the second edition appears to-morrow. Take the book and read it over, and then write a review that will demolish it. Félicien Vernou can't endure Nathan because he thinks that his success will impair the future success of his own book. One of the manias of such petty minds as his is to imagine that there isn't room under the sun for two successful men. So he will give your review a place in the great paper that employs him."

"But what can I say against the book? It's magnificent," cried Lucien.

"Come, my dear fellow, you must learn your

trade," laughed Lousteau. "The book must become, under your pen, the stupidest trash, a dangerous, unhealthy work, even if it were a genuine masterpiece."

"But how?"

"You must change the beauties to defects."

"I am incapable of such an exploit."

"A journalist, my dear fellow, is an acrobat, and you must accustom yourself to the inconveniences of the trade. I'm a good-natured fellow, and I'll tell you how you must proceed under such circumstances. Attention, my boy! You must begin by praising the book, and in that part of your article you can amuse yourself by saying what you really think of it. The public will say: 'This critic is not jealous, he will certainly be impartial.' After that they will look upon whatever you say as said conscientiously. After you have thus won the reader's esteem, you will regret the necessity of blaming the system into which such books seem likely to lead French literature. 'Does not France,' you will say, 'govern the intellect of the whole world? Century after century, down to this day, French writers have held Europe to the path of analysis, of philosophic scrutiny, by the power of style and by the original form they have imparted to ideas.' At that point you can insert, for the benefit of the bourgeois reader, a eulogy of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Montesquieu or Buffon. You can go on to explain how pitiless the French language is, that it is varnish spread upon thought.

You can indulge in an axiom or two, such as : ‘ In France a great writer is always a great man, he is compelled by the language to think constantly ; it is not so in other countries,’ etc. You can prove your assertion by comparing Rabener, a satirical German moralist, with La Bruyère. There’s nothing that fixes a critic’s position so thoroughly as to talk about an unknown foreign author. Kant is the pedestal of Cousin. Once upon that ground, you invent an expression that will summarize and make clear to fools the system of our men of genius of the last century, and call their literature a *literature of ideas*. Armed with that expression you throw all the illustrious dead at the heads of living authors. You explain that, in our day, a new variety of literature has sprung into being, in which too much use is made of dialogue—simplest of literary forms—and of descriptions which dispense with the necessity of thinking. You contrast the solid, incisive novels of Voltaire, Diderot, Sterne and Le Sage, with the modern novel in which everything is expressed by images, and which Walter Scott has *dramatized* overmuch. In such works there is no room for anyone but the inventor. ‘ Walter Scott’s style of novel is a fashion, not a system,’ you say. Then you proceed to crush that deplorable fashion, in which ideas are spun out and passed through the rolling-mill—a fashion within the reach of the meanest minds, in which everyone can become an author cheap, a fashion which you can call the *literature of images*. Then you must turn the



argument against Nathan, proving that he is an imitator and has simply the appearance of talent. His book is lacking in the grand concise style of the 18th century, and the author has substituted events for sentiments. Movement is not life, pictures are not ideas! Discharge a few such sentences as those; the public echoes them. And so, notwithstanding the merit of the work, it seems fatal and dangerous to you, for it opens the doors of the temple of Glory to the common herd; and you can call attention to an army of petty scribblers in the distance, eager to imitate that easily constructed form of literary work. At that point, you can indulge in noisy lamentations upon the deterioration of taste and slip in a word of praise for Messieurs Étienne, Jouy, Tissot, Gosse, Duval, Jay, Benjamin Constant, Aignan, Baour-Lormian, Villemain, the coryphées of the Napoléonic liberal party, under whose auspices Vernou's paper is published. You can point to that glorious phalanx resisting the invasion of the romanticists, holding firm for ideas and style against images and idle chatter, continuing the Voltairean school and opposing the English and German schools, just as the seventeen orators of the Left are fighting for the nation against the ultras of the Right. Sheltered by those names, which are revered by the immense majority of Frenchmen who will always be on the side of the opposition of the Left, you can trample upon Nathan, whose work, although containing many points of superior excellence, confers the right of citizenship in France

upon a literature devoid of ideas. After that it will no longer be a question of Nathan and his book, do you see? but of the glory of France. The duty of honest and courageous pens is to oppose zealously these foreign importations. That flatters the subscriber. In your view, France is a shrewd gossip, not easily taken by surprise. Although the publisher has, by methods you will not discuss, filched a triumph for the book, the real public will soon correct the mistakes made by the five hundred idiots who compose its vanguard. You can say that, after he has had the good fortune to dispose of one edition of the book, the publisher is very bold to print a second edition, and express your regret that so shrewd a publisher has so little acquaintance with the instincts of the French people. Here is your stock in trade. Season these arguments with wit, give piquancy to them with a little dash of vinegar, and Dauriat is cooked in the stove of reviews. But don't forget to close in a tone of compassion for the error of Nathan, to whom, if he abandons his present course, contemporaneous literature will be indebted for works of the greatest merit."

Lucien was stupefied by Lousteau's harangue; the journalist's words caused the scales to fall from his eyes, and he discovered literary truths that he had never even suspected.

"What you say," he cried, "is full of truth and commonsense."

"Without it, could you make an attack on Na-

than's book?" rejoined Lousteau. "That, my boy, is the first form of review used to demolish a work. It is the pickaxe of criticism. But there are many other formulas! you will learn them in time. When you are absolutely obliged to speak of a man you do not like—sometimes the proprietor or editor-in-chief of a newspaper has his hand forced—you resort to the negative statements of what we call an *article de fonds*. You put at the head of the article the title of the book you are expected to criticise; you begin with some general remarks in which you can talk about the Greeks and Romans, and then you say at the end: 'These considerations bring us to Monsieur So-and-So's book, which will be the subject of a second article.' And the second article never appears. Thus the book is stifled between two promises. In this case your article is not directed against Nathan but against Dauriat, so you must use the pickaxe. The pickaxe does no harm to a good book, but it pierces to the heart of a bad book: in the first case it wounds nobody but the publisher, and, in the second it renders the public a service. These forms of literary criticism are also employed in political criticism."

Étienne's cruel lesson opened many new compartments in Lucien's imagination and he began to have an admirably clear understanding of the business.

"Let us go to the office," said Lousteau; "we shall find our friends there and we'll agree upon a

concerted movement against Nathan ; you'll see how it will make them laugh."

When they reached Rue Saint-Fiacre, they went up together to the attic where the paper was made up, and Lucien was no less surprised than overjoyed to see the delight with which his comrades agreed to demolish Nathan's book. Hector Merlin took a sheet of paper and wrote these lines, which he carried off at once to his paper :

*A second edition of Monsieur Nathan's book is announced. We had intended to keep silent concerning that work, but this symptom of its success compels us to publish an article, not so much upon the book itself as upon the tendency of the younger literary school.*

At the head of the humorous items in the next morning's number, Lousteau placed this paragraph :

*\*\* Dauriat is to publish a second edition of Monsieur Nathan's book. Has he not yet learned the axiom of the Law Courts : NON BIS IN IDEM ? All honor to the brave unfortunate !*

\*

Étienne's words had been like a lighted torch to Lucien, whose desire to be revenged upon Dauriat took the place of conscience and inspiration. Three days later, having passed all the intervening time in Coralie's bedroom working in front of the fire, waited upon by Bérénice and caressed in his moments of weariness by the watchful and silent Coralie, Lucien put in shape a critical article of about three columns, in which he rose to a surprising height. He hurried to the office of the paper; it was nine o'clock at night and he found the editors there and read them the result of his labors. He was listened to most attentively. Félicien did not say a word but took the manuscript and rushed down the stairs.

“What's the matter with him?” cried Lucien.

“He has taken your article to the printing office!” said Hector Merlin; “it's a masterpiece, and there's not a word to be cut out or a line to be added.”

“I only had to show you the road!” said Lousseau.

“I would like to see Nathan's expression tomorrow when he reads that,” observed another

editor, whose face gave evidence of his blissful satisfaction.

"It's best to be your friend," said Merlin.

"Is it really good?" asked Lucien eagerly.

"It will make Blondet and Vignon ill," said Lousteau.

"Here's a short article," continued Lucien, "that I scratched off for you, and if it's successful, it might be the first of a series of similar sketches."

"Read it to us," said Lousteau.

Thereupon Lucien read one of the charming articles which made the fortune of that small paper, and in which, in two columns, he described some one of the trifling details of Parisian life, a figure, a type, an everyday occurrence, or some striking peculiarity. This specimen, entitled *Les Passants de Paris*, was written in the novel, original style in which the thought resulted from the contact of the words, in which the jingling of adverbs and adjectives attracted the attention. It was as different from the serious and profound article upon Nathan as Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* from his *Esprit des Lois*.

"You're a born journalist," said Lousteau. "That will go in to-morrow; write as many of them as you choose."

"By the way," said Merlin, "Dauriat is in a rage over the two shells we have exploded in his magazine. I have just come from his place; he is breathing fire and slaughter and he's furious with Finot, who told him that he'd sold you his paper.

I took him aside and whispered these words in his ear: ‘*Les Marguerites* will cost you dear! A man of talent comes to you and you turn him away when we receive him with open arms!’ ”

“Dauriat will be crushed by the article we have just heard,” said Lousteau to Lucien. “You see what newspapers are, my boy! But your vengeance is progressing! Baron Châtelet came here this morning and asked for your address; there was a bloodthirsty article about him in this morning’s paper and the ex-beau has a weak head; he’s in despair. Haven’t you seen the paper? the article is very amusing. It’s the *Funeral of the Heron mourned by the Cuttlefish*. Madame de Bargeton is now known as the *Cuttlefish* in society, and Châtelet is called by no other name than *Baron Héron*.”

Lucien took the paper and could not repress a smile as he read that little chef-d’œuvre of satire from the pen of Vernou.

“They’re about to surrender,” said Merlin.

Lucien took part in high good-humor in the exchange of *bons mots* and shafts of wit with which they completed their labors,—smoking and talking, describing the events of the day, discussing the amusing peculiarities of their fellows or giving some new details concerning their characters. This eminently mocking, clever, ill-natured conversation made Lucien familiar with the morals and the personal characteristics of literary men.

“While they are setting up the paper,” said

Lousteau, "I will take you around and introduce you to the doorkeepers and behind the scenes of all the theatres to which you have free admission; then we'll join Florine and Coralie at the Panorama-Dramatique and have a little sport with them in their dressing-rooms."

Arm-in-arm they went from theatre to theatre, where Lucien was enthroned as dramatic editor, flattered by the managers and stared at by the actresses, all of whom knew the effect that a single article from his pen had produced upon the fortunes of Coralie and Florine, one of whom was engaged at the Gymnase at twelve thousand francs a year, the other at the Panorama at eight thousand. It was a succession of little ovations which increased Lucien's importance in his own eyes, and gave him the measure of his power. At eleven o'clock the two friends reached the Panorama-Dramatique, where Lucien adopted a jaunty air that had a marvellous effect. Nathan was there and offered his hand to Lucien, who took it and pressed it.

"So, my masters," he said, looking at Lousteau and Lucien, "you propose to bury me alive?"

"Wait until to-morrow, my dear fellow, and you'll see how Lucien has handled you! On my word, you will be satisfied. When criticism takes such a serious tone as that, a book gains by it."

Lucien was red with shame.

"Is it harsh?" asked Nathan.

"It's very grave," said Lousteau.

"Then there will be no harm done, will there?"



said Nathan. "Hector Merlin told me in the lobby of the Vaudeville that I was flayed alive."

"Let him talk and wait till you read it," cried Lucien, escaping into Coralie's dressing-room, following the actress, who just then ran off the stage in her bewitching costume.

The next morning, as Lucien was breakfasting with Coralie, he heard a cabriolet, whose wheels, in the unfrequented street, made a sharp, clear sound that denoted an equipage of expensive build, while the horse's easy gait and manner of stopping betrayed the thoroughbred. Lucien went to the window and saw Dauriat's magnificent English horse, and Dauriat himself handing the reins to his groom before alighting.

"It's the publisher," he exclaimed.

"Let him wait," said Coralie instantly, to Bérénice.

Lucien smiled at the presence of mind of the girl who had identified herself so entirely with his interests. She went to him and kissed him with an effusion of genuine feeling: she had had a happy thought.

The prompt appearance of the insolent publisher, the sudden self-abasement of the prince of charlatans, are attributable to certain circumstances almost entirely forgotten, the publishing business has gone through such a violent transformation in the last fifteen years. From 1816 to 1827, the date at which book-stalls, at first established as newspaper reading-rooms, under-

took to supply new books for their customers to read, for a small fee, and at which the increased severity of the fiscal laws as bearing upon the periodical press led to the invention of advertisements, publishers had no other means of announcing their publications than by articles inserted either in the *feuilleton* or in the body of the paper. As late as 1822, the French newspapers appeared in sheets of such meagre size that the great papers hardly exceeded the dimensions of the small papers of the present day. Dauriat and Ladvoat were the first publishers who, to escape the tyranny of newspaper managers, invented posters, with which they caught the attention of Paris, displaying fanciful figures, strange schemes of color, vignettes and, at a later period, lithographs, which made the poster a poem to the eyes and often a deception and a snare to the purses of book-lovers. The posters became so original in design that one of the maniacs known as *collectors* possesses a complete collection of those exhibited in Paris. This form of announcement, at first restricted to shop windows and to the stalls on the boulevards, but eventually extended over the whole of France, was abandoned for the advertisement. Nevertheless the poster, which attracts the eye when the advertisement and often the work itself are forgotten, will always endure, especially since the method of painting them upon blank walls was invented. The advertisement, accessible to all

who can pay for it, which has converted the fourth page of our newspapers into a field as fertile for the revenue as for the speculators, was born as a result of the rigors of the Stamp Office, the Post Office and of the large sums required to be deposited as security. These restrictions, invented in the time of Monsieur de Vellèle, who might have destroyed all the newspapers by vulgarizing them, formed them into a sort of privileged class by making the foundation of a newspaper almost impossible. In 1821, therefore, the newspapers had the right of life and death over the conceptions of the mind and over the undertakings of publishers. A notice of a few lines in the Paris items brought a tremendously high price. Intriguing was carried to such a point in the editorial offices, and in the evening on the battlefield of the printing offices, at the hour when the making up of the paper decided the question whether such and such a notice should be accepted or rejected, that the wealthy publishing houses all had a man of letters in their pay to prepare these brief articles in which it was essential to express many ideas in few words. These obscure journalists, who were not paid until their articles were actually inserted, often remained through the night at the printing office to see safely through the press the few lines, which afterwards came to be called *réclames*, or it might be longer articles, obtained God knows how! To-day the customs of literature and the publishing trade have changed so entirely that many people

would put aside as fables the tremendous efforts, the bribes, the knavery, the intrigues which the necessity of obtaining these *réclames* suggested to publishers, authors, the martyrs to glory and all the galley slaves doomed to success in perpetuity. Dinners, presents, cajolery of all sorts were resorted to with journalists. The following anecdote will explain better than all the assertions in the world, the close alliance between the critic and the publisher :

A man of great talent, aspiring to become a statesman, and at this time young and gallant, was the editor of a great newspaper, and as such received the homage of a famous publishing firm. One day—it was a Sunday—when the wealthy publisher was entertaining the editors of the leading papers at his country-house, the mistress of the house, then young and pretty, took the illustrious writer to walk in the park. The head clerk, a cold, serious-minded, methodical German, was walking there, arm-in-arm with a writer of *feuilletons*, talking of an enterprise as to which he wished his advice, and thinking only of business; deep in conversation they strolled beyond the park into the forest. Suddenly the German saw in a clump of bushes, somebody who resembled his employer's wife; he looked again through his eyeglass, motioned to the young editor to say nothing and to go away, and cautiously retraced his steps.

“What did you see?” the editor asked him.

“Almost nothing,” he replied. “But our long

article is accepted. We shall have at least three columns in the *Débats* to-morrow."

Another fact will further illustrate this power of the press :

A book by Monsieur de Chateaubriand on the last of the Stuarts was relegated to the back shelves of a certain bookshop as a *rossignol*. A single article written by a young man in the *Journal des Débats* sold the whole edition in a week. At a time when you could not hire a book you wished to read, but must buy it, ten thousand copies were sold of certain liberal works which were highly praised by all the organs of the opposition ; then, too, Belgian infringement did not yet exist.

The preliminary attacks of Lucien's friends and his own article had the effect of stopping the sale of Nathan's book. Nathan suffered only in his vanity ; he had nothing to lose, for he had been paid ; but Dauriat might lose thirty thousand francs. In brief, the business of publishing what were called *novelties* was summed up in this commercial theorem : a ream of white paper is worth fifteen francs, when covered with printing it is worth, according to its success or failure, a hundred sous or a hundred crowns. In those days, an article for or against often solved that financial problem. Therefore Dauriat, who had five hundred reams to sell, hurried to Lucien to arrange terms of capitulation. The publisher, late sultan, had become a slave. After he had waited some

time, complaining and parleying loudly with Bérénice, he was admitted to speak with Lucien. The haughty publisher assumed the smiling air of courtiers when they enter the presence, mingled with self-assurance and affability.

“Don’t disturb yourself, my dear loves!” he said. “How sweet the two little turtle-doves are! you seem to me exactly like two doves! Who would say, mademoiselle, that this young man, who looks like a girl, is a tiger with claws of steel who tears away a man’s reputation as he probably tears your *peignoir* when you are slow about taking it off?”

And he began to laugh without finishing his jest.

“My boy,” he continued, taking a seat beside Lucien— “Mademoiselle, I am Dauriat,” he said, interrupting himself.

He deemed it necessary to discharge his name like a pistol shot, as it seemed to him that Coralie’s greeting was none too warm.

“Have you breakfasted, monsieur? Will you join us?” said the actress.

“Why, yes, we can talk more comfortably at table,” said Dauriat. “Moreover, by accepting your invitation to breakfast I shall be entitled to ask you to dinner with my friend Lucien, for we are to be as close friends now as the glove and the hand.”

“Bérénice! oysters, lemons, fresh butter and champagne,” said Coralie.

"You are too bright a man not to know what brings me here," said Dauriat, turning to Lucien.

"You have come to buy my collection of sonnets?"

"Precisely," Dauriat replied. "First of all, let us both lay aside our weapons."

He took from his pocket a handsome notecase, took out three notes of one thousand francs, put them on a plate and presented them to Lucien with a courtierlike air, saying:

"Is monsieur satisfied?"

"Yes," said the poet, who felt as if he were drowning in waves of beatitude at the sight of that unhopèd-for sum.

He restrained a mad longing to dance and sing; he believed in the Wonderful Lamp, in magicians; and lastly he believed in his own genius.

"So *Les Marguerites* are mine," said the publisher; "but you will never attack any of my publications?"

"*Les Marguerites* are yours; but I cannot bind my pen, it belongs to my friends, as theirs belong to me."

"But you have become one of my authors. All my authors are my friends. So of course you won't injure me in a business way without giving me warning of your attacks so that I can meet them."

"Agreed."

"To your renown!" said Dauriat, raising his glass.

"I see that you have read *Les Marguerites*," said Lucien.

Dauriat did not lose countenance.

"To buy your *Marguerites*, my boy, without knowing anything about them is the greatest flattery a publisher can venture to bestow. In six months you will be a great poet; you will have favorable reviews, for you are feared, so I shall have no trouble in selling your book. I am the same man to-day that I was four days ago; it isn't I that have changed but you; last week your sonnets were like cabbage-leaves in my eyes; to-day your position has made them *Messéniennes*."\*

"Oh! well," said Lucien, whom the sultanesque pleasure of having a beautiful mistress and his certainty of literary success combined to render jocose and charmingly impertinent, "if you haven't read my sonnets, I fancy you have read my review?"

"Oh! yes, my friend; otherwise, should I have come here in such hot haste? Unfortunately that terrible article is very fine. Ah! you have marvellous talent, my boy. Take my advice and make the most of the fashion," he said with an air of good-humor that concealed the profound impertinence of the word. "But have you seen the paper, have you read it yourself?"

"Not yet," said Lucien, "and it is the first important piece of prose I have published. But Hector will have sent it to me at Rue Charlot."

\*The title of a collection of patriotic poems by Casimir Delavigne.



M. DAURIAT TO LUCIEN

---

*"You have come to buy my collection of sonnets?"*

*"Precisely," Dauriat replied. "First of all, let us both lay aside our weapons."*

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Impressions of the 18th





M. DAURIAT TO LUCIEN

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*He took from his pocket a handsome notecase, took out three notes of one thousand francs, put them on a plate and presented them to Lucien with a courtier-like air, saying :*

*"Is monsieur satisfied?"*

M. DARRIAT TO LUCIEN

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"You have come to buy my collection of sonnets?"  
"Precisely," Darriat replied. "First of all, let us  
both lay aside our weapons."  
He took from his pocket a handsome notebook, took  
out three notes of one thousand francs, put them on a  
plate and presented them to Lucien with a courteous  
like air, saying:  
"Is monsieur satisfied?"







“Here, read it!” said Dauriat, imitating Talma in *Manlius*.

Lucien took the sheet but Coralie snatched it away from him.

“The first fruits of your pen are mine, you know,” she said with a laugh.

Dauriat was extremely flattering and courtier-like, for he feared Lucien; he invited him with Coralie to a grand dinner-party he was to give to newspaper men at the end of the week. He carried away the manuscript of *Les Marguerites*, telling *his* poet to come whenever he pleased to the wooden galleries and sign the contract, which was all drawn. Adhering to the royal airs by which he sought to impose upon superficial people, and to be looked upon as a Mæcenas rather than as a publisher, he left the three thousand francs without taking a receipt, refused with a gesture of indifference the one offered by Lucien, and took his leave after kissing Coralie’s hand.

“Well, my love, do you think you’d have seen many of these rags if you’d stayed in your hole on Rue de Cluny, mulling over your old books from the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève?” said Coralie to Lucien, who had told her the whole story of his life. “Do you know, your little friends of Rue des Quatre-Vents seem to me to be great idiots!”

His friends of the club were idiots! and Lucien laughed when he heard them called by that name! He had read his article in print, he had tasted

the ineffable joy that authors feel, the first ecstatic thrill of vanity, that never caresses the mind but once. After reading and rereading his article, he appreciated better its full scope and bearing. Printing is to manuscript what the stage is to women; it brings out its beauties and its defects; it kills as well as gives life; false reasoning catches the eye as quickly as the most noble thoughts. Lucien in his intoxication did not think of Nathan, for Nathan was simply his stepping-stone; he was swimming in a sea of joy and imagined himself already rich. To a child who but yesterday descended modestly the Beaulieu steps at Angoulême, returning to L'Houmeau to Postel's attic, where he and his whole family lived on twelve hundred francs a year, the sum brought by Dauriat was a veritable Potosi. A fleeting memory, still very vivid, but destined to be blotted out by the constant dissipation of Parisian life, carried him back to Place du Mûrier. He saw once more his noble, beautiful Ève, his brother David and his poor mother. He sent Bérénice out at once to change a note and, during her absence, wrote a short note to his family; then he despatched Bérénice to the express office, fearing that, if he delayed, it would be too late to send five hundred francs to his mother on that day. To Coralie and himself that partial restitution seemed a praiseworthy action. The actress kissed him and thought him a model son and brother; she overwhelmed him with caresses, for such traits of character delight girls

of her stamp, all of whom carry their heart in their hand.

“Now we have enough to buy dinner every day for a week,” she said, “and we will have a little carnival, you have worked enough.”

Coralie, as if determined to enjoy to the full the beauty of a man whom all other women would envy her, carried him off to Staub, for she thought he was not properly dressed. From there the lovers went to the Bois de Boulogne and returned to dine with Madame du Val-Noble, where they found Rastignac, Bixiou, Des Lupeaulx, Finot, Blondet, Vignon, Baron de Nucingen, Beaudenord, Philippe Bridau, Conti the great musician and the whole circle of artists, speculators, people who seek to offset great labor with great emotions, all of whom welcomed Lucien most warmly. Lucien, sure of himself, gave free rein to his wit, as if it were not an article of commerce with him, and was proclaimed a *strong man*, a form of eulogy then much in vogue among those *demi-camarades*.

“Oh! we shall have to find out what he has in him,” said Théodore Gaillard to one of the poets patronized by the court, who was thinking of founding a small royalist newspaper, later known as *Le Réveil*.

After dinner the two journalists accompanied their mistresses to the Opéra, where Merlin had a box, and whither the whole party also betook themselves. Thus Lucien reappeared in triumph where, a few months before, he had made such a dismal

failure. He walked in the lobby arm-in-arm with Merlin and Blondet, looking the dandies in the face who had formerly put him out of countenance. He had Châtelet under his feet! De Marsay, Vandenesse, Manerville, the lions of that period, exchanged some insolent glances with him. Beyond question the elegant and comely Lucien was a subject of conversation in Madame d'Espard's box, where Rastignac made a long visit, for the marchioness and Madame de Bargeton turned their glasses upon Coralie. Did the sight of Lucien arouse a regretful thought in Madame de Bargeton's heart? As for the poet himself, when he saw the Corinne of Angoulême, his heart was stirred by a longing for revenge as on the day when he had felt the weight of her contempt and that of her cousin on the Champs-Élysées.

"Did you bring an amulet with you from your province?" said Blondet to Lucien some days later, as he entered the apartment of the poet, who was still in bed.—"His beauty," he said to Coralie, kissing her on the forehead, "is making ravages from cellar to garret, in high life and low life.—I have come to put you in requisition, my dear fellow," he continued, shaking hands with the poet: "last night, at the Italiens, Madame la Comtesse de Montcornet asked me to bring you to call upon her. You certainly won't refuse a young and charming woman, at whose house you will find the *élite* of the best society?"

"If Lucien is sensible," said Coralie, "he won't

go to your countess's. What need has he to trail his cravat about in society? He would be bored to death."

"Do you propose to keep him in close confinement?" queried Blondet. "Are you jealous of *comme il faut* women?"

"Yes," cried Coralie, "they're worse than we are."

"How do you know it, my little pet?" said Blondet.

"From their husbands," she replied. "You forget that I had De Marsay for six months."

"Do you imagine, my child, that I am very anxious to introduce so handsome a man as yours at Madame de Montcornet's? If you object to it, let us consider that I haven't mentioned it. But I fancy it's not so much a question of women as to obtain peace and compassion from Lucien for a poor devil, the target of his paper. The Baron du Châlet is fool enough to take newspaper articles seriously. The Marquise d'Espard, Madame de Bargeton and the Comtesse de Montcornet's salon are interested in the Heron, and I have promised to reconcile Laura and Petrarch, Madame de Bargeton and Lucien."

"Ah!" cried Lucien, whose veins seemed to receive an influx of fresher blood, and who felt the intoxicating joy of gratified vengeance, "so I have my feet on their breasts! You make me adore my pen, adore my friends, adore the deadly power of the press. I haven't yet written an article on the

Heron and the Cuttlefish. I will go, my boy," he said, putting his arm around Blondet's waist, "I will go, but not until that couple have felt the weight of this light little thing!"

He took the pen with which he had written the article on Nathan and waved it over his head.

"To-morrow I will throw two little columns at their heads. Then we'll see. Don't be alarmed, Coralie: there's no question here of love, but of revenge, and I propose that it shall be complete."

"There's a man for you!" exclaimed Blondet. "If you knew, Lucien, how rare a thing it is to hear such an explosion in the *blasé* society of Paris, you could appreciate yourself. You will be a proud rascal some day," he added, employing a somewhat more emphatic expression, "for you are on the path that leads to power."

"He will get there," said Coralie.

"He has made great progress already in six weeks."

"And when he is separated from some sceptre only by the thickness of a corpse, he can take Coralie's dead body for a stepping-stone."

"You love each other as they loved in the Golden Age," said Blondet. "I congratulate you on your great article," he continued, turning to Lucien, "it is full of new ideas. You are a past master in journalism."

Lousteau came with Hector Merlin and Vernou to see Lucien, who was prodigiously flattered by their attentions. Félicien brought him a hundred

francs for his article. The management of the paper had felt the necessity of paying well for work so well done, in order to hold the author. Coralie, seeing this influx of newspaper men, had sent to order breakfast at the *Cadran Bleu*, the nearest restaurant, and when Bérénice came and told her that all was ready, she invited them all to walk into her beautiful dining-room. In the middle of the repast, when the champagne had begun to have its due effect, the purpose of the visit of Lucien's comrades was disclosed.

"You don't want to make an enemy of Nathan, do you?" said Lousteau. "Nathan's a newspaper man himself, he has friends and he might play you an ugly trick when you publish your first book. Haven't you *L'Archer de Charles IX.* to sell? We saw Nathan this morning and he is desperate; but you must write another article and squirt praise into his face."

"What! after my article against his book?" asked Lucien.

Étienne Lousteau, Émile Blondet, Hector Merlin, and Félicien Vernou interrupted him with a simultaneous roar of laughter.

"You have invited him to supper for the day after to-morrow, haven't you?" Blondet asked Lucien. "Your article wasn't signed," said Lousteau. "Félicien, who isn't so green as you are, knew enough to put a C. at the end of it, and you can use that signature after this for your articles in his paper, which is pure Left We are all of the Op-

position. Félicien had the delicacy not to bind you so far as your future opinions are concerned. In Hector's paper, which is Right Centre, you can sign with an L. We are anonymous when we attack, but we sign our articles when we praise."

"The question of signatures doesn't disturb me," said Lucien; "but I don't see what there is to be said in the book's favor."

"Then you really thought what you wrote?" said Hector.

"Yes."

"Ah! my boy," said Blondet, "I thought you were more of a man! On my word of honor, when I looked at your brow, I gave you credit for omnipotence like that of the greatest writers, all so powerfully constituted as to be able to consider everything in its twofold form. In literature, my boy, everything has a right and a wrong side: no one can take it upon himself to say which is the wrong side. In the domain of thought, everything is bilateral. Ideas are composed of two parts. Janus is the myth of criticism and the symbol of genius. God alone is three-sided! What puts Molière and Corneille in a class by themselves, if not the power to make Alceste say *yes* and Philinte, Octave and Cinna, *no*? Rousseau, in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* wrote a letter for and a letter against duelling: would you dare undertake to determine his real opinion? Which of us could pass judgment between Clarissa and Lovelace, between Hector and Achilles? Which is Homer's hero?



What was Richardson's meaning? Criticism should consider works from every point of view. In a word, we are reporters on a large scale."

"So you stand by what you write, eh?" said Vernou ironically. "Why, we are dealers in phrases and we live by our trade. When you wish to produce a great and enduring work, a book, you can throw your thoughts and your soul into it, cling to it and defend it; but newspaper articles that are read to-day and forgotten to-morrow are worth just what you get for them and no more, to my mind. If you attach importance to such trash, then you will make the sign of the Cross and invoke the Holy Spirit when you write a prospectus!"

They were all amazed to find that Lucien had any conscientious scruples, and they tore his *prætexta* to rags in order to clothe him in the *toga virilis* of journalism.

"Do you know how Nathan consoled himself after reading your article?" said Lousteau.

"How should I know?"

"He cried: 'Petty newspaper articles pass from sight but great works remain!' That man will come here to supper two days hence; he must prostrate himself at your feet, kiss your spurs and tell you that you're a great man."

"That would be amusing," said Lucien.

"Amusing!" rejoined Blondet; "it's necessary."

"I am willing to do it, my friends," said Lucien,

who was a little tipsy, "but how shall I go to work?"

"Write for Merlin's paper three beautiful columns in which you refute your own arguments," said Lousteau. "After gloating over Nathan's frenzy, we told him that he would soon owe us thanks for the unanswerable polemic with whose aid his book would be sold in a week. At this moment you are, in his eyes, a spy, a cur, a rascal; the day after to-morrow you will be a great man, a mighty brain, a man worthy of Plutarch! Nathan will embrace you as his best friend. Dauriat has been here and you have three thousand-franc notes: the trick is played. Now, you must have Nathan's esteem and friendship. It is not necessary to attack anyone but the publisher. We must immolate and hunt down only our enemies. If it were a question of a man who had made a name without us, of an inconvenient genius whom our interests required us to crush, we should make no such rejoinder; but Nathan is one of our friends. Blondet induced somebody to attack him in the *Mercure*, to have the pleasure of replying in the *Débats*. In that way the first edition of the book was sold!"

"My friends, on my word as an honest man, I am incapable of writing two words in praise of that book——"

"You will get another hundred francs," said Merlin. "Nathan will bring you ten louis, to say nothing of an article you can write for Finot's re-

view, for which Dauriat will pay you a hundred francs and the review a hundred: total, twenty louis!"

"But what shall I say?" Lucien asked.

"This is the way to get out of the scrape, my boy," replied Blondet, collecting his thoughts. 'Envy, which attacks all great works, as the worm attacks the sound fruit, has tried to gnaw at this book,' you will say. 'In order to find defects in it, criticism has been compelled to invent theories concerning the book, and to distinguish two forms of literature: that which confines itself to ideas and that which deals principally in images.' Then, my boy, you will say that the superlative degree of literary art is to express the idea in the image. While endeavoring to prove that the image alone is poetic, you can complain of the lack of poesy in our language, refer to the criticisms of foreigners upon the *positivism* of our style, and praise Monsieur de Canalis and Nathan for the service they are rendering to France by making its language less prosaic. Overturn your former argument by pointing out that we are in advance of the 18th century. Invent the *progress* we have made—a superb opportunity to mystify the bourgeois! Our younger school of literature proceeds by pictures in which all styles are combined, comedy and melodrama, descriptions, characters, dialogue, connected by the ingenious knots of an interesting plot. The novel, which requires sentiment, style and imagery, is the most impor-

tant modern creation. It succeeds comedy which, with its antiquated laws, is no longer possible under modern customs. It embraces facts and ideas in its inventions, which demand both the wit of La Bruyère and his incisive morality; characters drawn as only Molière could draw them, the grand machinery of Shakespeare, and the delineation of the most delicate shades of passion—the only treasure our predecessors handed down to us. Therefore the novel is vastly superior to the cold, mathematical discussion, the dry analysis of the 18th century. ‘The novel,’ you may say sententiously, ‘is an amusing epic.’ Quote *Corinne*, lean upon Madame de Staël. The 18th century left all manner of questions unsettled, the 19th is in duty bound to settle them: and it proceeds to settle them by realities, but by realities which live and move; in a word, it brings in play passion, an element unknown to Voltaire. Tirade against Voltaire. ‘As for Rousseau, he did nothing but dress up arguments and systems. Julie and Claire are too spiritual, they have neither flesh nor bones.’ You can enlarge upon this theme and say that we owe to the peace and to the Bourbons a young and original literature, for you are writing for an organ of the Right Centre. Make sport of the makers of systems. Lastly, you can exclaim in a fine outburst of enthusiasm: ‘There are many errors and many falsehoods in our contemporary’s article! and for what purpose? to cry down a most excellent work, to deceive the public and to

reach this conclusion: A book that sells does not sell. *Proh pudor!*' Give them *Proh pudor!* that honest oath enlivens the reader. Remark upon the decadence of criticism. Conclusion: 'There is but one literature worthy of the name—that which produces entertaining books. Nathan has entered upon a new path, he understands his time and answers to its needs. The crying need of the time is drama. Drama is the longing of an age in which politics are a never-ending pantomime. Have we not seen in twenty years,' you will say, 'the four dramas of the Revolution, the Directory, the Empire and the Restoration?' From that you fall into dithyrambs of eulogy and the second edition is sold. Thus: next Saturday you will write a page in our review and sign it *De Rubempré* in full. In this latter article you will say: 'It is the natural fate of great works to cause full discussion. This week such-and-such a paper said so-and-so about Nathan's book, and such-and-such another paper replied with much vigor.' You will criticise the two critics, C. and L., you will pay me a little compliment apropos of my first article in the *Débats*, and you will end by asserting that Nathan's is the greatest book of the age. It will be as if you said nothing, for that is said about every book. You will have earned four hundred francs during the week, over and above the pleasure of having written the truth somewhere. Sensible people will agree either with C. or L. or De Rubempré, perhaps with all three! Mythology,

which is certainly one of the grandest of human inventions, placed Truth at the bottom of a well, and of course we need buckets to take her out; you will have given the public three for one. There you are, my boy. Now, go ahead."

Lucien was fairly bewildered. Blondet kissed him on both cheeks, saying:

"I am going to my shop."

They all departed to their respective shops. In the eyes of those men of genius, the newspaper office was no more than a shop. They were all to meet again in the evening at the wooden galleries, where Lucien was to sign his contract with Dauriat. Florine and Lousteau, Lucien and Coralie, Blondet and Finot dined at the Palais-Royal, where Du Bruel was entertaining the manager of the Panorama-Dramatique.

"They are right!" cried Lucien when he was alone with Coralie, "men should be simply instruments in the hands of superior minds. Four hundred francs for three articles! Doguereau was hardly willing to give me as much for a book that cost me two years' work."

"Be a critic," said Coralie, "enjoy yourself! Look at me; shall not I be in Andalusia to-night, to-morrow night dressed as a gypsy and some other night as a man? Do as I do; give them grimaces for their money, and let us enjoy life."

Lucien, much pleased with the paradox, set his mind astride of that capricious mule, the offspring

of Pegasus and Balaam's ass. He galloped through the fields of thought while they were driving in the Bois and discovered original beauties in Blondet's disquisition. He dined as happy men dine, and signed at Dauriat's a contract by the terms of which he conveyed to him absolutely the manuscript of *Les Marguerites*, detecting nothing contrary to his interest therein; then he looked in at the office of the paper, where he scribbled off two columns, and returned to Rue de Vendôme.

The next morning he found that the ideas of the night before had taken root in his brain; a usual occurrence in vigorous minds which have done but little work. Lucien felt a keen pleasure in meditating upon the new article he was to write and he set about the task with ardor. Under his pen the beauties of composition to which contradiction gives birth sprang up and blossomed. He was witty and satirical, he rose to the height of some entirely novel considerations concerning sentiment, concerning ideas and images in literature. Ingenious as he was and shrewd, he recalled, in order to praise Nathan, his first impressions of the book when he read it at the bookstall on the Cour du Commerce. From a bloodthirsty, venomous critic, from a comical satirist, he was transformed into a poet by a few concluding sentences which flowed from beneath his pen with a majestic swing, like a censor laden with perfume waving toward the altar.

"A hundred francs, Coralie!" he cried, pointing

to the eight sheets of paper he had covered while she was dressing.

Being in the mood, he dashed off the terrible article he had promised Blondet against Châtelet and Madame de Bargeton. During that morning he tasted one of the keenest secret pleasures of the journalist's life, that of sharpening the epigram, of polishing its cold blade, that is, to find its sheath in the victim's heart, and carving the handle for his readers. The public admires the clever work of his hand, it detects no malice therein, it knows not how the sharp steel of the *bon mot* thirsting for revenge is turned about in the thousand wounds of cunningly tortured self-esteem. This ghastly pleasure, sombre and solitary, enjoyed without witnesses, is like a duel with an absent antagonist, slain at a distance with the barrel of a quill, as if the journalist had the imaginary power attributed to the wishes of the possessors of talismans in Arabian tales. Epigram is the weapon of hatred, of the hatred that inherits all man's evil passions, just as love concentrates all his good qualities. Therefore there is no man who is not witty when he is wreaking vengeance, for the same reason that there is none to whom love does not give pleasure. Notwithstanding the commonness of this form of wit in France and the facility with which it is turned off, it is always well received. Lucien's article was well adapted to put, and did put, the finishing touch to his paper's reputation for malice and malevolence; it pierced two hearts, it griev-



ously wounded Madame de Bargeton, his ex-Laura, and the Baron du Châtelet, his rival.

“Come, let us go for a drive in the Bois; the horses are harnessed and stamping,” said Coralie; “you mustn’t kill yourself.”

“Let us take the article on Nathan to Hector. The newspaper is, in truth, like Achilles’ lance that cured the wounds it made,” said Lucien, as he corrected a few errors.

The lovers set out and exhibited themselves in their splendor to that Paris which, but yesterday, had turned its back upon Lucien, and which was now beginning to devote a great deal of attention to him. The idea that one has attracted the attention of Paris, when one has realized the immensity of the city and the difficulty of making one’s mark there, causes an intoxicating joy which turned Lucien’s head.

“My dear,” said the actress, “let us go to your tailor and hurry up your clothes, or try them on, if they’re ready. If you are going to call on those fine ladies, I propose that you shall wipe out that monster of a De Marsay, little Rastignac, Ajuda-Pinto, Maxime de Trailles, the Vandenesses, all the dandies, in fact. Remember that Coralie is your mistress! But don’t throw me over, will you?”



\*

Two days later, on the day before the supper to be given by Lucien and Coralie to their friends, the Ambigu presented a new play, which Lucien was to write up for his paper. After dinner, Lucien and Coralie went on foot from Rue de Vendôme to the Panorama-Dramatique, through Boulevard du Temple by the Café Turc, which in those days was a favorite promenade. Lucien overheard many remarks concerning his good fortune and his mistress's beauty. Some said that Coralie was the loveliest woman in Paris, others that Lucien was worthy of her. The poet felt that he was where he belonged. That life was his life. He scarcely thought of the club. He asked himself if those great minds he had admired so enthusiastically two months before were not a little foolish with their puritanical ideas. The word idiots, thoughtlessly uttered by Coralie, had taken root in Lucien's mind and was already bearing fruit.

He escorted Coralie to her dressing-room, sauntered through the wings with the air of a sultan, greeted by all the actresses with ardent glances and flattering words.

"I must go to the Ambigu and attend to my business," he said.

At the Ambigu, every seat was filled. There was no room for Lucien. He went into the wings and complained bitterly of having no seat reserved for him. The manager, who did not know him, told him that they had sent two boxes to his paper, and sent him about his business.

"I shall write of the play according to what I hear said about it," said Lucien in an injured tone.

"What a fool you are!" said the *jeune première* to the manager, "that's Coralie's lover!"

The manager instantly turned to Lucien and said:

"I will go and speak to the director, monsieur."

Thus the most trifling details all tended to confirm Lucien's impression of the great power of the press and to flatter his vanity.

The director appeared and obtained the consent of the Duc de Rhétoré and the dancer Tullia, who were in one of the proscenium boxes, to take Lucien in with them. The duke consented at once when he recognized Lucien.

"You have reduced two persons to despair," said the young man, referring to the Baron du Châtelet and Madame de Bargeton.

"What will happen to-morrow, then?" said Lucien. "Thus far my friends have been firing at them guerilla-fashion, but I open fire with red-hot bullets to-night. To-morrow you will see why we make sport of Potelet. The article is entitled:

*Potelet of 1811 to Potelet of 1821.* Châtelet is made the type of the men who denied their benefactor and went over to the Bourbons. After I have made them understand what I can do, I will go to Madame de Montcornet's."

Lucien and the young duke had a long conversation, sparkling with wit; he was anxious to prove to the great nobleman what a stupendous mistake Mesdames d'Espard and de Bargeton had made in looking down on him; but he showed his weakness by trying to establish his claims to bear the name of *Rubempre*, when the Duc de Rhétoré mischievously called him Chardon.

"You ought to become a royalist," said the duke. "You have shown yourself a man of intellect, now show yourself a man of sense. The only way to obtain a royal ordinance, giving you the name and title of your maternal ancestors is to ask it in return for services rendered to the court. The liberals will never make you a count! The Restoration government will end by putting down the press, the only power it has to fear. They have waited too long already, for it ought to be muzzled. Take advantage of its last moments of liberty to make yourself redoubtable. In a few years, a name and a title will be more reliable sources of wealth in France than talent. In that way, you can possess everything: intellect, nobility and beauty, and you can rise to any height. So do not be a liberal now except for the purpose of selling your royalism to good advantage."

The duke urged Lucien to accept the invitation to dinner he would shortly receive from the minister with whom he had supped at Florine's.

Lucien was instantly won over by the nobleman's arguments, and overjoyed to see opening before him the doors of salons from which, a few months before, he had thought that he was forever excluded. He admired the power of thought. The press and the intellect were then the power of modern society. Lucien understood why Lous-teau might regret having opened the gates of the temple to him ; he already felt on his own account the necessity of placing insurmountable obstacles in the way of the ambitious youths who rushed from the provinces to Paris. If a poet should come to him as he had thrown himself into Lous-teau's arms, he dared not ask himself what sort of a reception he would give him. The young duke saw that Lucien was absorbed in thought and made no mistake as to the cause of his absorption : he had laid bare to the ambitious youth, without fixed will but not without desire, the whole political horizon, just as the journalists had shown to him, from the summit of the Temple, as the devil showed to Jesus, the literary world and all its treasures. Lucien knew nothing of the little conspiracy set on foot against him by the people whom the paper was attacking at that moment, a conspiracy in which Monsieur de Rhétoré was implicated. The young duke had terrified Madame d'Espard's social circle by talking

of Lucien's intellectual powers. Having been requested by Madame de Bargeton to sound the journalist, he had hoped to meet him at the Ambigu-Comique. Neither society nor the journalists were very profound: do not expect any deep-laid treachery. On neither side was any plan arranged; their Machiavelism proceeds, so to speak, by daylight and consists in being always at hand, ready for anything, ready to take advantage of evil as well as good, watching for the moment when passion puts a man in their power. During the supper party at Florine's, the young duke had fathomed Lucien's character; he had just attacked him on the side of his vanity, trying his 'prentice hand as a diplomatist upon him.

Lucien, when the play was at an end, hurried to Rue Saint-Fiacre to write his criticism of it. It was studiously caustic and biting; it pleased him to try his power. The melodrama was stronger than the one at the Panorama-Dramatique; but he wished to know whether he could, as he had been told, slaughter a good play and make a bad one successful. The next day, as he was breakfasting with Coralie, he unfolded the paper, after telling her that he had made short work of the Ambigu-Comique. He was immeasurably astonished to read, after his article on Madame de Bargeton and Châtelet, a criticism of the play at the Ambigu, so toned down and sweetened during the night that, while his clever analysis of the plot was retained, the conclusion reached was favorable to the play itself. It

was said that it would fill the cash-box at the theatre. His rage was indescribable, and he made up his mind to say a word or two to Lousteau. He fancied that he was already necessary to the paper, and vowed that he would not allow himself to be domineered over and exploited like an idiot. To establish his power definitively, he wrote an article, in which he summarized and weighed the opinions put forth concerning Nathan's book, for Dau-riat and Finot's review. When that was done, he dashed off one of his *Varietes* articles for his own paper. In their first effervescence, young journalists delight in hatching out articles and in that way very imprudently display all their flowers.

The manager of the Panorama-Dramatique produced a new vaudeville in order to give Florine and Coralie an evening off. There was to be card-playing before supper. Lousteau came to get Lucien's article, written in advance upon the vaudeville in question, of which he had seen a dress rehearsal, so that he might have no uneasiness concerning the make-up of the paper. When Lucien had read him one of the charming little articles upon Parisian peculiarities which made the fortune of the paper, Étienne kissed him upon both cheeks and called him the providence of newspapers.

"In that case, why do you amuse yourself by changing the whole spirit of my articles?" said Lucien, who had written that brilliant sketch simply to give more force to his grievances.

"I?" cried Lousteau.



“ Well, who did change my article then ? ”

“ My dear fellow,” laughed Étienne, “ you are not yet familiar with affairs. The Ambigu takes twenty subscriptions, of which nine only are supplied to the manager, the leader of the orchestra, the acting manager and their mistresses, and the three proprietors of the theatre. Each of the boulevard theatres pays eight hundred francs to the paper, in that way, and Finot receives as much more in the value of the boxes given him, to say nothing of the subscriptions of authors and actors. So the rascal makes eight thousand francs a year on the boulevards. From the small theatres, judge of the large ones ! Do you understand ? We are bound to be very indulgent.”

“ I understand that I am not free to write what I think.”

“ Eh ! what do you care, if you feather your nest ? ” cried Lousteau. “ After all, my dear fellow, what grievance have you against the theatre ? You must have a reason for slaughtering last night’s play. To slaughter for the sake of slaughtering would be to bring the paper into bad repute, and when it struck a blow with good reason, it would produce no effect. Did the manager treat you ill ? ”

“ He reserved no seat for me.”

“ Good,” said Lousteau, “ I will show the manager your article and tell him that I have smoothed you down, and you’ll find that you are better off than if it had appeared. Ask him for tickets to

morrow, he'll sign forty in blank for you every month, and I'll take you to a man with whom you can make arrangements to dispose of them; he will buy them all at fifty per cent less than the regular prices. The same traffic is carried on in theatre tickets as in books. You will see another Barbet, the leader of a *claque*; he lives not far from here and we have time; come."

"But, my dear fellow, Finot carries on an infamous trade, levying indirect contributions thus on the domains of thought. Sooner or later—"

"Nonsense! where do you come from?" cried Lousteau. "For what do you take Finot? Beneath his false good-humor, beneath that Turcaret manner, beneath his ignorance and stupidity there is all the cunning of the dealer in hats whose offspring he is. Haven't you seen an old soldier of the Empire, Finot's uncle, in his cage at the office of the paper? That uncle is not only an honest man, but he has the good luck to be considered an idiot. He is the man who is known in all the pecuniary transactions. In Paris, an ambitious man is very lucky if he has with him a fellow-creature who is willing to be compromised. There are, in politics as in journalism, a multitude of cases in which the leaders must not be known. If Finot should become a political character, his uncle would become his secretary and would receive on his account the contributions that are levied in the departments in great emergencies. Giroudeau, whom at first sight you would take for a simpleton, has pre-

cisely enough cunning to be an undecipherable enigma. He is on guard to prevent one being bored to death by complaints, demands, would-be editors, and I don't think that any other paper has his equal."

"He plays his part well," said Lucien, "I have seen him at work."

Étienne and Lucien went as far as Rue du Faubourg-du-Temple, where the editor-in-chief stopped in front of a handsome house.

"Is Monsieur Braulard at home?" he asked the concierge.

"What's that? *monsieur*?" said Lucien. "So the leader of *claqueurs* is monsieur, is he?"

"My dear fellow, Braulard has an income of twenty thousand francs, he has his claws on the dramatic authors of the boulevard, all of whom have an account current with him as with a banker. Authors' tickets and complimentary tickets can be sold, and Braulard deals in that sort of merchandise. Let us do a little calculating, a science that is very useful when it isn't abused. Fifty complimentary tickets a day for each theatre make two hundred and fifty tickets a day; if they are worth forty sous each on an average, Braulard pays the authors a hundred and twenty-five francs a day and takes the chance of making that amount. Thus the authors' tickets alone bring him in four thousand francs a month or forty-eight thousand a year. Suppose he loses twenty thousand francs, for he can't always sell his tickets—"

“Why not?”

“Oh! the people who buy their seats at the office of the theatre stand on the same footing as those who have complimentary tickets which have no reserved seats. The theatre reserves the right of allotting seats. Then there are days when the weather is fine and there are bad plays. So Braulard makes perhaps thirty thousand francs a year in that way. Then he has his *claqueurs*, another branch of industry. Florine and Coralie pay him tribute; if they didn't subsidize him, they wouldn't be applauded whenever they come on or go off.”

Lousteau made this explanation in a low voice as they ascended the stairs.

“Paris is a strange place,” said Lucien, finding that self-interest was crouching in every corner.

A neat maid ushered the two journalists into Monsieur Braulard's apartments. The dealer in tickets, who was sitting in a study chair in front of a large cylindrical desk, rose when he saw Lousteau. He wore a frock-coat of gray swanskin, trousers with feet, and red slippers, exactly like a physician or solicitor. In him, Lucien saw the type of a newly rich man of the people: an ordinary face, cunning gray eyes, a *claqueur's* hands, a complexion over which debauchery had passed as rain passes over a roof, grizzled hair and a hoarse voice.

“You come, of course, for Mademoiselle Florine, and monsieur for Mademoiselle Coralie. I know you well. Never fear, monsieur,” he said to

Lucien, "I have bought the custom of the Gymnase; I'll look out for your mistress and warn her of any tricks they may try to play on her."

"That offer is not to be refused, my dear Braulard," said Lousteau; "but we have come about the paper's tickets to all the boulevard theatres: mine as editor-in-chief, and monsieur's as critic at each theatre."

"Oh! yes, Finot has sold his paper, I heard about that. He's getting on, is Finot. I'm giving him a dinner at the end of the week. If you will confer upon me the honor and pleasure of your company, you can bring your wives along; there'll be plenty of sport; we have Adèle Dupuis, Ducange, Frédéric du Petit-Méré, and my mistress, Mademoiselle Millot; we shall laugh hard and drink harder."

"Ducange must be hard up, he has lost his suit."

"I have lent him ten thousand francs, but the success of *Calas* will pay me; so I warmed him! Ducange is a bright man, he has methods—"

Lucien thought he must be dreaming when he heard that man passing judgment upon the talents of authors.

"Coralie has won," said Braulard, with the air of a competent judge. "If she's a good girl, I'll secretly support her against the cabal when she makes her *début* at the Gymnase. Listen: I'll have men stationed in the galleries, who will smile and make little murmurs to start the applause."

That's a trick that suits a woman. I like Coralie, and you ought to be satisfied with her ; she's a girl of sentiment. Oh ! I can ruin whoever I want to."

"But let us arrange about the tickets," said Lousteau.

"Very good ; I will go to Monsieur and get them about the first of every month. Monsieur is your friend, and I will treat him like yourself. You have five theatres, and they'll give you thirty tickets ; that will be something like seventy-five francs a month. Perhaps you'd like something in advance ?" said the dealer in tickets, returning to his desk and opening his cash-drawer, which was filled with gold pieces.

"No, no," said Lousteau, "we will keep that in reserve for evil days."

"Monsieur," continued Braulard, turning to Lucien, "I will go and talk with Coralie soon, and we'll come to an understanding."

Lucien was profoundly amazed, upon looking around Braulard's office, to see a bookcase, engravings and suitable furniture. As they passed through the salon, he noticed that the furniture there was equally removed from tawdriness and from too great splendor. The dining-room seemed to him the most tastefully furnished room of all, and he made a jesting remark on the subject.

"Why, Braulard is an epicure," said Lousteau. "His dinners, which are cited in dramatic literature, are in keeping with his money-bags."

"I have some good wines," said Braulard mod-

estly. "Ah! there are my decoys," he cried, as the sound of hoarse voices and strange footsteps was heard on the stairs.

As they went out, Lucien saw a disgusting procession of *claqueurs* and ticket vendors, all with caps, tattered trousers, threadbare coats, blue or greenish hangdog faces, stunted figures, long beards and eyes that were at once fierce and wheedling; a ghastly crew, that lives and multiplies on the boulevards of Paris. In the morning they sell watch chains and gold trinkets for twenty-five sous, and in the evening applaud or hiss under the chandeliers; in a word, they adapt themselves to all the vile necessities of Paris.

"There are the *Romans!*" said Lousteau, laughing, "the glory of actresses and dramatic authors. At close quarters they're not much of an improvement on ours."

"It is hard," said Lucien, as they retraced their steps, "to retain one's illusions concerning anything in Paris. There are taxes on everything, everything is sold there, everything manufactured, even success."

Lucien's guests were Dauriat, the manager of the Panorama, Matifat and Florine, Camusot, Lousteau, Finot, Nathan, Hector Merlin and Madame du Val-Noble, Félicien Vernou, Blondet, Vignon, Philippe Bridau, Mariette, Giroudeau, Cardot and Florentine, and Bixiou. He had invited his friends of the club. Tullia, the dancer, who, it was said, was a little cruel to Du Bruel, was also of the party—but with-

out her duke—as were the proprietors of the newspapers upon which Nathan, Merlin, Vignon and Vernou were employed. There were about thirty in all, as many as Coralie's dining-room would hold. About eight o'clock, when all the candles in the chandelier were lighted, the furniture, the draperies and the flowers with which the rooms were decorated, assumed that festal appearance which gives to such functions in Paris the effect of a beautiful dream. Lucien felt an indescribable thrill of happiness, of gratified vanity and hope fulfilled, when he reflected that he was the master of those apartments, nor did he consider how or by whom the blow of the magic wand had been struck. Florine and Coralie, dressed with the studied wantonness and artistic magnificence of actresses, smiled on the provincial poet like two angels bidden to open the doors of the Palace of Dreams to him. In truth, Lucien was almost dreaming. His life had so suddenly taken on an entirely different aspect within a few months, he had passed so swiftly from extreme poverty to extreme opulence, that he had moments of profound anxiety, like those who, while they are dreaming, are conscious that they are asleep. At the sight of that fair reality, however, his eye expressed a serene confidence to which envious folk would have given the name of fatuity. His personal appearance had changed. Happy every day, his bright color had faded, his eyes were moist and had a languid look; in a word, to use an expression of Madame d'Espard, he had the *air of one who is loved*.



His beauty gained by the change. The consciousness of his strength and his influence was visible on his face, lighted up by love and by experience. At last he was face to face with the literary world and with society, and he believed that he could dominate both. To this poet, who never reflected except under the pressure of misfortune, the present seemed to be free from care. Success filled the sails of his bark; he had at his orders the necessary instruments to carry out his plans, a well-organized household, a mistress whom all Paris envied him, a handsome equipage, and incalculable sums in his desk. His soul, his heart and his mind were equally metamorphosed; in presence of such satisfactory results, it did not occur to him to discuss means.

This magnificent display will seem—and justly—so improbable to economists who have practised housekeeping in Paris, that it will not be amiss to point out the foundation, however insecure, upon which the material happiness of the actress and her poet rested. Without compromising himself, Camusot had induced Coralie's tradesmen to give her credit for at least three months. Thus horses, servants, everything moved as if by enchantment for the two children, who were so eager to enjoy life, and who enjoyed everything to the utmost. Coralie took Lucien by the hand and introduced him in advance of the others to the transformation scene in the dining-room, magnificent with its splendid service of plate, its candelabras with forty candles, and to the regal menu and the dainties of the des-

sert, furnished by Chevet. Lucien kissed Coralie on the forehead and pressed her to his heart.

"I shall make my way, my love," he said, "and then I will repay you for such love and such devotion."

"Nonsense!" said she; "are you satisfied?"

"I should be very hard to suit, if I were not."

"Ah! that smile pays for everything," she replied, putting her lips to his with a serpentine movement.

They found Florine, Lousteau, Matifat and Camusot arranging the card tables. Lucien's friends,—for all these people already called themselves his friends—arrived in due course. They played from nine o'clock to midnight. Luckily for him, Lucien knew no game of cards; but Lousteau lost a thousand francs and borrowed them from Lucien, who thought he could not refuse to lend them when his friend asked him. At about ten o'clock Michel, Fulgence and Joseph Bridau appeared. Lucien, who went and talked with them in a corner, thought that their faces were decidedly cold and serious, not to say constrained. D'Arthez was finishing his book and was unable to come. Léon Giraud was busily engaged with the publication of the first number of his review. The club had sent its three artists, who were less likely than the others to feel out of their element in a scene of debauchery.

"Well, my boys," said Lucien, adopting a tone of superiority, "you will see that the *little wag* may become a *great politician*."

"I ask nothing better than to find that I was mistaken," said Michel.

"Are you living with Coralie until something better turns up?" asked Fulgence.

"Yes," replied Lucien with what was intended to be an artless air. "Coralie had a poor old tradesman who adored her, and she showed him the door. I am more fortunate than your brother Philippe, who doesn't know how to manage Mariette," he added, glancing at Joseph Bridau.

"At all events, you're a man like other men now," said Fulgence, "you'll make your way."

"A man who will always be the same to you, in whatever position he may be," Lucien replied.

Michel and Fulgence exchanged an ironical smile, which Lucien saw and which showed him the absurdity of his remark.

"Coralie is wonderfully lovely," cried Joseph Bridau. "What a magnificent portrait to paint!"

"And as good as she is lovely," said Lucien. "On my word, she is angelic; but you shall paint her portrait; take her, if you choose, for a model of the fair Venetian brought before the senator by an old woman."

"All women who are in love are angelic," said Michel Chrestien.

At that moment, Raoul Nathan rushed at Lucien in a frenzy of affection, seized both his hands and pressed them warmly.

"My dear friend, not only are you a great man, but you have a heart, which is rarer to-day than

genius," he said. "You are devoted to your friends. I am yours in life and death, and I shall never forget what you have done for me this week."

Lucien's joy at being thus fawned upon by a man whose name was on every tongue, passed all bounds, and he glanced at his friends of the club with an air of superiority. Nathan's effervescence was due to what Merlin had told him about the proof sheets of the article in favor of his book, which appeared in the paper the following day.

"I consented to write the attack," Lucien said in Nathan's ear, "only on condition that I might answer it myself. I am your friend."

He returned to his three friends of the club, overjoyed by the incident which justified the remark at which Fulgence had smiled.

"When D'Arthez's book appears, I am in a position to be of service to him. That prospect alone would be sufficient to keep me on newspaper work."

"Have you a free hand?" queried Michel.

"As much so as possible when one is indispensable," said Lucien with mock modesty.

About midnight the guests took their seats at the table and the revel began. The conversation was much freer than at Matifat's, for no one suspected the divergence of opinions between the three representatives of the club and the newspaper men. Those young minds, depraved by the habit of arguing on both sides, came to close quarters and hurled

at one another the most shocking axioms of the jurisprudence to which journalism was then giving birth. Claude Vignon, who strove to uphold the august character of criticism, cried out against the tendency of the small papers toward personalities, saying that sooner or later the writers would discredit themselves. Lousteau, Merlin and Finot thereupon openly assumed the defence of the system, called in journalistic slang *blague*, maintaining that it was a sort of pointer by whose aid talent could be more easily discovered.

“All those who sustain the test are really strong men,” said Lousteau.

“Furthermore,” cried Merlin, “while ovations are being showered upon the great men, there must be a chorus of insults around them, as there was around the Romans in their triumphal processions.”

“Ah! all those who are laughed at will believe in their triumph!” said Lucien.

“Wouldn't one think that that was your case?” cried Finot.

“And our sonnets!” said Michel Chrestien; “don't they deserve such a triumph as Petrarch's?”

“*L'or*\*—Laure—already has a share in them,” observed Dauriat, whose pun called forth general applause.

“*Faciamus experimentum in anima vili*,” said Lucien with a smile.

“And woe to those whom the newspapers do not

\* Gold, or money, referring, of course, to Dauriat's having purchased the sonnets.

discuss, and to whom it throws wreaths at their first appearance. They will be relegated, like saints, to their niches, and no one will pay the slightest attention to them," said Vernou.

"People will say to them, as Champcenetz said to the Marquis de Genlis, who was looking too fondly at his wife: 'Pass on, my man, we have already given you something,'" said Blondet.

"In France, success kills," said Finot. "We are too jealous of each other here not to want to forget and make everybody else forget another's triumph."

"Contradiction is what gives life in literature," said Claude Vignon.

"As in nature, where it results from two contending principles," cried Fulgence. "The triumph of one over the other means death."

"As in politics," added Michel Chrestien.

"We have just proved it," said Lousteau. "Dauriat will sell two thousand copies of Nathan's book this week. Why? Because the book has been attacked and will be well defended."

"How could such an article as this," said Merlin, taking from his pocket the proof of the next morning's paper, "fail to sell a whole edition?"

"Read me the article," said Dauriat. "I am a publisher everywhere, even at supper."

Merlin read Lucien's triumphant article, which was applauded by the whole assemblage.

"Could that article have been written without the first?" said Lousteau.

Dauriat took from his pocket the proof sheets of the third article and read it. Finot followed the reading carefully, for the article was to appear in the second number of his review; and in the capacity of editor-in-chief, he exaggerated his enthusiasm.

"Messieurs," he said, "if Bossuet were living in our day he would write like that."

"I believe you," said Merlin. "Bossuet would be a newspaper man to-day."

"To Bossuet II.!" said Claude Vignon, raising his glass and bowing ironically to Lucien.

"To my Christopher Columbus!" replied Lucien, proposing a toast to Dauriat.

"Bravo!" cried Nathan.

"Is that a nickname?" asked Merlin maliciously, glancing at Finot and Lucien.

"If you go on in this way," said Dauriat, "we cannot follow you, and these gentlemen," indicating Matifat and Camusot, "won't understand you. Wit is like cotton, it breaks if you spin it too fine, as Bonaparte said."

"Messieurs," said Lousteau, "we have been eye-witnesses of a serious, inconceivable, unheard-of, truly surprising fact. Do you not admire the rapidity with which our friend has changed from provincial to journalist?"

"He was born a journalist," said Dauriat.

"My children," said Finot, rising with a bottle of champagne in his hand, "we have all protected and all encouraged our host's first steps in the career in

which he has surpassed our hopes. In two months he has proved his mettle by the fine articles we are all familiar with. I propose to christen him journalist in due form."

"A crown of roses to proclaim his twofold victory," cried Bixiou with a glance at Coralie.

Coralie made a sign to Bérénice, who went to fetch some old artificial flowers from the actress's boxes. When the stout lady's maid brought the flowers, a wreath of roses was soon made up, with which those who were the most tipsy adorned themselves grotesquely. Finot, the high priest, poured a few drops of champagne on Lucien's beautiful blond locks, uttering with delicious gravity this parody of the sacramental words:

"In the name of the Stamp Office, the Security and the Fine, I baptize thee journalist. May thy articles sit lightly on thee!"

"And be paid for without deduction for blank spaces!" said Merlin.

At that moment, Lucien noticed the grieved faces of Michel Chrestien, Joseph Bridau and Fulgence Ridal, who took their hats and went away amid a roar of imprecations.

"They're curious Christians!"\* said Merlin.

"Fulgence used to be a good fellow," said Lous-teau, "but *they* have perverted his morals."

"Who?" queried Vignon.

"Certain serious-minded young men who meet in

\* In French, *Chrétien*s is pronounced exactly like the proper name *Chrestien*.



a philosophical and religious *musico* on Rue des Quatre-Vents, where there is much anxiety concerning the general tendency of humanity," Blondet replied.

"Oh! oh!"

"They are endeavoring to find out whether it turns on its own axis, or whether it moves ahead," continued Blondet. "They were greatly embarrassed between the straight line and the curved line, they found a manifest absurdity in the Biblical triangle, and thereupon some prophet or other appeared to them and pronounced in favor of the spiral."

"A parcel of men might invent more dangerous nonsense than that," cried Lucien, seeking to defend the club.

"You take those theories for mere idle words," said Félicien Vernou, "but there comes a time when they are transformed into musket shots or the guillotine."

"As yet," said Bixiou, "they have only gone so far as to seek the providential thought that invented champagne, the humanitarian tendency of trousers, and the little creature that makes the world go round. They pick up great men who have fallen, like Vico, Saint-Simon, Fourier. I greatly fear that they are turning my poor Joseph Bridau's head."

"They are responsible," said Lousteau, "for Bianchon, my compatriot and schoolfellow, turning his back on me."

"Do they teach gymnastics and orthopedy of the mind there?" queried Merlin.

"That may well be," said Finot, "as Bianchon takes part in their reveries."

"Bah! he'll be a great physician all the same," said Lousteau.

"Isn't D'Arthez their ostensible leader," asked Nathan, "an undersized young fellow who is to swallow us all?"

"He's a man of genius!" cried Lucien.

"I prefer a glass of sherry," said Claude Vignon with a smile.

At that moment, every one was describing his own character to his neighbor. When bright men reach a point where they dilate upon themselves and give up the key to their hearts, it is certain that drunkenness has taken them in flank. An hour later all the guests, who had become the best friends in the world, were addressing one another as great men, men of might, men to whom the future belonged. Lucien, as master of the house, had retained some glimmering of lucidity; he listened to the sophistry that was lavished upon him and completed his demoralization.

"My boys," said Finot, "the liberal party is forced to revive its polemical discussions, for it has nothing to say at this moment against the government, and you understand what an embarrassing position that is for the opposition. Which of you would like to write a pamphlet demanding the re-establishment of the right of primogeniture, so as to raise an outcry against the secret designs of the court?" It would be very profitable."

"I," said Hector Merlin, "it's in line with my opinions."

"Your party would say that you were compromising them," rejoined Finot. "Félicien, you undertake the pamphlet, Dauriat will publish it, and we'll keep the secret."

"How much will you give?" asked Vernou.

"Six hundred francs! You can sign, *Comte C.*"

"I'll do it," said Vernou.

"So you're going to introduce the *canard* into politics?" queried Lousteau.

"That's Chabot's affair transported into the sphere of ideas," replied Finot. "Certain designs are attributed to the government, and we set public opinion loose upon them."

"I shall never cease to feel the most profound amazement that a government abandons the guidance of its ideas to such rascals as we are," said Claude Vignon.

"If the ministry is foolish enough to come down into the arena," rejoined Finot, "we lead it by the nose with drums beating; if it is offended, we envenom the question at issue and disaffect the masses. The press never risks anything while the authorities have everything to lose."

"France will be a nullity until the day when newspapers are outlawed," retorted Claude Vignon. "You are making progress from hour to hour," he said to Finot. "You will be Jesuits, minus the faith, fixity of purpose, discipline and union."

They returned to the card tables. The light of

the candles soon paled before the first rays of dawn

“Your friends from Rue des Quatre-Vents were as gloomy as men condemned to death,” said Coralie.

“They were the judges,” replied the poet.

“Judges are more entertaining than that,” said Coralie.

For a month, Lucien's time was taken up with suppers, dinners, breakfasts, evening parties, and he was drawn on by an irresistible current into an eddying whirl of dissipation, mingled with work that was easily performed. He no longer looked ahead. The power of looking ahead amid the complications of life is the seal of a great will, which poets and all weak or simply intellectual persons can never counterfeit. Like most journalists, Lucien lived from day to day, spending his money as he earned it, oblivious of the periodical changes of life in Paris, which are so disastrous to such Bohemians as he. His dress and his bearing would bear comparison with those of the most famous dandies. Like all fanatics, Coralie loved to adorn her idol; she ruined herself to provide her dear poet with the fashionable outfit of dandies, which he had so coveted during his first walk at the Tuileries. Lucien had canes of marvelous shape, an exquisite eye-glass, diamond studs, rings for his morning cravats, rings *a la chevalière*, and gorgeous waistcoats in sufficient numbers to enable him always to dress in harmonious colors. He was soon a full-fledged dandy.

When he appeared at the German minister's, in response to the invitation he had received, his metamorphosis excited a sort of suppressed envy among the young men present, who were the acknowledged monarchs in the kingdom of fashion—De Marsay, Vandenesse, Ajuda-Pinto, Maxime de Trailles, Rastignac, the Duc de Maufrigneuse, Beau-denord, Manerville, etc. Society men are jealous of one another just as women are.

The Comtesse de Montcornet and the Marquise d'Espard, for whom the dinner was given, had Lucien between them and overwhelmed him with attentions.

“Why did you turn your back on society, it was ready to receive you kindly and entertain you?” said the marchioness. “I have a bone to pick with you! you owe me a call and I am still expecting it. I saw you the other evening at the opera, but you did not deign to come and see me or even to bow to me.”

“Your cousin, madame, dismissed me in such explicit terms—”

“You don't know women,” Madame d'Espard interrupted him. “You have wounded the most angelic heart and the noblest soul that I know. You have no idea of all that Louise intended to do for you, and how shrewdly her plan was formed. Oh! she would have succeeded,” she exclaimed, in answer to Lucien's incredulous gesture. “Her husband, who has recently died, as it was certain that he would die, of an attack of indigestion, was sure

to leave her free sooner or later, was he not? Do you suppose she proposed to be Madame Chardon? The title of Comtesse de Rubempré is well worth the trouble of working for. Love, you see, is one form of vanity, which should be made to harmonize, especially in marriage, with all other forms of vanity. Even if I loved you madly, that is to say, enough to marry you, it would be very hard for me to be called Madame Chardon. You will agree to that. Now that you have seen the difficulties of life in Paris, you know how many detours one must make to reach one's goal; and you must confess that Louise aspired to a favor that was almost out of reach of a stranger without fortune, so that she was bound to neglect no precautions. You have much wit; but, when we love, we have even more than the cleverest man. My cousin chose to make use of that absurd Châtelet—I owe you a great deal of pleasure, your articles against him amused me immensely!" she said, interrupting herself.

Lucien did not know what to think. Although he had been initiated into the treachery and perfidy of journalism, he knew nothing of those qualities as practised in society; and so, despite his perspicacity, he was destined to receive some harsh lessons.

"What! madame," he said, his curiosity keenly aroused, "haven't you taken the Heron under your wing!"

"Why, in society one is forced to be polite to one's bitterest enemies, and to seem to be entertained by bores, and it often happens that one

apparently sacrifices one's friends, in order to be of more service to them. You are still very innocent, aren't you? You pretend to write, and you know nothing of the common tricks of society? Suppose my cousin did seem to sacrifice you to the Heron, was it not necessary to use his influence to your advantage? for our man stands very well with the present ministry; so we pointed out to him that, up to a certain point, your attacks would benefit him in order that we might be able to reconcile you some day. Châtelet has been recompensed for your persecutions. As Des Lupeaulx said to the ministers: 'While the papers are making sport of Châtelet, they let the ministry alone.' "

"Monsieur Blondet led me to hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you at my house," said the Comtesse de Montcornet when the marchioness left Lucien to his reflections. "You will find a few artists there and authors, and a lady who is most anxious to meet you, Mademoiselle des Touches, one of those talented minds that are so rare among our sex, who will doubtless invite you to her house. Mademoiselle des Touches—Camille Maupin, if you choose—has one of the most noteworthy salons in Paris; she is enormously rich; she has been told that you are as handsome as you are clever and she is dying to make your acquaintance."

Lucien could do nothing but stammer his thanks and cast an envious glance at Blondet. There was as much difference between a woman of the rank and style of the Comtesse de Montcornet and Coralie

as between Coralie and a girl from the street. Young, lovely and intellectual, the countess's special attraction, physically speaking, was the extremely fair complexion of the women of the North; her mother was born a Princess Sherbellof, and the minister, before dinner, had lavished his most respectful attentions upon her. The marchioness by this time had finished pecking daintily at the wing of a chicken.

"My poor Louise was so fond of you!" she said to Lucien; "she told me all about the glorious future she dreamed of for you; she would have borne much, but how contemptuously you treated her when you sent back her letters! We forgive cruelty, for a man must still believe in us to care to wound us; but indifference!—indifference is like the ice around the poles, it stifles everything. Come, confess now that you have lost a treasure by your own fault. Why break with her? Even if she has treated you disdainfully, haven't you your fortune to make, your name to win? Louise thought of all that."

"Why did she say nothing to me about it?" said Lucien.

"Mon Dieu, it was I who advised her not to take you into her confidence. Between ourselves, when I saw how unfamiliar you were with society, I was afraid of you: I was afraid that your inexperience, your heedless ardor would destroy or disarrange her calculations and our plans. Can you remember now what you were then? You would certainly agree



with me if you could see your double to-day. You don't look like the same man. That was the only mistake we made. But is there one man in a thousand who combines such great intellectual powers with such marvellous aptitude for adapting himself to his surroundings? I had no idea that you would be such a surprising exception. You have metamorphosed yourself so suddenly, you have fallen in with Parisian customs so readily, that I did not recognize you in the Bois de Boulogne a month ago."

Lucien listened to the great lady with indescribable pleasure: her flattering words were uttered with such a confiding, mischievous, innocent air; she seemed to be so deeply interested in him, that he was fain to believe in some prodigy like that of his first evening at the Panorama-Dramatique. Since that happy evening, the whole world had smiled upon him, he attributed a talismanic power to his youth and he determined therefore to put the marchioness to the proof, promising himself that he would not be taken by surprise.

"What were these plans, madame, pray, that have now become chimerical?"

"Louise wished to obtain from the king an ordinance permitting you to bear the name and title of Rubempré. She wished to bury the Chardon. Success in that undertaking, then so easy to obtain, but which your present opinions render almost impossible, would have been a fortune to you. You will treat these ideas as visions and mere

trifles ; but we know something of life, and we know the solid value of the title of count to a fashionable, charming young man. Just announce here, in the presence of a few young English millionaires or heiresses : *Monsieur Chardon* or *Monsieur le Comte de Rubempre*, and two entirely different effects would be produced. If he were over head and ears in debt, the count would find all hearts open to him and his beauty, embellished by the title, would be like a diamond in a rich setting. Monsieur Chardon would not even be noticed. We did not create these ideas, we find them in force everywhere, even among the bourgeois. At this moment you are turning your back on fortune. Look at that handsome young fellow, Vicomte Félix de Vandenesse ; he is one of the king's private secretaries. The king likes young men of talent, his baggage was no heavier than yours when he arrived in Paris from his province, and you have a thousand times more wit than he ; but do you belong to a great family ? have you a name ? You know Des Lupeaulx ; his name is Chardin, not unlike yours ; but he would not sell his farm of Des Lupeaulx for a million ; some day he will be Comte Des Lupeaulx and his grandson may become a great nobleman. If you go on in the false path on which you have entered, you are lost. See how much wiser Monsieur Émile Blondet is than you ! he is on a newspaper that supports the government, he is highly considered by all the powers that be, he can mingle with the

liberals without danger, for his views are sound ; so he will make his way sooner or later ; but he knew enough to make a wise selection both of opinions and patrons. That pretty young woman, your neighbor, was a Demoiselle de Troisville, who has two peers of France and two deputies in her family, and she made a rich marriage because of her name ; she receives a great deal, she will have influence and turn the political world topsy-turvy for little Émile Blondet. To what will a Coralie bring you ? To find yourself buried in debt and worn out with dissipation a few years hence. You bestow your love ill and you arrange your life ill. That is what the woman you take pleasure in wounding said to me the other night at the Opéra. In deploring the way you are misusing your talent and your promising youth, she was not thinking of herself, but of you."

" Ah ! if you were telling the truth, madame ! " cried Lucien.

" What interest can you imagine I should have in telling you untruths ? " said the marchioness with a cold and haughty glance that annihilated Lucien.

Lucien was too abashed to renew the conversation, and the offended marchioness did not speak to him again. He was annoyed, but he realized that he had made a great blunder, and determined to repair it. He turned to Madame de Montcornet and talked about Blondet, praising that young writer's merits to the skies. His advances were well received by the countess, who invited him, at a sign

from Madame d'Espard, to her next evening at home, asking him if he would not be glad to see Madame de Bargeton, who would be there, notwithstanding her mourning; it was not to be a great reception, but one of her regular *at homes*; there would be only a few friends.

"Madame la Marquise," said Lucien, "claims that all the fault is on my side; should not her cousin be kind to me?"

"Put an end to these absurd attacks upon her, which couple her name with that of a man she despises, and you will soon agree upon terms of peace. You thought that she fooled you, so I have been told; but I have seen her grieving over your desertion. Is it true that she left her province with you and for you?"

Lucien glanced at the countess with a smile, not daring to reply.

"How could you distrust a woman who made such sacrifices for you? And, besides, lovely and clever as she is, she ought to be loved *in spite of everything*. Madame de Bargeton loved you for yourself less than for your talents. Believe me, women love intellect before beauty," she said, glancing at Blondet out of the corner of her eye.

Lucien detected in the minister's mansion the points of difference between the best society and the anomalous social circle in which he had been living for some time. The two varieties of luxury had no similarity, no point of contact. The great height and the arrangement of the rooms in that suite,

which was one of the most luxurious in Faubourg Saint-Germain, the old-fashioned gilding of the salons, the profuse decorations, the quiet richness of the accessories were all strange and new to him ; but the habit of becoming accustomed quickly to fine things prevented him from displaying his astonishment. His expression was as far removed from fatuous self-assurance as from fawning and servility. His manners were good, and he attracted those who had no reason for being hostile to him, like the young men whom his abrupt introduction into the first society, his beauty and his success, made jealous. Upon leaving the table, he offered his arm to Madame d'Espard, who accepted it. When Rastignac saw that Lucien was smiled upon by the Marquise d'Espard, he came forward and introduced himself as a compatriot and reminded him of their first meeting at Madame du Val-Noble's. The young patrician seemed desirous to form an intimacy with the great man from his province ; he invited him to come and breakfast with him some morning and offered to present him to the young men of fashion. Lucien accepted the invitation.

“ Dear Blondet will be there,” said Rastignac.

The minister joined the group, consisting of the Marquis de Ronquerolles, the Duc de Rhétoré, De Marsay, Général de Montriveau, Rastignac and Lucien.

“ Well done,” he said to Lucien with the German amiability beneath which he concealed his re

doubtable craft, "you have made your peace with Madame d'Espard; she is delighted with you, and we all know," he added, glancing at the men about him, "how hard she is to please."

"Yes, but she adores wit," said Rastignac, "and my illustrious compatriot has it to sell."

"It won't take him long to find out what a villainous trade he's engaged in," said Blondet hastily; "he will come over to us, he'll soon be one of us."

Lucien's companions joined in a chorus upon that theme. The serious men uttered a few profound sentences in a despotic tone, the younger men made jocose remarks about the liberal party.

"I am sure," said Blondet, "that he tossed up to see whether it should be Right or Left; but now he is going to make a deliberate choice."

Lucien began to laugh, remembering the scene in the Luxembourg with Lousteau.

"He has taken for elephant driver," continued Blondet, "one Étienne Lousteau, a bully for a small newspaper, who sees a hundred-sou piece in a column, whose politics consists in believing in the return of Napoléon, and, what seems to me even more absurd, in the gratitude and patriotism of Messieurs of the Left. As a De Rubempré, Lucien's leanings should be aristocratic; as a journalist, he ought to be for the government, or he will never be De Rubempré or secretary general."

Lucien, to whom the diplomatist offered a seat at a whist table, aroused the greatest surprise

when he admitted that he did not know the game.

“ My friend,” Rastignac whispered to him, “ come to my rooms early on the day you are to share my poor breakfast, and I will teach you whist ; you dishonor our royal city of Angoulême, and let me repeat a remark of Monsieur de Talleyrand, that, if you don’t know that game, you are laying up for yourself a very wretched old age.”

Des Lupeaulx was announced ; a master of requests, high in favor at court, who performed secret services for the ministry ; a shrewd, ambitious man, who insinuated himself everywhere. He bowed to Lucien, whom he had met before at Madame du Val-Noble’s, and there was in his bow a semblance of friendship, which was well calculated to deceive Lucien. Finding the young journalist there, this man, who made himself everybody’s friend in politics in order not to be taken unawares by anybody, realized that Lucien was likely to make as great a success in society as in literature. He detected an ambitious man in the poet, and he overwhelmed him with protestations and demonstrations of friendly interest in such a way as to make it seem as if they were friends of long standing and to deceive Lucien as to the value of his promises and his words. Des Lupeaulx’s principle was to become well acquainted with those whom he wanted to get rid of if they should prove to be rivals. Thus Lucien was well received by everybody. He realized all that he owed to the Duc de Rhétoré, to the minister, to

Madame d'Espard and to Madame de Montcornet. He talked with each of those ladies for a few moments before taking his leave and displayed for their benefit all the charm of his intellect.

"What fatuity!" said Des Lupeaulx to the marchioness when Lucien left her.

"He will be spoiled before he's ripe," said Des Marsay to the marchioness with a smile. "You must have some hidden reason for turning his head so."

Lucien found Coralie sitting in her carriage in the courtyard, she having come to meet him; he was touched by the attention and described his evening. To his unbounded astonishment, the actress approved the new ideas that were already buzzing in his brain, and urged him most earnestly to enlist under the ministerial banner.

"You have nothing but blows to earn with the liberals," she said; "they conspire, they have killed the Duc de Berri. Will they overthrow the government? Never! Through them you will never get anywhere; while, on the other side, you will become Comte de Rubempré. You can be of service to the ministry, be made peer of France and marry a rich wife. Be an ultra. Besides, it's good form," she added, using the expression which to her mind formed a supreme, unanswerable argument. "La Val-Noble, whom I dined with to-day, told me that Théodore Gaillard was certainly going to start his little royalist paper called *Le Réveil*, to answer the satire of your paper and of the *Miroir*. According to



IN MME. DE MONTCORNET'S SALON

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*“Are you happy?” A melancholy No would have made his fortune. He fancied that it was a clever stroke to describe Coralie ; he said that he was loved for his own sake, and all the other idiotic things that men in love say. Madame de Bargeton bit her lips. It was all over.*

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her Monsieur de Villèle and his party will go over to the ministry within a year. Try to get the benefit of this change by joining them while they are of no consequence ; but don't say a word to Étienne or your friends, who would be quite capable of playing you some mean trick."

A week later Lucien presented himself at Madame de Montcornet's ; his agitation was violent beyond words when he saw once more the woman he had loved so dearly and whose heart his satire had pierced. Louise also was metamorphosed ! She had become what she would have been always except for her life in the provinces, a great lady. There was a dainty grace in her mourning which told of a happy widowhood. Lucien fancied that he counted for something in this coquettish display, and he was not mistaken ; but he had, like an ogre, tasted fresh meat, and throughout the evening he wavered between the lovely, the loving, the voluptuous Coralie, and the faded, the haughty, the cruel Louise. He could not make up his mind to sacrifice the actress to the great lady. Madame de Bargeton, whose love for Lucien revived when she saw how clever and how handsome he was, awaited that sacrifice during the whole evening ; the pains she had taken, her insidious words, her coquettish ways went for naught, and she left the salon with an insatiable longing for vengeance.

"Well, dear Lucien," she said, with a kindly air instinct with Parisian grace and nobility, "you should be my pride and you have taken me for your

first victim. I have forgiven you, my child, thinking that there must be a remnant of love in such a vengeance."

By this apostrophe, delivered with regal dignity, Madame de Bargeton regained her position. Lucien, who believed that he was in the right a thousand times over, felt that he was put in the wrong. She did not refer to the crushing letter of farewell by which he had broken with her, or to the causes of the rupture. Women of the first society have a marvellous talent for belittling their faults by joking about them. They can and do efface them all with a smile or with a question feigning surprise. They remember nothing, they explain away everything, they are amazed, they ask questions, they make comments, they amplify, they quarrel, and end by wiping away their faults as you wipe away a spot with a little soap and water, you knew them to be black, and in a moment they become white and innocent. As for yourself, you are very fortunate not to be proved guilty of some unpardonable crime. In a moment, Lucien and Louise had recovered their illusions concerning each other and were speaking the language of friendship; but Lucien, drunken with gratified vanity and with Coralie, who, it should be said, made life easy for him, was unable to reply frankly to this question, which Louise accompanied with a sigh of hesitation: "Are you happy?" A melancholy No would have made his fortune. He fancied that it was a clever stroke to describe Coralie; he said that he was loved for his

own sake, and all the other idiotic things that men in love say. Madame de Bargeton bit her lips. It was all over. Madame d'Espard came with Madame de Montcornet to where her cousin was sitting. Lucien found himself, so to speak, the hero of the evening; he was flattered, cajoled and made much of by those three women, who turned him inside out with infinite skill. Thus his success in that brilliant circle was no less than in the bosom of journalism.

The lovely Mademoiselle des Touches, so famous under the name of Camille Maupin, to whom Mesdames d'Espard and De Bargeton presented Lucien, invited him to dinner on one of her Wednesdays, and seemed deeply moved by his justly celebrated beauty. Lucien tried to prove that he was as clever as he was handsome. Mademoiselle des Touches expressed her admiration by the air of artless sprightliness and the fascinating affectation of a frenzied desire for his friendship, by which all those are deceived who are not thoroughly familiar with Parisian life, where the constant recurrence of the same pleasures makes every one so eager for novelty.

“If I pleased her as much as she pleases me,” said Lucien to Rastignac and De Marsay, “we would shorten the romance—”

“You both know too well how to write them to want to act them,” replied Rastignac. “Do authors ever fall in love with each other? There always comes a time when they say little cutting things to each other.”

"It wouldn't be a bad dream for you," laughed De Marsay, "that charming girl is thirty years old, to be sure; but she has nearly eighty thousand francs a year. She is adorably capricious, and her beauty is of a type that should last a long while. Coralie is a little fool, my dear fellow, good for nothing but to give you a start; for a good-looking boy ought not to be without a mistress; but if you don't make some fine catch in society, the actress will injure your chances in the long run. Come, my dear fellow, cut out Conti, who is just about to sing with Camille Maupin. In all times poetry has taken precedence of music."

When Lucien heard Mademoiselle des Touches and Conti sing together, his hopes took flight.

"Conti sings too well," he said to Des Lupeaulx.

Lucien returned to Madame de Bargeton, who led him into the salon where the Marquise d'Espard was.

"Well, do you not propose to take an interest in him?" Madame de Bargeton asked her cousin.

"Why, let Monsieur Chardon," said the marchioness with an air that was at once impertinent and kind, "put himself in a position where he can be patronized without inconvenience to his patrons. If he wishes to obtain the ordinance that will allow him to lay aside his father's wretched name for his mother's, he must at least be on our side."

"I shall have arranged all that within two months," said Lucien.

"Very well," said the marchioness, "I will see



my father and my uncle, who are in attendance on the king ; they will mention you to the chancellor."

The diplomatist and the two women had shrewdly divined Lucien's vulnerable point. The poet, enchanted with aristocratic splendor, had an indescribable feeling of mortification to hear himself called Chardon, when no other man entered those salons who did not bear some high-sounding name set in titles. The sensation was renewed wherever he went, for several days. He experienced, moreover, a sensation quite as disagreeable in going back to the duties of his profession after passing the preceding evening in the fashionable world, where he made a very respectable appearance with Coralie's carriage and servants. He learned to ride so that he might canter beside the carriages of Madame d'Espard, Mademoiselle des Touches and the Comtesse de Montcornet, a privilege he had so envied others when he first came to Paris.

Finot was delighted to obtain for his most useful editor a complimentary ticket to the Opéra, where Lucien wasted many evenings ; but he belonged thenceforth to the special circle of dandies of that period. The poet gave Rastignac and his fashionable friends a sumptuous breakfast in return for the one given him, but he was guilty of the bad taste of giving it in Coralie's apartments. He was too young, too poetic and too trusting to appreciate certain fine distinctions ; could an actress, an excellent girl, but without education, teach him life ? The provincial demonstrated in the most convincing way

to these young men, all of whom were ill-disposed toward him, the collusion between Coralie and himself, a state of things which every young man secretly aspires to, but which every one condemns. The man who made the most cruelly satirical comments on it that same evening was Rastignac, although he maintained his position in society by similar means, but kept up appearances so well that he could treat whatever was said on the subject as calumny. Lucien had quickly learned the game of whist, and gambling became a passion with him. In order to avoid all rivalry, Coralie, far from disapproving Lucien's course, encouraged him in dissipation with the blindness peculiar to whole-hearted sentiments, which never look beyond the present, and which sacrifice everything, even the future, to the enjoyment of the moment. The character of true love constantly exhibits points of resemblance to childhood; it has its thoughtlessness, its imprudence, its improvidence, its laughter and its tears.

At this time there flourished a class of young men called *viveurs*, rich or poor, idlers all, who lived lives of incredible recklessness, enormous eaters and even more enormous drinkers. Spendthrifts all and mingling the roughest sort of practical jokes with an existence which was rather wild than foolish, they recoiled from no impossible exploit and prided themselves upon their misdeeds, which did not, however, go entirely beyond bounds; they displayed such originality of invention in covering up their escapades that it was impossible not to forgive

them. No other fact was more eloquent than this of the dependency to which the Restoration condemned the youth of France. Young men, who did not know how to exert their powers, not only employed them in journalism, in conspiracies, in literature and in art, but wasted them in the most extraordinary excesses, so abundant was the supply of healthy sap and overflowing energy in the veins of young France. If they worked, these attractive youths sought power and pleasure; if they chose an artistic career, they longed for treasures; if they were idle, they sought means of exciting their passions; under all circumstances they wanted places, and politics provided none for them. Almost all the *viveurs* were endowed with eminent qualities; some lost them in that enervating life, others resisted its natural effects. The most famous and brightest of them, Rastignac, finally, under De Marsay's guidance, entered upon a serious career, in which he distinguished himself. The practical jokes in which these young men indulged became so famous, that they furnished the theme of several vaudevilles.

Lucien, introduced by Blondet into this society of spendthrifts, became its most shining light next to Bixiou, one of the most ill-natured wits and the most indefatigable satirist of the time. So it was that Lucien's life, during that whole winter, was one long intoxication, broken by the easy work of journalism; he continued his series of short articles and from time to time made tremendous efforts to

produce a few pages of thoughtful criticism. But study was an exceptional thing with him and he devoted no time to it unless he were actually compelled to do so ; breakfasts, dinners, pleasure-parties, evenings in society, gambling, took all of his time and Coralie claimed the rest. Lucien forbade himself to think of the morrow. He saw that all his pretended friends did just as he did, earning something by writing publishers' prospectuses for which good prices were paid and by the premiums offered for certain articles essential to the success of risky speculations, spending what they earned, and with no thought for the future. Once admitted among journalists and men of letters on a footing of equality, Lucien saw that there were enormous obstacles to be surmounted in case he wished to rise higher ; every one was willing to have him for an equal, but no one wanted him for a superior. By insensible degrees, therefore, he renounced all thought of literary glory, believing that political eminence was more easily obtained.

“Intrigue arouses fewer opposing passions than talent, its underground manœuvres attract nobody's attention,” said Châtelet to him one day—they had become reconciled. “Moreover, intrigue is superior to talent ; it makes something out of nothing ; whereas, in the majority of cases, the vast resources of talent serve no other purpose than to make men miserable.”

Lucien therefore pursued his controlling thought through this life of ease in which to-morrow was

always treading on the heels of yesterday, amid wild revels, and never found the promised work. He was assiduous in society, he paid court to Madame de Bargeton, Madame d'Espard and Madame de Montcornet, and did not miss a single one of Mademoiselle des Touches' evenings; he appeared in society after some dinner-party given by authors or publishers; he left the salons to attend a supper-party, given in payment of a wager; the exigencies of Parisian conversation and the gaming-table absorbed the small store of ideas and mental force left by his dissipation. He no longer had the lucidity of mind, the coolness of brain that were essential to enable him to watch what was taking place about him, to display the exquisite tact that parvenus must employ at every instant; it was impossible for him to distinguish between the moments when Madame de Bargeton was drawn toward him, turned her back upon him in anger, forgave him or condemned him anew.

Châtelet saw what chances his rival still had, and became Lucien's friend in order to encourage him in the life of dissipation in which he was wasting his energies. Rastignac, jealous of his compatriot, and, moreover, deeming the baron a more useful and more reliable ally than Lucien, espoused Châtelet's cause. So it was that, a few days after the interview between the Petrarch and Laura of Angoulême, Rastignac had reconciled the poet and the ex-beau of the Empire at a magnificent supper at the *Rocher de Cancale*. Lucien, who never re-

turned home until morning and rose at midday, could not resist a love that was always at hand. Thus the mainspring of his will, constantly softened by a natural indolence that made him indifferent to the good resolutions formed in the rare moments when he saw his position in its true light, lost its power entirely, and before long did not answer to the most violent pressure of poverty. The gentle and loving Coralie, who had been very happy to see Lucien enjoying himself and had encouraged him in his dissipation, seeing therein a pledge of the duration of his attachment, and an additional bond between them in the necessities it created, had the courage to urge her lover not to forget his work, and was obliged several times to remind him that he had earned almost nothing during the last month. The lover and his mistress ran in debt with appalling rapidity. The fifteen hundred francs that were left from the price of *Les Marguerites* and the first five hundred francs earned by Lucien had been speedily devoured. In three months the poet's articles did not bring him in more than a thousand francs, and he thought that he had worked tremendously. But he had already adopted the jocosé jurisprudence of the *viveurs* concerning debts. Debts are charming things in young men of twenty-five; later, no one forgives them. It is worthy of note that certain truly poetic minds, in which the will is weak, preoccupied in observing their sensations in order to express them by images, are essentially devoid of the moral perception which

should accompany observation of every sort. Poets like to receive impressions themselves rather than to look into the minds of others to study the mechanism of the sentiments. Lucien asked no questions of the *viveurs* as to those of their number who disappeared ; he gave no thought to the future of those pretended friends, some of whom inherited fortunes, others had hopes certain to be realized, some possessed acknowledged talent, others a most immovable faith in their destiny and a premeditated design to evade the laws. Lucien believed in his own future, relying upon these profound axioms of Blondet's: "Everything comes out right at last. Nothing makes any difference to those who have nothing.—We cannot lose anything more than the fortune we are seeking.—If a man goes with the current he is sure to be carried somewhere.—A man of intellect who has a foothold in society can make his fortune when he pleases."







That winter, so full of dissipation, was employed by Théodore Gaillard and Hector Merlin in collecting the funds required for the foundation of *Le Réveil*, whose first number did not appear until March, 1822. The business was managed at Madame du Val-Noble's. That clever and refined courtesan, who said, referring to her apartments: "These are the *comptes* of the Thousand and One Nights!" exercised a very considerable influence over the bankers, noblemen, and writers of the royalist party, all of whom were accustomed to gather in her salon to discuss and arrange certain matters which could be discussed nowhere else. Hector Merlin, to whom the editorship-in-chief of *Le Réveil* had been promised, was to have for his right arm Lucien, who had become his intimate friend, and who was also promised the *feuilleton* in one of the ministerial journals. This change of front on Lucien's part was being secretly arranged amid the diversions of his life. The boy fancied himself a great politician by concealing this projected stage trick, and he relied upon the ministerial bounty to arrange his pecuniary affairs and dissipate Coralie's secret misery. The actress, always smiling, concealed her distress; but

Bérénice was bolder and informed Lucien. Like all poets, that great man in embryo was moved to pity for a moment by the disastrous state of affairs, promised to work, forgot his promise and drowned that fleeting care in debauchery. When Coralie saw clouds upon her lover's brow, she scolded Bérénice and told her poet that everything was all right.

Madame d'Espard and Madame de Bargeton awaited Lucien's conversion, they said, before asking Châtelet to apply to the minister for the coveted ordinance concerning the change of name. Lucien had promised to dedicate his *Marguerites* to Madame d'Espard, who seemed much flattered by a distinction which has become rare since authors became a power in themselves. When Lucien went to Dauriat's shop in the evening and asked how his book was coming on, the publisher had excellent reasons to give for delaying the printing. He had this or that undertaking on hand which took all his time, he was just about to publish a new volume of Canalis's, with which it would not be well to come in competition, Monsieur de Lamartine's second *Meditations* were in press, and two important collections of poems should not appear together; the author must trust to the publisher's judgment. Meanwhile Lucien's necessities became so pressing that he had recourse to Finot, who advanced him something upon articles to be written. When the poet-journalist described his plight to his friends, the *viveurs* at the supper-table, they drowned his scruples in floods

of champagne, frozen with jests. Debts! every strong-minded man had debts! Debts represent satisfied needs, exacting vices. A man never succeeds unless he is urged on by the iron hand of necessity.

“For great men, the grateful Mont-de-Piété!” cried Blondet.

“To wish for everything is to owe everything,” said Bixiou.

“No, to owe everything is to have had everything!” rejoined Des Lupeaulx.

The *viveurs* easily convinced the child that his debts would be the golden spur with which he would prick the horses harnessed to the chariot of his fortune. Then there was always Cæsar with his forty millions of debts and Frederick II. receiving a ducat a month from his father, and all the celebrated, corrupting examples of great men depicted in their vices and not in the omnipotence of their courage and their conceptions!

At last Coralie's carriage, horses and furniture were seized by several creditors, whose claims amounted to four thousand francs. When Lucien went to Lousteau to ask for the thousand francs he had lent him, Lousteau showed him divers stamped papers showing that Florine was in a position analogous to Coralie's; but, in his gratitude, he proposed to take the necessary steps to dispose of *L'Archer de Charles IX.*

“How did Florine come to this?” asked Lucien.

“Matifat has taken fright,” Lousteau replied,

“and we have lost him ; but if Florine consents, he shall pay dear for his treachery ! I’ll tell you about it some time.”

Three days after Lucien’s fruitless application to Lousteau, the two lovers were breakfasting together in melancholy mood, by the fireplace in their lovely bedroom ; Bérénice had boiled some eggs for them over the fire on the hearth, for the cook, coachman and other servants had gone.

It was impossible to dispose of the seized furniture. The house did not contain a single object in gold or silver or anything of value ; they were all represented by tickets from the Mont-de-Piété, forming a very instructive little octavo volume. Bérénice had kept two covers. The little newspaper rendered an inestimable service to Lucien and Coralie by holding off the tailor, milliner and dressmaker, all of whom trembled at the thought of offending a journalist who could cry down their establishments.

While they were still at table, Lousteau arrived, crying :

“Hurrah ! Long live *L’Archer de Charles IX!* I’ve just *worked off* a hundred francs’ worth of books, my dears,” he said, “let’s go halves!”

He handed Coralie fifty francs, and sent Bérénice to procure a substantial breakfast.

“Yesterday, Hector Merlin and I dined with some publishers, and we paved the way for the sale of your novel by cunning hints. You are in treaty with Dauriat ; but Dauriat is stingy and will give

only four thousand francs for two thousand copies, and you want six thousand. We made you out twice as great as Walter Scott. Oh! you have incomparable novels in your brain! you don't offer a book, but a great enterprise; you are not simply the author of a more or less ingenious novel, but you will be a whole library in yourself! That word did the business. So don't forget your rôle; you have in your portfolio: *La Grande Mademoiselle*, or *France sous Louis XIV.*;—*Cotillon I.*, or *Les Premiers Jours de Louis XV.*;—*La Reine et le Cardinal*, or *Tableau de Paris sous la Fronde*;—*Le Fils de Concini*, or *Une Intrigue de Richelieu!*—These novels will be announced on the cover. We call that manœuvre, tossing success in a coverlet. They toss the books up and down on the cover until they become celebrated, and in that way a man is greater by virtue of the books he hasn't written than by those he has. The *In press* is the literary mortgage! Come, let us laugh a bit! Here's some champagne. You understand, Lucien, that our men's eyes were like saucers. Have you any saucers left?"

"They are seized," said Coralie.

"I understand and I resume," said Lousteau. "The publishers will believe in all your manuscripts if they see a single one. In the publishing trade they ask to see the manuscript and pretend to read it. Let them think we believe it; they never read books; if they did, they wouldn't publish so many! Hector and I gave them to understand that for five thousand francs you would agree to three thousand

copies in two editions. Give me the manuscript of the *Archer*; day after to-morrow we are to breakfast with the publishers, and we'll hook them!"

"Who are they?" asked Lucien.

"Two partners, good fellows and square in business matters, named Fendant and Cavalier. The first was once chief clerk for Vidal and Porchon, the other is the smartest travelling salesman on Quai des Augustins; they've been in business about a year. After losing some little money, publishing translations of English novels, my worthies propose now to work the native novel. There's a report that these particular dealers in scribbled paper risk only other people's capital, but I fancy you are not interested to know whose money they give you."

Two days later, the two journalists were invited to breakfast on Rue Serpente in Lucien's former quarter, where Lousteau still kept his room on Rue de la Harpe; and Lucien, who called for his friend, found him in the same plight as on the evening of his introduction to the world of letters; but he was no longer astonished, for his education had made him familiar with all the vicissitudes of a journalist's life, and his imagination could grasp anything. The great man from the provinces had received, staked and lost the price of more than one article, and had lost at the same time the desire to write them; he had written more columns than one, according to the ingenious process Lousteau had described to him when they were walking from Rue de la Harpe to

the Palais-Royal. Having fallen under the dominion of Barbet and Braulard, he traded in books and theatre tickets; he was ready to praise or attack any person or thing; indeed, at that moment, he felt a sort of delight in making all that he possibly could out of Lousteau before turning his back on the liberals, whom he proposed to attack the more vigorously, in that he had had a better opportunity to study them. For his part Lousteau received, to Lucien's prejudice, the sum of five hundred francs in cash from Fendant and Cavalier, under the name of commission, for having procured this future Walter Scott for the firm, who were in quest of a French Scott.

The house of Fendant and Cavalier was one of the publishing houses established without any capital of any sort, of which there were many in those days, and of which there will always be some so long as paper-makers and printers continue to give credit to publishers for a sufficient time to enable them to play seven or eight games of chance called publications. Then, as to-day, manuscripts purchased from the authors were paid for in notes coming due in six, nine and twelve months, a mode of payment based upon the nature of the sale which was settled between publishers upon notes running even longer. These publishers paid the paper-makers and printers in the same coin, so that they had in their hands in the course of a year, *gratis*, a whole library of a dozen to twenty works. Suppose that two or three of them were successful,

the profits upon those balanced the losses upon the others, and they held their own by striking an average. If their operations were all of doubtful success, or if, to their undoing, they happened upon good books which would not sell until they had been tasted and appreciated by the true public; if the discounting of their notes were burdensome, if they themselves suffered loss through failures, they tranquilly filed their schedules, without the slightest anxiety, being prepared beforehand for that result. Thus all the chances were in their favor; they gambled upon the great green-cloth of speculation with other people's funds and not their own. Fendant and Cavalier were in that position. Cavalier had contributed his tact, and Fendant his ingenuity. The partnership funds were eminently deserving of that title, for they consisted of a few thousand francs, the hardly-earned savings of their mistresses, out of which they both appropriated handsome salaries, which were very scrupulously expended in dinners to journalists and authors, and in tickets to the theatre, where, they said, much of their business was done. Both these semi-rascals were considered shrewd men; but Fendant was more crafty than Cavalier. The latter, true to his name, traveled, while Fendant looked after the business in Paris. The partnership was what a partnership between publishers always will be, a duel.

The partners occupied the ground floor of one of the old mansions on Rue Serpente, where the office of the firm is found at the end of a series



of spacious salons converted into warerooms. They had already published many novels, such as *La Tour du Nord*, *Le Marchand de Bénarès*, *La Fontaine du Sépulcre*, *Tékéli*, and the novels of Galt, an English author who did not find favor in France. The success of Walter Scott had concentrated the attention of publishers upon English productions to such an extent that they were all, like true Normans, intent upon the conquest of England; they were seeking Walter Scott there, as at a later period prospectors sought asphalt in gravelly soil and bitumen in swamps, and realized immense profits upon projected railroads. One of the most absurd errors that Parisian business men commit is always to expect success on the same lines on which it has been achieved before, whereas it always goes by contraries. In Paris especially, success kills success. On that theory, Fendant and Cavalier fearlessly inserted in large letters under the title of *Les Strelitz*, or *La Russie il y a cent ans*, after the style of Walter Scott. Fendant and Cavalier were thirsty for a pronounced success: a good book might help to float their piles of books, and they were lured by the prospect of having articles in the papers, the great condition of a successful sale in those days, for it rarely happened that a book was purchased on its own merits; it was almost always published for reasons entirely disconnected therewith. Fendant and Cavalier saw in Lucien the journalist and in his book a commodity whose early sales would carry them over the end of the month.

The journalists found the partners in their office, the contracts all ready, the notes signed. Such promptitude astonished Lucien. Fendant was a short, slender man and the owner of a villainous countenance: the expression of a Kalmuck, low forehead, flat nose, tightly-closed mouth, two small bright black eyes, irregular profile, harsh complexion, a voice that resembled the sound made by a cracked bell, in a word, all the external marks of a consummate rascal; but he made up for those disadvantages by his honeyed speech, he attained his ends by conversation. Cavalier, a plain-spoken bachelor, whom you would have taken for the driver of a diligence rather than for a publisher, had reddish hair, and the flushed face, heavy frame and everlasting chatter of a commercial traveller.

“We shall have no difficulty,” said Fendant to Lucien and Lousteau. “I have read the book, it is very literary and suits us so well that I have already sent the manuscript to the printing office. The contract is drawn in accordance with the terms stated; we never depart from any terms we have agreed to. Our notes are drawn at six, nine and twelve months, you can easily get them discounted and we will make the discount good. We have reserved the right to give the book another title: we don’t like *L’Archer de Charles IX.*, it doesn’t sufficiently arouse the curiosity of readers; there are several kings named Charles, and in the Middle Ages there were so many archers! Now if you should say *Le Soldat de Napoleon I* but *L’Archer de Charles IX.*!—

Cavalier would have to take a course in French history in order to sell a copy in the provinces."

"If you knew the people we do business with!" cried Cavalier.

"*La Saint-Barthélemy* would be better," said Fendant.

"*Catherine de Médicis*, or *La France sous Charles IX.* would be more like one of Walter Scott's titles," suggested Cavalier.

"We'll decide about that when the book's printed," said Fendant.

"As you please, provided that the title suits me," rejoined Lucien.

The contract having been read and signed and the copies exchanged, Lucien put the notes in his pocket with unparalleled satisfaction. All four then adjourned to Fendant's house where they had the most vulgar of breakfasts: oysters, beefsteak, kidneys with champagne and Brie cheese; but these commonplace dishes were accompanied by exquisite wines, chargeable to Cavalier, who knew a travelling salesman in the wine trade. Just as they were taking their places, the printer to whom the novel had been given made his appearance, and surprised Lucien by bringing him proofs of the first two signatures of his book.

"We mean to move rapidly," said Fendant to Lucien; "we rely on your book and we are devilishly in need of a success."

The breakfast lasted from noon until nearly five o'clock.

"Where can I get some money?" Lucien asked Lousteau.

"Let's go and see Barbet," replied Étienne.

The two friends, a little heated with wine, went down to Quai des Augustins.

"Coralie is surprised to the last degree at Florine's loss; Florine didn't tell her until yesterday, and then she attributed the trouble to you and seemed angry enough to leave you," said Lucien.

"It is true," said Lousteau, forgetting his usual prudence and opening himself to Lucien. "My friend—for you are my friend, Lucien; you lent me a thousand francs and you have never asked me for them but once. Beware of gambling. If I didn't gamble, I should be a happy man. I owe God and the devil. At this moment, I have bailiffs on my track; in fact, when I go to the Palais-Royal, I am compelled to double the dangerous headlands."

In the slang of the *viveurs*, to *double a headland* is to take a roundabout way, it may be to avoid passing a creditor's shop or to avoid a spot where you may meet him. Lucien, who could not safely pass through every street, knew the manœuvre without knowing its name.

"Do you owe so much?"

"A mere trifle!" Lousteau replied. "A thousand crowns would save my life. I made up my mind to reform and gamble no more, and in order to straighten myself out I've been doing a little *chantage*."

“What is *chantage*?” asked Lucien, to whom the word was unfamiliar.

“*Chantage* is an invention of the English press, recently imported into France. The *chanteurs* are men who are so placed that they can dictate the course of a newspaper. No manager or editor-in-chief of a paper is supposed ever to be concerned in *chantage*. They have their Giroudeaus and Philippe Bridaus. These *bravi* call upon a man who, for certain reasons, doesn't want to be talked about. Many people have peccadillos more or less serious on their consciences. There are many fortunes of suspicious origin in Paris, obtained by methods of doubtful legality, often by criminal manœuvres, which would furnish a crop of delightful anecdotes, like that of Fouché's gendarmes surrounding the spies of the préfet of police, who, not being in the secret of the counterfeiting of Bank of England notes, undertook to arrest the printers who were secretly employed under the orders of the minister; the story of Prince Galathionne's diamonds, too, the Maubreuil affair, the Pombreton succession, etc. The *chanteur* has procured something, an important document perhaps, and makes an appointment with the rich man. If the threatened party doesn't pay readily, the *chanteur* points to the press as being all ready to attack him and disclose his secrets. The man is afraid, he pays up, and the trick is done. Suppose you are engaged in some perilous undertaking which may fall through as a result of hostile newspaper articles: a *chanteur* is detailed to call on

you and suggest that you buy them off. There are even ministers to whom *chanteurs* are sent, and who stipulate with them that the paper shall attack their political acts and not attack them personally, or who waive the latter stipulation and ask mercy for their mistresses. Des Lupeaulx, that good-looking master of requests whom you know, is perpetually engaged in negotiations of this sort with newspaper men. The rascal has secured a wonderfully advantageous position at the very centre of power by his connections: he is at one and the same time the proxy of the press and the ambassador of ministers; he trades in self-esteem; he even carries the business into politics and induces the newspapers to keep silent as to such a loan, or such a concession, allotted without competition or publicity, in which a share is given to the wolves of the liberal bank. You did a little *chantage* with Dauriat, when he gave you a thousand crowns to stop you decrying Nathan. In the 18th century, when journalism was in its swaddling-clothes, *chantage* was practised by means of pamphlets, which favorites and noblemen paid to have destroyed. The inventor of *chantage* was one Aretino, a very great Italian, who imposed his will on kings as to-day a newspaper imposes its will on actors."

"What scheme did you try on Matifat to get your thousand crowns?"

"I inspired attacks on Florine in six papers and Florine complained to Matifat. Matifat asked Braulard to find out the motive of the attacks. Braulard

was fooled by Finot. Finot, for whose benefit I became a *chanteur*, told the druggist that you were belaboring Florine in Coralie's interest. Giroudeau went and told Matifat confidentially that everything could be arranged if he would consent to sell his one-sixth interest in Finot's review for ten thousand francs. Finot was to give me three thousand if the game worked. Matifat was on the point of concluding the bargain, only too happy to recover ten thousand francs of his thirty thousand, which he considered in great danger, for Florine told him a few days ago that Finot's review didn't take. He feared a call for more funds instead of a dividend. But the manager of the Panorama-Dramatique, before going into insolvency, wished to negotiate some accommodation notes; and in order to induce Matifat to discount them, he told him of the trick Finot was playing upon him. Matifat, like a shrewd tradesman, left Florine, kept his one-sixth and is waiting for us to come to him. Finot and I are howling with rage. We were unlucky enough to attack a man who doesn't care for his mistress, a heartless, soulless wretch. Unfortunately, Matifat's business isn't dependent on the press, we can't attack his pockets. A druggist can't be criticised as you would criticise hats, fashions, theatres, or objects of art. Cocoa, pepper, paints, dye-stuffs, opium can't be cried down. Florine is at her wits' end, the Panorama closes to-morrow and she doesn't know what is to become of her."

"As a result of the closing of the theatre, Coralie

is to make her *debut* at the Gymnase in a few days," said Lucien; "she can help Florine then."

"Never!" said Lousteau. "Coralie doesn't know much, but she's not fool enough yet to give herself a rival! Our affairs are in a pretty mess! But Finot is so anxious to get back his sixth—"

"Why so?"

"Because it's an excellent thing, my dear fellow. There's a chance of selling the review for three hundred thousand francs. In that case Finot would have a third, plus a commission allotted to him by his co-owners, which he shares with Des Lupeaulx. So I am going to propose a game of *chantage*."

"But *chantage* means your money or your life."

"Better than that," said Lousteau; "it's your money or your honor. Day before yesterday a small newspaper, whose proprietor had been refused a credit, informed its readers that a repeating watch surrounded with diamonds, belonging to one of the notabilities of the capital, had found its way, strangely enough, into the hands of a private in the Garde Royale, and promised to tell the whole story, said to be worthy of the Thousand and One Nights. The notability in question lost no time in inviting the editor-in-chief to dinner. Certainly the editor-in-chief gained something, but contemporaneous history has lost the anecdote of the watch. Whenever you see the press hot on the track of powerful men, you may know that there is something underneath,—discounts refused, or favors that they were unwilling to grant. This *chantage* in private mat-



ters is what rich Englishmen dread most keenly ; it contributes largely to the secret revenues of the British press, which is infinitely more depraved than ours. We are mere children ! In England they pay five or six thousand francs for a compromising letter to sell again."

"What method have you discovered of getting hold of Matifat ?" asked Lucien.

"My dear fellow," said Lousteau, "that beastly trader has written the most curious letters to Florine : orthography, style, sentiments, everything as comical as you can imagine. Now, Matifat is terribly afraid of his wife ; we can, without calling him by name, without giving him a chance to complain, deal a blow at him in the bosom of his Lares and Penates, where he fancies himself secure. Imagine his frenzy when he sees the first instalment of a little romance entitled *The Love Affairs of a Druggist*, after he has been fairly warned of the chance that has placed in the hands of the editor of such and such a paper certain letters wherein he speaks of little Cupid, wherein he writes *gamet* for *jamais*, wherein he says of Florine that she helps him to cross the desert of life, implying that he takes her for a camel. In short, there's enough to dispel our subscribers' blues for a fortnight in that eminently droll correspondence. We shall frighten him with a threat of an anonymous letter to inform his wife of the joke. But will Florine be willing to take it upon herself to appear to persecute Matifat ? She still has some principles, that is to say, hopes.

Perhaps she is keeping the letters for herself and wants a share. She's a fox, she's a pupil of mine. But when she knows that the sheriff's officer is no joke, when Finot has made her a suitable present or given her the hope of an engagement, she'll give me the letters and I'll turn them over to Finot for a consideration. Finot will hand the correspondence to his uncle, and Giroudeau will bring the druggist to terms."

This confidence cleared Lucien's brain, and his first thought was that he had some extremely dangerous friends; then he reflected that he must not quarrel with them, for he might need their formidable influence in case Madame d'Espard, Madame de Bargeton and Châtelet should fail to keep their word. Étienne and Lucien were by this time upon the quay in front of Barbet's wretched shop.

"Barbet," said Étienne to the publisher, "we have five thousand francs of Fendant and Cavalier, at six, nine and twelve months; do you want to discount their notes?"

"I'll give three thousand francs for them," said Barbet with imperturbable tranquillity.

"Three thousand francs!" cried Lucien.

"No one else will give you that," rejoined the publisher. "These gentlemen will fail within three months; but I know some good books that they have that sell a little slow; they can't afford to wait, and I'll buy them for cash and pay with their own notes; in that way I shall get the books at a discount of two thousand francs."

“Are you willing to lose two thousand francs?” Lousteau asked Lucien.

“No!” cried Lucien, dismayed at the result of this first attempt.

“You are wrong,” Lousteau replied.

“You can’t negotiate their paper anywhere,” said Barbet. “Monsieur’s book is Fendant and Cavalier’s last deal, they can’t print it except by leaving the copies as security with their printer; if it’s successful, it will only save them for six months, for they’ll burst, sooner or later! Those fellows drink more *petits verres* than they sell books! To me, their notes represent a stroke of business, so that I am willing to give more than the note-shavers who consider the value of every signature. The note-shaver’s business consists in finding out if each of three signers will pay thirty per cent in case of failure. But you have only two signatures to offer, and neither of them is worth ten per cent.”

The two friends gazed at each other, surprised to hear from the mouth of such a clown, an analysis in few words of the whole theory of bill discounting.

“No long words, Barbet,” said Lousteau. “What discounter can we go to?”

“Père Chaboisseau, Quai Saint-Michel, helped Fendant over last month, you know. If you refuse my proposition, see what you can do with him; but you’ll come back to me, and then I won’t give you more than twenty-five hundred francs.”

Étienne and Lucien betook themselves to Quai Saint-Michel, to a small house on a passageway

where Chaboisseau lived, and found him on the second floor, in an apartment furnished in most original fashion. This second-rate and yet millionaire banker, one of the regular note-brokers for the publishing trade, was very fond of the Greek style. The cornice of the room was Greek. The bed, classically pure in form, with purple hangings arranged in Grecian fashion along the wall, like the background of one of David's pictures, dated from the time of the Empire, when everything was made in that style. The chairs, the tables, the lamps, the candlesticks, the smallest accessories, selected no doubt with much patience from the stocks of furniture dealers, breathed the slender and fragile but refined grace of antiquity. This light mythological system of decoration was in striking contrast to the habits of the broker. It is a noteworthy fact that the most whimsical men are found among those whose business it is to deal in money. They are, in a certain sense, the libertines of thought. Being able to have whatever they want, and for that reason being tired of everything, they put forth tremendous efforts to shake off their indifference. Whoever studies them carefully, always finds some hobby, some corner of the heart through which they are accessible. Chaboisseau seemed intrenched in antiquity as in an impregnable camp.

"Doubtless, he is worthy of his sign,"\* said Étienne to Lucien with a smile.

Chaboisseau, a little man with powdered hair,

\* *Chaboisseau*, in French, a sea-serpent.

greenish frockcoat, walnut-colored waistcoat, black breeches, figured stockings and shoes that creaked when he walked, took the notes and examined them ; then he gravely handed them back to Lucien.

“ Messieurs Fendant and Cavalier are delightful fellows, most intelligent young men, but I have no money,” he said in a soft voice.

“ My friend will be generous in the matter of discount,” said Étienne.

“ I wouldn’t take those notes on any terms,” rejoined the little man, whose words descended upon Lousteau’s suggestion as the guillotine knife descends upon a man’s neck.

The two friends withdrew ; as they passed through the reception-room, to which point Chaboisseau, as a measure of precaution, escorted them, Lucien spied a pile of old books which the broker, once a bookseller, had purchased, and the novelist’s eye was attracted by a copy of the architect Ducerceau’s work on the royal palaces and famous châteaux of France, the plans and descriptions of which are given in that book with great accuracy.

“ Would you let me have that book ? ” Lucien asked.

“ Yes,” said Chaboisseau, once more a bookseller.

“ At what price ? ”

“ Fifty francs.”

“ It is too much, but I must have it, and I have

nothing to pay you with but the notes you won't take."

"You have a note for five hundred francs at six months, I'll take that," said Chaboisseau, who probably owed Fendant and Cavalier a balance of that amount.

The friends returned to the Grecian room, where Chaboisseau made up a little account, deducting interest at six per cent and six per cent commission, thirty francs in all; he also deducted fifty francs for the Ducerceau, and took from his strong-box, filled with glistening crowns, four hundred and twenty francs.

"Look you, Monsieur Chaboisseau, the notes are all good or all bad, why don't you discount the others?"

"I'm not discounting, I'm taking my pay for a sale," said the good man.

Étienne and Lucien were still laughing at Chaboisseau, without fully understanding him, when they arrived at Dauriat's shop, where Lousteau asked Gabusson to direct them to a note-broker. They took a cab forthwith and drove to Boulevard Poissonnière, armed with a letter of introduction Gabusson had given them, informing them that it was addressed to the most curious and extraordinary *individual*, to use his expression.

"If Samanon won't take your notes," Gabusson had said, "no one will discount them for you."

Dealer in old books on the ground floor, in old clothes on the first and in prohibited pictures on the

second, Samanon was also a pawnbroker. No one of the characters in Hoffmann's novels, no one of Walter Scott's repulsive misers can be compared to the creature that social and Parisian nature had produced in that man, if indeed Samanon were a man. Lucien could not restrain a horrified gesture at the sight of the little dried-up old man, whose bones were trying to pierce his perfectly tanned leather skin, covered with numerous green and yellow blotches, like one of Titian's or Paul Veronese's paintings when examined at close quarters. Samanon had one immovable, glass eye, the other was sharp and gleaming; he seemed to use the dead eye in discounting and the other in selling his obscene pictures. He wore a little wig of a rusty black color, with white hairs protruding from beneath it; his yellow forehead had a threatening look, his cheeks were creased straight across by his protruding jaws, his teeth, which were still white, seemed to be fastened to his lips, like those of a horse when it yawns. The contrast between his eyes and his leering mouth gave him a decidedly ferocious appearance. The stiff, wiry hairs of his beard looked as if they would prick like so many pins. A threadbare coat, which had reached the tinder stage, a rusty black cravat, worn ragged by his beard, which afforded a view of his neck, wrinkled like a turkey's, indicated that he cared but little to redeem his sinister countenance by his costume. The two journalists found him sitting in a horribly dirty counting-room, engaged in pasting labels on

the backs of some old books purchased at a sale. Having exchanged a glance in which they asked each other the thousand and one questions suggested by the existence of such a character, Lucien and Lousteau saluted him and handed him Gabusson's letter of introduction together with Fendant and Cavalier's notes. While Samanon was reading, a man entered that gloomy den—a man of lofty intellect, dressed in a short coat that seemed to have been cut out of zinc, it was so stiff and hard and impregnated with innumerable foreign substances.

"I need my coat, my black trousers, and my satin waistcoat," he said to Samanon, handing him a numbered card.

As soon as Samanon had pulled the copper knob of a bell, a woman came down stairs—a Norman, to judge by her fresh, rich coloring.

"Let monsieur have his clothes," he said, holding out his hand to the author. "It's a pleasure to deal with you; but one of your friends brought a young fellow here who tricked me shamefully!"

"The idea of anybody tricking him!" said the artist to the two journalists, pointing to Samanon with a most comical expression.

Like the *lazzaroni* who paid the *monte-di-pieta* for the privilege of wearing their holiday clothes for a single day, the great man produced thirty sous, which the broker's skinny, yellow hand seized and dropped into his cash-drawer.

"What a strange business you do with him," said Lousteau to this great artist, who was a slave to



NOTES BY FENDANT AND CAVALIER

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opium, and who as he passed his time in imagination in enchanted palaces, no longer had the will or the power to create.

“This man lends much more than the *Mont-de-piété* on pawnable articles, and he has, moreover, the ghastly kindness to allow you to use them on occasions when a man must be decently dressed,” he replied. “I am going to dine at the Kellers’ to-night with my mistress. It is easier for me to get thirty sous than two hundred francs, so I come here for my wardrobe, which has been worth a hundred francs to this charitable usurer in the past six months. Samanon has already devoured my library, book by book.”\*

“And sou by sou,” laughed Lousteau.

“I’ll give you fifteen hundred francs,” said Samanon to Lucien.

Lucien leaped into the air as if the broker had plunged a red-hot needle into his heart. Samanon was scrutinizing the notes closely, paying particular attention to the dates.

“Even then,” said the usurer, “I must see Fendant, who will have to give me some books as security. You’re not worth much,” he said to Lucien, “you live with Coralie, and your furniture has been seized.”

Lousteau glanced at Lucien, who took his notes and rushed out from the shop to the boulevard, saying:

“Is he the devil?”

\* *Livre*, means not merely book, but was formerly the denomination of the coin now generally called a *franc*.

The poet gazed for some minutes at the little shop, which called forth a smile from all the passers-by, it was such a wretched little place and the ticketed books in the boxes were so shabby and dirty.

“What sort of business is done there?” they asked one another.

A few moments later the great unknown, who was to take part, ten years thereafter, in the vast but unsupported enterprise of the Saint-Simonians, came from the shop very well dressed, smiled at the two journalists and walked with them toward the Passage des Panoramas, to complete his toilet by having his boots polished.

“When Samanon enters a publisher’s, printer’s or paper-maker’s establishment, the owner is lost,” he said to his friends. “He is like an undertaker’s man, come to take measurements for a coffin.”

“You won’t get your notes discounted,” said Étienne to Lucien.

“Where Samanon refuses,” said the stranger, “no one accepts, for he is the *ultima ratio*! He is one of the *sheep* employed by Gigonnet, Palma, Werbrust, Gobseck and the other crocodiles, who swim about in the Place de Paris, and with whom every man who has his fortune to make or to unmake must come in contact, sooner or later.”

“If you can’t discount your notes at fifty per cent,” said Étienne, “you must exchange them for cash.”

“How?”

“Give them to Coralie and she’ll take them to Camusot.—You kick at that,” continued Lousteau, as Lucien checked him with a horrified start. “What childishness! Can you put such a foolish whim as that in the scales with your whole future?”

“At all events, I shall take this money to Coralie,” said Lucien.

“Another idiotic idea!” cried Lousteau. “You won’t do any good with four hundred francs when you need four thousand. Let’s keep enough to get drunk with in case of loss, and go and play.”

“That’s good advice,” said the great unknown.

As they were within four steps of Frascati’s, the words had a magnetic effect. The two friends dismissed their cab and went up to the gambling rooms. At first they won three thousand francs, then fell back to five hundred, won three thousand seven hundred, were reduced to a hundred sous, went up once more to two thousand, and risked them all upon the even, in order to double them at a single stroke; as even had not won for five deals, they chose that. Odd was again the winner. Thereupon Lucien and Lousteau descended the stairs of that famous establishment, having wasted two hours in consuming excitement. They had kept a hundred francs. On the steps of the little peristyle with two pillars, supporting on the outside a little sheet-iron porch, which more than one eye has gazed upon

with love or despair, Lousteau said, seeing Lucien's inflamed glance :

“ Let's keep only fifty francs.”

They went upstairs again. In an hour they had won three thousand francs ; they staked them on the red, which had lost five times in succession, trusting to the chance which was responsible for their previous loss. Black won. It was six o'clock.

“ Let's keep only twenty-five francs,” said Lucien.

This fresh attempt lasted but a short time ; the twenty-five francs were lost in ten deals. Lucien savagely threw down his last twenty-five francs on the figure representing his age and won ; no words can describe the trembling of his hand, when he took the rake to draw in the coins the banker threw down one by one. He gave Lousteau ten louis and said :

“ Off with you to Véry's !”

Lousteau understood and went to order the dinner. Lucien, left alone at the gaming-table, staked his thirty louis on the red and won. Emboldened then by the secret voice that gamblers sometimes listen to, he left the whole upon the red and won ; there-upon his stomach became like a raging furnace ! Despite the voice, he staked his hundred and twenty louis on the black and lost. Then he felt within him the delightful sensation that takes the place of the gambler's terrible excitement when, having nothing more to risk, he leaves the burning palace where his fleeting dreams have come and gone. He joined Lousteau at Véry's, where, as La Fontaine



says, he hurled himself into cookery, and drowned his cares in wine. At nine o'clock he was so completely intoxicated that he did not understand why his concierge on Rue de Vendôme sent him to Rue de la Lune.

“Mademoiselle Coralie has given up her apartments and gone to the address written on this paper.”

Lucien, too drunk to be astonished at anything, re-entered the cab that had brought him and was driven to Rue de la Lune, making puns on the name of the street on the way. During that morning the failure of the Panorama-Dramatique had been announced. The actress, in dismay, instantly sold all her furniture, with her creditors' consent, to little Père Cardot, who, in order not to change the character of the apartments, installed Florentine there. Coralie paid up everything and satisfied the landlord's claim. During the time consumed by this operation, which she called *a house cleaning*, Bérénice was arranging certain indispensable articles of furniture, purchased at second hand, in a small suite of three rooms on the fourth floor of a house on Rue de la Lune, within two steps of the Gymnase. Coralie was awaiting Lucien there, having saved from the wreck her spotless love and a bag of twelve hundred francs. Lucien, in his drunken loquacity, described his misfortunes to Coralie and Bérénice.

“You did right, my angel,” said the actress, throwing her arms about his neck. “Bérénice will find a way to negotiate your notes with Braulard.”



\*

The next morning Lucien awoke amid the enchanting joys that Coralie lavished upon him. The actress was more loving and tender than ever before, as if to make up for the wretchedness of their new home with the richest treasures of her heart. She was ravishingly beautiful, her locks peeping out from beneath a fresh, white silk handkerchief, her eyes sparkling with laughter, her words as bright as the rays of the rising sun that streamed in through the windows to gild their charming poverty. The decent bedroom was hung with a sea-green paper with a red border ; there were two mirrors, one on the mantel and one over the commode. A second-hand carpet, purchased by Bérénice with her own money, notwithstanding Coralie's orders, covered the cold bare floor. The clothes of the lovers were bestowed in a wardrobe with a glass door and in the commode. The mahogany chairs were upholstered in blue cotton. Bérénice had saved from the crash a clock and two porcelain vases, four silver covers and six small spoons. The dining-room, which was nearer the street than the bedroom, was like that of a government clerk at twelve hundred francs. The kitchen faced the landing. Bérénice slept in an

attic on the floor above. The rent was not more than three hundred francs. The wretched house had a false porte-cochère, and the concierge's quarters were in one of the condemned wings, in which a small window had been cut to enable him to keep watch upon seventeen tenants. Such beehives are called, in notarial parlance, productive houses. Lucien spied a desk, an armchair, pens, ink and paper. The cheerfulness of Bérénice, who counted upon Coralie's début at the Gymnase, and the merry humor of the actress, who was looking over her part, a roll of paper tied with a bit of blue ribbon, banished the anxiety and gloom of the now thoroughly sober poet.

"If only nothing is known in society of this come-down," said Lucien, "we shall come out all right. After all, we have forty-five hundred francs before us! I am going to make the most of my new position on the royalist newspapers. To-morrow we begin the publication of *Le Réveil*; I know something about journalism now, and I shall make my way!"

Coralie, who saw only love in these words, kissed the lips that had uttered them. Bérénice had laid the table before the fire, and served a modest breakfast of scrambled eggs, two cutlets, and coffee with cream. There was a knock at the door. Three sincere friends, D'Arthez, Léon Giraud and Michel Chrestien appeared before the astonished eyes of Lucien, who, deeply touched, invited them to share his breakfast.

“No,” said D’Arthez, “we have come upon more serious business than simply to condole with you; for we know all, we have been to Rue de Vendôme. You know my opinions, Lucien. Under any other circumstances, I should rejoice to find you adopting my political convictions; but, being in the position in which you have placed yourself by writing for the liberal papers, you could not join the ranks of the ultras without injuring your character forever and ruining your life. We have come to implore you, in the name of our friendship, however weak it may have become, not to debase yourself so. You have attacked the romanticists, the Right and the government; you cannot now defend the government, the Right and the romanticists.”

“The reasons that guide my action are drawn from a higher order of ideas; the end will justify all I do,” said Lucien.

“Perhaps you do not understand our position,” said Léon Giraud. “The government, the court, the Bourbons, the absolutist party,—or, if you choose to include them all in a general expression, the system that is opposed to the constitutional system and that splits into several widely divergent parts as soon as the means to be taken to stifle the Revolution come under discussion,—are agreed upon one point, the necessity of putting down the press. The foundation of *Le Réveil*, *La Foudre*, *Le Drapeau Blanc*, all of which are intended to reply to the slanders, the insults, the mockery of the liberal press,—which I do not uphold in this matter, for the

disregard of the grandeur of our priesthood is precisely what has led us to publish a dignified and sober newspaper whose influence will in a short time attain respectable and imposing proportions and make itself felt," he said parenthetically ; "as I was saying, this royalist and ministerial artillery is a first attempt at reprisal, undertaken to give the liberals blow for blow, wound for wound. What do you think will happen, Lucien ? A majority of the subscribers belong to the Left. In the press, as in war, victory will perch on the banner of the largest battalions ! You will be called infamous wretches, liars, enemies of the people ; the others will be defenders of the country, men of honor, martyrs, although more hypocritical and more perfidious than you perhaps. By this means, the pernicious influence of the press will be increased, as its most odious enterprises will be legitimized and consecrated. Insult and personalities will become one of its recognized privileges, adopted for the benefit of subscribers and continued in force as something that has been tested by use on both sides. When the evil is disclosed in its full extent, the restriction and prohibition laws and the censorship, established on account of the assassination of the Duc de Berri and abolished since the opening of the Chambers, will be revived. Do you know what the French people will conclude from this discussion ? They will believe the insinuations of the liberal press, they will believe that the Bourbons mean to attack the hardly won, material results of the Revolution, and they

will rise some fine day and expel the Bourbons. Not only are you degrading yourself, but some day you will find yourself in the beaten party. You are too young, too recent an addition to journalism; you know too little of its secret springs and its tricks; you have aroused too much jealousy to be able to resist the general *hue and cry* that will be raised against you in the liberal papers. You will be drawn on by the factions, which are still in the paroxysm of fever; but their fever has taken a different turn, and the brutal deeds of 1815 and 1816 are succeeded by ideas, by the oral conflicts of the Chamber, and by discussions in the newspapers."

"My friends," said Lucien, "I am not the light-headed creature, the mere poet you choose to see in me. Whatever may happen, I shall have gained an advantage that the triumph of the liberal party can never give me. By the time you win your victory, my object will be attained."

"We will cut off your—hair," said Michel Chrestien with a laugh.

"I shall have children then," said Lucien, "and if you cut off my head no harm will be done."

The three friends did not understand Lucien, whose relations with fashionable society had developed in him in the highest degree the pride of birth and aristocratic vanity. The poet believed, and with reason, too, that he possessed an immense fortune in his beauty and wit when supported by the name and title of Comte de Rubempré. Ma-

dame d'Espard, Madame de Bargeton and Madame de Montcornet held him by that thread as a child holds a beetle. Lucien no longer flew outside of a well-defined circle. The words: "He is one of us, his opinions are all right!" uttered three days before in the salons of Mademoiselle des Touches, had intoxicated him, to say nothing of the congratulations he had received from the Ducs de Lenoncourt, de Navarreins and de Grandlieu, from Rastignac, Blondet, the lovely Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, the Comte d'Esgrignon, and Des Lupeaulx, the most influential persons and in the highest favor at court of the whole royalist party.

"Well, we can say no more," rejoined D'Arthez. "It will be harder for you than for any other man to keep yourself pure and to retain your own esteem. I know you well, and you will suffer keenly when you find that you are despised by the very people to whom you have devoted yourself."

The three friends took their leave without offering to shake Lucien's hand. Lucien sat for some moments thoughtful and sad.

"Bah! let those idiots go," said Coralie, jumping upon Lucien's knees and throwing her lovely white arms around his neck, "they take life seriously, and life is a joke. At all events, you shall be Comte Lucien de Rubempré. If necessary, I'll cajole the chancellor. I know where to take that libertine of a Des Lupeaulx, who will get your ordinance signed. Didn't I tell you that, when you needed



only one step more to seize your prey, you should have Coralie's body?"

The next morning Lucien allowed his name to be published among the staff of *Le Réveil*. The name was announced as a conquest in the prospectus, a hundred thousand copies of which were distributed through the efforts of the ministry. Lucien attended the triumphal banquet at Robert's, within two steps of Frascati's, which lasted nine hours, and which was attended by all the *coryphées* of the royalist press: Martainville, Auger, Destains and a multitude of authors, still living, who in those days *made monarchy and religion*, to use a time-honored expression.

"We're going to give it to the liberals!" said Hector Merlin.

"Messieurs," replied Nathan, who had enlisted under that banner, judiciously concluding that it was better to have the authorities for him than against him in the management of the theatre he was thinking of establishing, "if we make war on them, let us do it seriously; let us not fire cork bullets! Let us attack all the classic and liberal writers without distinction of age or sex, put them to the sword of satire, and give no quarter."

"Let us deal honorably, let us not force presents, books and money from the publishers. Let us restore the good name of journalism."

"Good," said Martainville. "*Justum et tenacem propositi virum!* Let us be implacable and cutting. I will paint La Fayette as he is: Harlequin I!"

"I," said Lucien, "will look after the heroes of *Le Constitutionnel*, Sergent Mercier, the *Complete Works of Monsieur de Jouy* and the illustrious orators of the Left!"

War to the death was proposed and unanimously voted, at one o'clock in the morning, by the editors, who drowned all differences of opinion and all their ideas in a bowl of fiery punch.

"*We have had a famous monarchical and religious orgy,*" said one of the most celebrated writers in romantic literature, as they separated.

This historical remark, repeated by a publisher who was present at the dinner, appeared the next day in *Le Miroir*, but the disclosure was attributed to Lucien. This defection was the signal for a terrific outcry in the liberal papers; Lucien became their *bête noire* and was berated in the most cruel fashion: they described the misfortunes of his sonnets, they informed the public that Dauriat preferred to lose three thousand francs rather than publish them, they called him the sonnetless poet!

One morning, in the same paper in which Lucien had begun his journalistic career so brilliantly, he read the following lines, written solely for his eye, for the public could hardly understand the jest:

\* \* \* *If Dauriat the publisher persists in refusing to publish the sonnets of the future French Petrarch, we shall show ourselves generous foes and open our columns to those poems, which must be very interesting,*

*to judge from the specimen that a friend of the author has handed us.*

And beneath that terrible advertisement, the poet read this sonnet, which made him weep hot tears :

A sorry plant, whose doubtful worth its aspect told,  
Upsprang within a garden bed one lovely morn ;  
It promised, though, that glorious colors would adorn  
Its stalk, and all its noble pedigree unfold.

They suffered it. But now its gratitude behold !  
At once its fairer sisters' charms it put to scorn,  
But these, at length, their patience by its boasts o'erborne,  
To prove its birth defied it with a challenge bold.

And then it bloomed. But never vulgar, cheating clown  
Was hissed and scorned as did those cultured flowers drown  
With hisses, jeers and shame, that paltry flower that day.

Then passed the master by, he bruised and struck it down :  
At eve, a lonely ass came on its grave to bray,  
For truth to tell, 'twas but a sorry THISTLE \* crown.

Vernou spoke of Lucien's passion for gambling, and referred to the *Archer* in advance of its appearance as an anti-national work in which the author took the part of the murderous Catholics against the Calvinist victims. As the days passed, the quarrel grew more bitter. Lucien counted upon his friend Lousteau, who owed him a thousand francs, and with whom he had had divers secret understandings; but Lousteau became his sworn enemy. It came about in this way. Nathan had been in love with

\* *Thistle*, in French, is *Chardon*.

Florine for three months, and did not know how to take her away from Lousteau, to whom she was, moreover, a genuine providence. In view of her distress and despair upon being left without an engagement, Nathan, Lucien's colleague, went to Coralie and begged her to offer Florine a part in a play of his own, promising to obtain a conditional engagement at the Gymnase for the actress without a theatre. Florine, drunken with ambition, did not hesitate. She had had time to fathom Lousteau. Nathan was an ambitious man of letters and a politician, a man whose energy was adapted to his needs, while Lousteau's vices neutralized his will. The actress, who was determined to reappear with renewed *éclat*, gave the druggist's letters to Nathan and Nathan forced Matifat to redeem them with the sixth-interest in the review which Finot coveted. Florine was thereupon installed in a magnificent suite on Rue Hauteville, and took Nathan for her protector in the face of the whole journalistic and theatrical world. Lousteau was so severely hit by this episode that he wept toward the end of a dinner that his friends gave him to console him. At that debauch, the guests agreed that Nathan had played a fair game. Some writers, Finot and Vernou among them, knew of the dramatist's passion for Florine; but they all said that Lucien, by meddling in the affair, had been false to the most sacred laws of friendship. The spirit of faction, the desire to serve his new friends, made the new royalist's course inexcusable.

“Nathan is carried away by the logic of the passions, while the great man from the provinces, as Blondet calls him, is guided by his own interest!” cried Bixiou.

Thus the ruin of Lucien, the intruder, the little rascal who wanted to swallow the whole world, was unanimously resolved upon and deeply meditated. Vernou, who hated him, agreed to give him no rest. To avoid paying Lousteau a thousand crowns, Finot accused Lucien of having prevented him from making fifty thousand francs, by betraying to Nathan the secret of the scheme against Matifat. Nathan, acting upon Florine's advice, had secured Finot's support by selling him his *little sixth* for fifteen thousand francs. Lousteau, who lost his thousand crowns, could not forgive Lucien that tremendous blow at his interests. The wounds of self-esteem become incurable when the oxide of money gets into them. No words, no painting can depict the fury that seizes upon a writer when his self-esteem is wounded, or the energy that comes to his aid when he feels the sting of the poisoned arrows of raillery. They whose energy and power of resistance are stimulated by the attack, quickly succumb. Men of tranquil temperament, whose conduct is based upon the profound oblivion that awaits insulting newspaper articles, display true literary courage. Thus, at first glance, the weak seem to be the strong; but their resistance is of brief duration.

During the first fortnight, Lucien, in a furious rage, discharged a perfect hailstorm of articles in

the royalist papers, in which he and Hector Merlin shared the burden of the critical work. Every day, from the ramparts of *Le Réveil*, he fired the full battery of his wit, supported by Martainville, the only man who assisted him without any hidden motive, and who was not in the secret of the agreements executed jestingly after drinking, or at Dauriat's in the wooden galleries, or behind the scenes at the theatre, between the newspaper men of both parties, secretly bound by the ties of good-fellowship. When Lucien went to the lobby of the Vaudeville, he was no longer greeted as a friend; only the men of his own party shook hands with him, whereas Nathan, Hector Merlin and Théodore Gaillard fraternized openly with Finot, Lousteau, Vernou and some journalists who rejoiced in the title of *good fellows*. At that period the lobby of the Vaudeville was the headquarters for literary slander, a sort of boudoir frequented by men of all parties, politicians and magistrates. After administering a reprimand to one of his colleagues in one of the chambers of the Council for sweeping the wings with his robe, a certain president found himself robe to robe with the culprit in the lobby of the Vaudeville. Lousteau at last gave Nathan his hand. Finot was there almost every evening. When Lucien had time, he went there to study the manner of his enemies, and the unhappy youth found them always implacably cold.

In those days, party spirit engendered animosities of a much more serious character than is the case

to-day. To-day everything is softened by a too great tension of the springs. To-day the critic, after immolating a man's book, offers him his hand. The victim must embrace the immolator, under pain of having to run the gauntlet of bitter satire. If he refuse, a writer is said to be unsociable, an unpleasant bedfellow, a mass of self-esteem, unapproachable, ill-tempered, revengeful. To-day, when an author has received in his back the dagger-thrusts of treachery, when he has avoided the snares laid for him with outrageous hypocrisy and has submitted to the most inhuman treatment, he hears his assassins wishing him good-day, and putting forth claims to his esteem, that is to say, to his friendship. Everything is excused and justified in an age when virtue has been transformed into vice, as certain vices have been exalted into virtues. Good-fellowship has become the most sacred form of liberty. The leading champions of the most contrary opinions speak in honeyed words and with courteous gestures. But in those days, if tradition is to be believed, it required some courage for certain royalist writers and certain liberal writers to meet at the same theatre. Hatefully insulting remarks were whispered. Glances were loaded like pistols, the least spark might discharge the first shot of a quarrel. Who has not heard his neighbor mutter imprecations at the entrance of men more especially marked out as targets for the attacks of the respective parties? There were but two parties in those days, royalists and liberals, romanticists and classicists,

the same hatred in two guises, a hatred which made the scaffolds of the Convention comprehensible.

Lucien, having become a frantic royalist and romanticist instead of the ardent liberal and Voltairean that he had been in the beginning, found himself therefore compelled to bear the burden of animosities which passed over the head of the man most abhorred by the liberals of those days, Martainville, the only man who defended him and was fond of him. His support under those circumstances was an injury to Lucien. Parties are ungrateful to their scouts, they readily abandon their forlorn hope. In politics especially, it is necessary for those who wish to succeed, to follow the main army. The favorite trick of the small papers was to couple the names of Lucien and Martainville. Liberalism threw them into each other's arms. Their friendship, whether genuine or pretended, was responsible for several articles written with abundance of gall by Félicien, who was frantic at Lucien's success in society and believed, as did all of the poet's former comrades, in his approaching elevation. His alleged treachery was venomously exaggerated therefore and embellished with all manner of aggravating circumstances. Lucien was called Judas the Little, and Martainville, Judas the Great, for Martainville was accused, rightly or wrongly, of having betrayed the Bridge of Pecq to the foreign armies. Lucien laughingly informed Des Lupeaulx that, for his own part, he had certainly betrayed the Asses' Bridge. Lucien's luxurious habits, although a hollow mock



ery, and based solely upon hopes, disgusted his friends, who never forgave him his lowly estate,—for to their minds he was still lowly,—or his magnificence on Rue de Vendôme. They all felt instinctively that a young, clever and handsome man, corrupted by themselves, might reach any height; therefore they resorted to any means to overthrow him.

A few days before Coralie's début at the Gymnase, Lucien entered the lobby of the Vaudeville arm-in-arm with Hector Merlin. Merlin was scolding him for assisting Nathan in the Florine affair.

"You have made two mortal enemies of Lousteau and Nathan," he said, "I gave you good advice and you didn't act upon it. You distributed praise and benefactions, and you will be cruelly punished for your good deeds. Florine and Coralie will never be on good terms while they are on the same stage: each will want to outdo the other. You have only our papers to defend Coralie; Nathan, over and above the advantage due to his being a writer of plays, does as he pleases with the liberal papers in theatrical matters, and he has been in journalism a little longer than you have."

These words confirmed Lucien's secret fears, for he found neither Nathan nor Gaillard as frank and open with him as he had a right to expect; but he could not complain, he was such a recent convert! Gaillard crushed him by informing him that new recruits must give pledges for a long while before

their party could place confidence in them. The poet encountered in the royalist and ministerial newspaper offices a jealousy of which he had not dreamed, the jealousy that breaks out among all classes of men in the presence of any sort of a prize to be divided, and which makes them like dogs fighting for a bone; they growl like them, strike the same attitudes, and display the same characteristics. These writers played one another innumerable vile tricks in secret, in order to injure one another in the eyes of the ruling powers; they accused one another of lukewarmness, and they resorted to the most perfidious machinations to rid themselves of a rival. The liberals had no subject of intestine warfare, being far removed from power and its favors. When he found himself encompassed by this intricate network of rival ambitions, Lucien had not the courage to draw his sword and cut the knots, nor did he feel that he had the patience to untie them; he could be neither the Arétin nor the Beaumarchais nor the Fréron of his time, so he clung to his single desire: to obtain his ordinance, realizing that that would enable him to make a wealthy marriage. His fortune would then depend upon a single hazard which his personal beauty would assist him to win. But Lousteau, who had placed so much confidence in him, knew his secret; the journalist knew at what point he could wound the Angoulême poet to the death: so it was that, on the day when Merlin went with him to the Vaudeville, Étienne had prepared a

horrible trap for Lucien, into which the poor boy was fated to fall and be overcome.

“There’s our handsome Lucien,” said Finot, leading Des Lupeaulx, with whom he was talking, up to Lucien, whose hand he took with deceitful catlike demonstrations of friendship. I know no instance of so rapid a rise in fortune as his,” he added, looking from Lucien to the master of requests. There are two sorts of fortune in Paris: there is material fortune, money, which any one can pile up, and moral fortune, connections, position, access to a certain social circle inaccessible to some other persons, whatever their material fortune, and my friend—”

“Our friend,” said Des Lupeaulx, with an affectionate glance at Lucien.

“Our friend,” continued Finot, patting Lucien’s hand between his own, “has made a brilliant fortune in that respect. In truth, Lucien has more resources, more talent, more wit than all his envious detractors, and in addition he is ravishingly handsome; his former friends will never forgive his success, they say he has had luck on his side.”

“Such luck,” said Des Lupeaulx, “never falls to the lot of fools or incapables. Can Bonaparte’s career be called luck? There were twenty generals in chief who commanded the army of Italy before him, just as there are at this moment a hundred young men who would like to be received by Mademoiselle des Touches, whom the world is already beginning to talk about as your wife, my dear

fellow," said Des Lupeaulx, putting his hand on Lucien's shoulder. "Oh! you're in high favor. Madame d'Espard, Madame de Bargeton and Madame de Montcornet are mad over you. Aren't you to be at Madame Firmiani's this evening and at the Duchesse de Grandlieu's rout to-morrow?"

"Yes," said Lucien.

"Permit me to introduce a young banker, Monsieur du Tillet, a man worthy of your friendship; he has succeeded in making a handsome fortune in a short time."

Lucien and Du Tillet bowed and entered into conversation, and the banker invited Lucien to dinner. Finot and Des Lupeaulx, two men of equal profundity, who knew each other well enough to be friends always, seemed to be continuing the conversation they had begun; they left Lucien, Merlin, Du Tillet and Nathan talking together and walked toward one of the divans with which the lobby of the Vaudeville was furnished.

"Come, my dear friend," said Finot to Des Lupeaulx, "tell me the truth! Are these people Lucien's protectors in good faith? for he has become the *bête-noire* of all my editors; and before helping in their conspiracy, I determined to consult you to find out whether it wouldn't be better to defeat it and assist him."

At that point, the master of requests and Finot gazed at each other for a moment with profound attention.

"My dear fellow," said Des Lupeaulx, "how

can you imagine that the Marquise d'Espard, Châtelet and Madame de Bargeton,—who has had the baron made préfet of the Charente and a count, so that she can return in triumph to Angoulême—can forgive Lucien for his attacks upon them? They enticed him into the royalist party in order to wipe him out. To-day they are all seeking excuses for refusing what they promised the child; can you think of any? you will confer an enormous favor on those two women, and some day or other they will remember it. I have their secret; they hate the young fellow so bitterly that they surprised me. This Lucien might have rid himself of his most cruel enemy, Madame de Bargeton, by ceasing his attacks, and on no other conditions than those which all women love to agree to; you understand? He is young and handsome, and he might have drowned hatred in torrents of love, then he would have become Comte de Rubempré and the Cuttlefish would have obtained some place for him in the king's household, some sinecure! Lucien would have made a very pretty reader to Louis XVIII., or he would have been made a librarian somewhere or other, a burlesque master of requests or manager of something in the *Menus-Plaisirs*. The little fool missed his chance. Perhaps it is for that that he has not been pardoned. Instead of imposing conditions, he had to submit to them. On the day that Lucien allowed himself to be caught by the promise of a royal ordinance, Châtelet took a long step forward. Coralie has been the boy's ruin. If he hadn't had

the actress for his mistress, he would have wanted the Cuttlefish again, and he'd have had her too."

"Then we can afford to crush him?" said Finot.

"By what means?" asked Des Lupeaulx carelessly, eager for an opportunity to curry favor with the Marquise d'Espard.

"He has a contract that binds him to do certain work on Lousteau's little paper; we shall be the better able to keep him at work writing, because he hasn't a sou. If the Keeper of the Seals feels annoyed by a satirical article, and it is proved to him that Lucien wrote it, he will look upon him as a man unworthy the king's favor. In order to make this provincial great man lose his head a bit, we have made arrangements for the downfall of Coralie; he will see his mistress hissed and unemployed. When the ordinance is once indefinitely suspended, we will joke our victim about his aristocratic pretensions; we will speak of his mother the nurse and of his father the apothecary. Lucien's courage is only skin-deep, he will strike his colors and we'll send him back where he came from. Nathan bought for me, through Florine, the one-sixth of the review that Matifat owned, I have succeeded in buying the paper-dealer's share, and Dauriat and I are sole owners; we can come to an understanding, you and I, to absorb the review for the benefit of the court. I took Florine and Nathan under my protection only on condition that *my* one-sixth should be restored; they sold it to me and I

must help them along ; but, first, I wanted to know about Lucien's chances—”

“ You are worthy of your name,” laughed Des Lupeaulx. “ Good ! I love men like you—”

“ Well, can't you procure Florine a definite engagement ? ” asked Finot.

“ Yes ; but get rid of Lucien for us, for Rastignac and De Marsay don't want to hear of him again.”

“ Sleep in peace,” said Finot. “ Nathan and Merlin will always have articles ready that Gaillard has promised to pass ; Lucien won't be able to get a line accepted, and in that way we shall cut off his supplies. He will have only Martainville's paper to defend himself and Coralie : one paper against all—he can't resist.”

“ I will tell you the vulnerable points of the ministry ; but give me the manuscript of the article you force Lucien to write,” rejoined Des Lupeaulx, who was very careful not to tell Finot that the royal ordinance promised to Lucien was a joke.

Des Lupeaulx left the lobby. Finot went up to Lucien and, in the affable tone by which so many people are deceived, explained to him why he could not waive his claim to the editorial work to which he was entitled. Finot recoiled at the idea of a lawsuit which would ruin his friend's hopes based upon his connection with the royalist party. Finot liked men who had sufficient strength of mind to change their opinions boldly. Were not Lucien and he certain to meet more or less, and were there not a thousand little favors they could do each other ?

Lucien needed a sure man in the liberal party to direct attacks upon the ministerials or ultras who refused to assist him.

“If they are fooling you, what will you do?” concluded Finot. “If some minister, thinking that he holds you tight by the halter of your apostasy, ceases to fear you and sends you to the devil, won’t you feel obliged to set a few dogs upon him to bite his calves? Very good; you have a mortal quarrel with Lousteau, who is calling for your head. Félicien and you don’t speak to each other. I alone am left! It is one of the laws of my business to live on good terms with all really strong men. In the society that you frequent, you can render me the equivalent of the services I will render you in the press. But business, first of all! Send me some purely literary articles, they won’t compromise you and you will have lived up to our agreement.”

Lucien saw nothing but friendly feeling, with an intermixture of shrewd business tact, in Finot’s propositions, and that gentleman’s flattery and Des Lupeaulx’s had put him in excellent humor: he thanked Finot!



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In the lives of ambitious men and of all those who can gain their ends only by the aid of men and things, by a plan of conduct shrewdly devised and persistently followed out and adhered to, there comes a cruel moment when some mysterious power subjects them to bitter trials: everything fails them at once; on all sides threads break or become entangled and misfortune comes upon them from all quarters. When a man loses his head in the midst of this moral confusion, he is lost. They who are able to resist this first rebellion of circumstances, who stiffen their limbs and let the tornado pass, who escape by putting forth a super-human effort and climbing to a higher level, are the really strong men. Every man, therefore, unless he be born rich, has what we must call his fatal week. In Napoleon's case, that week was the retreat from Moscow. That week had now come for Lucien. Things had gone too well with him in society and in literature; he had been too fortunate, and now he was to see men and things turning against him. The first pang was the keenest and most cruel of all; he felt it where he deemed himself invulnerable, in his heart and in his love.

Coralie was not intellectual ; but, being endowed with a loving heart, she had the faculty of laying it bare by those sudden inspirations which make great actresses. This strange phenomenon, when it has not by long use become a habit, is subject to individual caprices of character and often to a praiseworthy modesty which influences the conduct of actresses who are still young. Innocent and timid at heart, though outwardly bold and forward as an actress should be, Coralie, still overflowing with love, was conscious of a reaction of her woman's heart upon her actress's mask. The art of counterfeiting emotion, that sublime form of deception, had not yet triumphed over nature in her. She was ashamed of giving to the public what belonged to love alone. And then, too, she had a weakness that is peculiar to true-hearted women. Knowing that it was her mission to reign, a true queen, upon the stage, she nevertheless felt the need of applause. Incapable of facing an audience with which she was not in sympathy, she always trembled when she went upon the stage ; and, at such times, a lack of warmth in the audience might freeze her. This terrible sensation made every new rôle seem to her a new début. Applause caused a sort of intoxication in her, without effect upon her vanity but indispensable to her courage ; a murmur of disapproval or the silence of an indifferent audience deadened all her powers ; a well-filled, attentive hall, kindly and admiring glances, electrified her ; then she seemed to be in communication with all those noble hearts, and

felt that she had the power to move, to exalt them. This twofold effect disclosed the nervous nature and the constitution of her genius, betraying at the same time the poor child's affectionate disposition and delicate sensibilities.

Lucien at last appreciated the treasures locked up within that heart, and realized what a child his mistress was. Unskilled in the ruses of the actress, Coralie was incapable of defending herself against the rivalries and intriguing of the wings, in which an active part was taken by Florine, a girl as dangerous and as depraved as her friend was generous and simple-minded. Coralie was too proud to entreat authors for rôles and to submit to their degrading terms, to give herself to the first journalist who threatened her with his pen and his love—rôles must seek her. Talent, which is so rarely found in the exceptional profession of the actor, is only one condition of success; indeed it is sometimes a positive drawback at first, if it is unaccompanied by a certain genius for intrigue, of which Coralie had not a trace. Anticipating the torture that awaited his mistress at her *début* at the Gymnase, Lucien was determined to procure a triumph for her at any cost. The balance that remained from the proceeds of the furniture, together with what Lucien had earned, had all been expended for costumes, in fitting up the dressing-room and the various expenses of a first appearance. A few days before the fatal night, Lucien took a humiliating step to which his love impelled him: he took Fendant and Cavalier's notes

and went to Rue Bourdonnais, to the *Cocon d'Or*, to ask Camusot to discount them. The poet was not yet so corrupt that he was able to advance unmoved to that assault. He left many a pang upon the way, he paved the streets with painful thoughts, saying to himself alternately: "Yes!—No!" But he came at last, nevertheless, to the little cold, dark shop, lighted from an inner court, where gravely sat, not Coralie's lover, the rakish, indolent, amorous, incredulous Camusot whom he had known, but the grave paterfamilias, the tradesman bristling with craft and virtue, masked with the judicial prudery of a magistrate in the Tribunal de Commerce, and protected by the cold dignity of the head of a large establishment, surrounded by clerks, shelves, green boxes, invoices and samples, guarded by his wife, and attended by a simply-dressed young girl. Lucien trembled from head to foot as he saluted him, for the worthy tradesman greeted him with the same glance of insolent indifference he had already seen in the eyes of the note-brokers.

"Here are some notes, monsieur; I should be a thousand times indebted to you if you would take them from me!" he said, standing beside Camusot, who remained seated.

"You took something from me, monsieur, if my memory serves me," said Camusot.

Thereupon Lucien set forth Coralie's position, speaking in an undertone in the ear of the dealer in silks, who could hear the rapid beating of the humiliated poet's heart. Camusot did not intend that

Coralie should make a failure. As he listened he glanced at the signatures and smiled, for he was a judge of the Tribunal de Commerce and knew the standing of the various publishers. He gave Lucien forty-five hundred francs on condition that he add to his endorsement: *Value received in silks*. Lucien went at once to see Braulard and arranged matters with him in a way to ensure Coralie a great triumph. Braulard promised to come and did come to the dress rehearsal to decide as to the places at which his *Romans* should unmask their batteries of flesh and make success sure. Lucien handed the rest of the money to Coralie, concealing his negotiation with Camusot; he allayed the anxiety of the actress and Bérénice, who were at a loss to provide for the expenses of the household. Martainville, who was one of the best informed men of his time in matters pertaining to the stage, came several times to hear Coralie rehearse her part. Lucien had obtained a promise of favorable criticisms from several royalist editors; and so he had no suspicion of disaster.

On the day preceding Coralie's début, an unfortunate thing happened to Lucien. D'Arthez's book appeared. The editor-in-chief of Hector Merlin's paper handed the book to Lucien as the man most capable of dealing with it; he owed his fatal reputation in that direction to the articles he had written concerning Nathan. There were a number of people in the office, among others, all the editors. Martainville had come to reach an understanding

upon certain details of the general policy adopted by the royalist papers against the liberal papers. Nathan, Merlin, all the collaborators in le *Le Reveil* were talking about the influence of Léon Giraud's semi-weekly paper, an influence the more pernicious in that its language was prudent, calm and moderate. People were beginning to talk about the club on Rue des Quatre-Vents ; it was called a Convention. It had been decided that the royalist papers should wage systematic, deadly war upon those dangerous antagonists, who did, in fact, become the progenitors of the *Doctrine*, the fatal sect that overthrew the Bourbons on the day when a most base and cowardly exhibition of a revengeful spirit led the most brilliant of royalist writers to join it. D'Arthez, whose absolutist opinions were unknown, was included in the anathema pronounced against the club, and was to be the first victim. His book was to be *flayed*, to use the classic expression. Lucien refused to write the article. His refusal greatly scandalized the prominent men in the royalist party who were in the gathering. Lucien was informed in most explicit terms that a new convert had no will of his own ; if it did not suit him to belong to the party of monarchy and religion, he could return to his former camp : Merlin and Martainville took him aside, and in a friendly way reminded him that he was abandoning Coralie to the sworn hatred of the liberal papers, and that she would no longer have the royalist and ministerial papers to defend her. At it was, the actress would undoubtedly be

the theme of a warm discussion, which would procure for her the publicity to which all actresses aspire.

“You don’t understand these matters,” said Martainville. “She will play for three months amid the cross-fire of our articles, and will pick up thirty thousand francs in the provinces during her three months’ vacation. For one of the scruples which will prevent you from becoming a power in politics, and which you should trample under foot, you will ruin Coralie and your own future ; you are throwing away your livelihood.”

Lucien saw that he must choose between D’Arthez and Coralie : his mistress was lost if he did not slaughter D’Arthez in the great newspaper and in *Le Réveil*. The poor poet returned home with death at his heart ; he sat down by the fire in his bedroom and read the book, one of the greatest in modern literature. His tears fell upon page after page, he wavered long, but at last he wrote a satirical article, of the sort at which he was such an adept ; he took the book as children take a lovely bird to pluck and torture it. His terrible pleasantry was of a nature to injure the book. Upon re-reading it, all his worthy sentiments awoke anew : he crossed Paris at midnight to D’Arthez’s house, saw through the windows the chaste and timid light he had so often contemplated with the admiration that that truly great man’s noble constancy deserved ; he felt too weak to go upstairs, and sat upon the steps for some moments. At last, urged on by his

good angel, he knocked and found D'Arthez reading, without a fire.

"What has happened to you?" exclaimed the young author when he recognized Lucien, divining that nothing less than some direful disaster could have brought him thither.

"Your book is sublime," said Lucien, his eyes filled with tears, "and they have ordered me to attack it."

"Poor child, the bread you eat is very hard!" said D'Arthez.

"I ask only one favor of you—say nothing about my visit and leave me in my hell, to do the work of one damned forever. Perhaps men never laugh until the tender spots on their hearts are calloused."

"Always the same!" said D'Arthez.

"You think me a coward? No, D'Arthez, no, I am a boy drunk with love."

And he explained his position.

"Let me see the article," said D'Arthez, touched by all that Lucien told him of Coralie.

Lucien handed him the manuscript; D'Arthez read it and could not restrain a smile.

"What a fatal use to make of talent!" he cried.

But he held his peace when he saw Lucien buried in an easy-chair, overwhelmed by unfeigned grief.

"Will you let me correct it? I will return it to you to-morrow," he continued. "Sarcasm dishonors a book, whereas a grave and serious criticism is often equivalent to praise; I can make your article



more honorable both to you and to myself. Besides, no one but myself knows my faults !”

“When you ascend a barren hillside, you sometimes find a juicy fruit to allay the pangs of burning thirst ; this is my fruit !” said Lucien, as he threw himself into D’Arthez’s arms, burst into tears and kissed him on the forehead. “It seems to me,” he added, “as if I were entrusting my conscience to you, to be returned to me some day.”

“I look upon periodical repentance as great hypocrisy,” said D’Arthez solemnly ; “in such cases repentance is a premium placed upon unworthy conduct. Repentance is a virgin act that our soul owes to God : a man who repents twice, therefore, is a vile sycophant. I am afraid that your repentance does not look beyond forgiveness !”

Lucien was crushed by these words, and returned slowly to Rue de la Lune. The next day he carried his article, recast and returned by D’Arthez, to the office of the paper ; but, from that day he was consumed by a melancholy that he could not always disguise. When evening came and he saw that the Gymnase was filled to overflowing, he experienced all the painful emotion caused by a first appearance on the stage and aggravated in his case by all the force of his love. His pride and his vanity were at stake ; his glance scanned the faces of the audience as that of an accused man scans the faces of the jurors and judges ; a murmur made him shudder ; a trivial incident on the stage, Coralie’s entrances and

exits, the slightest inflections of her voice agitated him beyond measure. The play in which she made her *début* was one of those which fall and then rebound, and it fell. When she came upon the stage, she was not applauded, and she was struck to the heart by the coldness of the pit. In the boxes, nobody applauded but Camusot. Men stationed in the galleries and balcony silenced the tradesman with repeated cries of "Hush!" The galleries imposed silence on the *claqueurs* too, when they delivered salvos of applause that were evidently not spontaneous. Martainville applauded courageously, and Nathan, Merlin and the hypocritical Florine followed his example. When the failure of the play was assured, people flocked to Coralie's dressing-room, but they simply aggravated the outrage by the consolation they offered her. She returned home in despair, less for her own sake than for Lucien's.

"Braulard betrayed us," he said.

Coralie was in a raging fever, the blow had reached her heart. The next day it was impossible for her to act; she fancied that her career was at an end. Lucien hid the papers from her and opened them in the dining-room. All the critics attributed the failure of the play to Coralie; she had presumed too much upon her capabilities; although she was a prime favorite on the boulevards, she was out of place at the Gymnase; she had been tempted to try her fortune there by a praiseworthy ambition, but she had not consulted her own powers, she had

formed a wrong conception of her part. In fact, Lucien read a collection of *tartines* upon Coralie, written in the same hypocritical vein as his own articles upon Nathan. A fierce rage, such as Milo of Crotona must have felt when he found his hands caught in the cleft of the oak he had himself opened, took possession of Lucien; he became livid. His friends gave Coralie most perfidious advice in admirably kind, patronizing, interested phraseology. She ought, they said, to play parts which the treacherous authors of those infamous *feuilletons* knew to be entirely unsuited to her talent. Such was the tone of the royalist papers, inspired, doubtless, by Nathan. As for the liberal papers and the small papers generally, they adopted the treacherous, mocking method that Lucien had himself practised. Coralie heard sobs, she leaped from her bed and ran to Lucien, saw the papers, insisted on taking them, and read them. Then she went back to bed without a word. Florine was in the conspiracy, she anticipated the result and had learned Coralie's part with Nathan for her instructor. The management, believing that the play was a good one, wished to give Coralie's part to Florine. The manager called on the poor actress whom he found in tears and sadly depressed; but, when he told her in Lucien's presence that Florine knew her part and that the play must be given that evening, she started up and jumped out of bed.

"I will act!" she cried.

She fell to the floor in a swoon. Thus Florine

had the part and made her reputation in it, for she made the play a success; she was given an ovation in all the papers, and from that time she has been the great actress whom you know. Florine's triumph exasperated Lucien to the last degree.

"A wretched creature to whom you gave bread! If the Gymnase people choose, they can buy you off from your engagement. I shall be Comte de Rubempré, I will make my fortune and marry you!"

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Coralie, glancing sadly at him.

"Nonsense!" he cried. "Wait and see; in a few days you shall live in a fine house and have your horses and carriage; I will write a rôle for you!"

He took two thousand francs and rushed away to Frascati's. The wretched youth stayed there seven hours, devoured by fierce passions, his face calm and cold. During the day and a part of the night, his fortunes varied strangely; at one time he had won thirty thousand francs, and he left the place without a sou. When he returned, he found Finot waiting for him to get *his little articles*. Lucien made the mistake of complaining.

"Oh! everything is not rose-colored," said Finot; "you made your half-wheel to the left so abruptly that you were certain to lose the support of the liberal press, which is much stronger than the royalist and ministerial press. You should never go from one camp to the other without being sure of a

good bed on which you can take comfort for the losses you must expect ; but, in any event, a prudent man goes to see his friends, tells them his reasons, induces them to advise his abjuration, so that they become his accomplices, they pity him and agree, as Nathan and Merlin agreed with their comrades, to assist each other mutually. Wolves don't eat each other. You were as innocent as a lamb in this business. You will have to show your teeth to your new party to get anything out of it. You have necessarily been sacrificed to Nathan. I won't conceal from you the commotion, the scandal, the outcry your article against D'Arthez is causing. Marat was a saint compared with you. Attacks upon you are in preparation, and your book will go under. By the way, how far along is your novel ? ”

“ Here are the last sheets, ” said Lucien, pointing to a package of proofs.

“ All the unsigned articles in the ministerial and ultra papers against little D'Arthez are attributed to you. Every day now the pin-pricks of *Le Réveil* are aimed at the Rue des Quatre-Vents people, and the satire is the more cutting because it is amusing. There is a whole political coterie of grave and serious-minded men behind Léon Giraud's paper, a coterie into whose hands the government will come sooner or later. ”

“ I haven't set foot in *Le Réveil* office for a week. ”

“ Well, think about my little articles. Write fifty of them at once and I'll pay you for the lot ;

but make them consistent with the opinions of the paper.”

And Finot carelessly gave Lucien a subject for a jocose article against the keeper of the seals, telling him a fictitious anecdote which, he said, was going the rounds of the salons.

To make up for his loss at play, Lucien, despite his depression, mustered sufficient energy and youthful spirit to write thirty articles of two columns each. When they were finished, he went to Dauriat's, where he was sure of finding Finot, to whom he wished to hand them secretly ; he desired, moreover, to force the publisher to explain his failure to publish *Les Marguerites*. He found the shop full of his enemies. When he entered all conversation ceased and there was absolute silence. When he found himself thus under the ban of journalism his courage redoubled, and he said to himself, as he had said in the avenue at the Luxembourg :

“ I will triumph ! ”

Dauriat was neither patronizing nor amiable ; he was surly, and entrenched himself behind his rights : he would publish *Les Marguerites* when he chose, he would wait until Lucien's position assured their success, for he had bought the manuscript outright. When Lucien remonstrated that he was bound to publish the poems by the nature of the contract and the standing of the contracting parties, the publisher maintained that it was not so, and said that he could not in law be compelled to do what he deemed unprofitable ; that he was the sole judge of the fitting

time for publication. But there was one solution of the difficulty which any court would approve; Lucien was at liberty to pay back the thousand crowns, take his book and let some royalist publisher bring it out.

Lucien withdrew, more annoyed by the moderate tone Dauriat had adopted than he was by his pompous, aristocratic manner at their first interview. So *Les Marguerites* would not in all probability be published until Lucien should have powerful friends as auxiliaries, or should become formidable in his own person. The poet returned home slowly, in a state of utter despondency that would have led him to suicide if his actions had followed his thoughts. He found Coralie in bed, pale and ill.

“She must have a rôle or she will die,” said Bérénice to Lucien, while he was dressing to go to Mademoiselle des Touches’ on Rue du Mont-Blanc, where there was to be a great reception at which he expected to meet Des Lupeaulx, Vignon, Blondet, Madame d’Espard and Madame de Bargeton.

The reception was given for Conti, the great composer, who possessed one of the most celebrated voices off the operatic stage, and for La Cinti, La Pasta, Garcia, Levasseur, and two or three illustrious vocalists of the hostess’s own circle. Lucien made his way quietly to the corner where the marchioness, her cousin and Madame de Montcornet were sitting. The unhappy youth adopted an airy, satisfied, cheerful manner; he joked and appeared as he was in his days of splendor; he did not choose

to appear to need the countenance of society. He dilated upon the services he was rendering the royalist party, and appealed for proof to the shrieks of hate with which the liberals were filling the air.

“You will be very handsomely rewarded, my friend,” said Madame de Bargeton with a gracious smile. “Go to the chancellor’s office day after to-morrow with the Heron and Des Lupeaulx and you will find your ordinance there signed by the king. The Keeper of the Seals is to take it to the château to-morrow; but there is a council, and it will be late when he returns; however, if I should learn the result in the evening, I will send word to you. Where do you live?”

“I will come to you,” Lucien replied, ashamed to say that he lived on Rue de la Lune.

“The Ducs de Lenoncourt and de Grandlieu have mentioned you to the king” said the marchioness; “they praised your absolute and entire devotion as meriting a signal reward, so that you might have your revenge for the persecutions of the liberal party. The name and title of the Rubemprés, to which you are entitled through your mother, are destined to become illustrious in your person. The king told His Grace this evening to bring him an ordinance authorizing Monsieur Lucien Chardon to bear the name and title of the Comtes de Rubempré, as being, through his mother, the grandson of the last count. ‘Let us favor the goldfinches—*chardonnerets*—of the Pindus,’ he said, after reading your sonnet on the lily, which my cousin luckily remem-



bered and had given to the duke—' Especially when the king can perform the miracle of changing them to eagles,' Monsieur de Navarreins replied."

Lucien's heart overflowed in a way that might have moved a woman less deeply wounded than Louise d'Espard de Nègrepelisse. The more Lucien's beauty impressed itself upon her, the fiercer was her thirst for vengeance. Des Lupeaulx was right, Lucien was deficient in tact; he could not guess that the ordinance they were talking about was simply a joke of the sort in which Madame d'Espard was proficient. Emboldened by his anticipated triumph and by the flattering distinction with which Mademoiselle des Touches treated him, he remained under her roof until two in the morning, in order to speak with her privately. Lucien had learned at the offices of the royalist papers that Mademoiselle des Touches was the secret collaborator of the putative author of a play in which the great wonder of the moment, Little Fay, was to act. When the salons were deserted, he led Mademoiselle des Touches to a sofa in the boudoir, and described in such affecting fashion, Coralie's misfortunes and his own, that the illustrious literary hermaphrodite promised to have the leading rôle given to Coralie.

On the following day, when Coralie, overjoyed at Mademoiselle des Touches' promise to Lucien, had returned to life and was breakfasting with her poet, Lucien was reading Lousteau's paper which contained an epigrammatic version of the fictitious anecdote concerning the keeper of the seals and his wife.

The wickedest malice was concealed beneath the most incisive wit. King Louis XVIII. was brought upon the stage with admirable art, and held up to ridicule, but no opportunity was given for the king's attorney to intervene. These were the alleged facts to which the liberal party sought to impart an appearance of truth, but which simply went to increase the number of its clever slanders.

Louis the Eighteenth's passion for a gallant, perfumed correspondence, full of madrigals and flashes of wit, was interpreted therein as the last expression of his love, which was becoming *doctrinaire* : it was passing, they said, from fact to idea. The illustrious mistress, so cruelly assailed by Bèranger under the name of Octavie, had conceived most serious fears. The correspondence was languishing. The more wit Octavie displayed, the colder and more apathetic her lover. At last Octavie had discovered the cause of her fall from grace ; her power was threatened by the first fruits and the spice of a new correspondence between the royal letter-writer and the wife of the keeper of the seals. That excellent woman was supposed to be incapable of writing a note, she must be purely and simply the responsible agent of an audacious ambition. Who can be hidden under that skirt? After keeping watch for some time, Octavie discovered that the king was in fact corresponding with his minister. Her plan was formed. Assisted by a faithful friend, she caused the minister to be detained in the Chamber one day by a heated debate, and engineered a *tête-à-*

*tête* in which she outraged the king's self-esteem by revealing this trickery. Louis XVIII. flies into a royal Bourbon rage, he storms at Octavie, he refuses to believe; Octavie offers to prove her statements at once if he will write a line which requires an immediate reply. The unfortunate woman, taken by surprise, sends to summon her husband from the Chamber; but Octavie has provided for everything; at that moment he was in the tribune. The wife sweated blood and water, summoned such intellect as she had, and replied as best she could.

"Your chancellor will tell you the rest," cried Octavie, laughing at the king's chagrin.

Although it was absolutely false, the article stung to the quick the keeper of the seals, his wife and the king. It was said that Des Lupeaulx, whose secret Finot had not divulged, had invented the anecdote. The clever, stinging article filled the liberals and Monsieur's adherents with joy; Lucien enjoyed it, seeing in it nothing more than an amusing *canard*. The next day he called for Des Lupeaulx and the Baron du Châtelet. The baron had occasion to thank His Grace: Monsieur Châtelet, appointed Councillor of State on special service, had been made a count, with the promise of the prefecture of the Charente as soon as the present prefect should have served the few months necessary to complete the term of service which would entitle him to the maximum pension. The Comte du Châtelet—for the *du* was inserted in the patent—took Lucien in his carriage and treated him on a footing

of equality. Except for Lucien's articles, he might not have progressed so rapidly; the persecution of the liberals was like a stepping-stone to him. Des Lupeaulx was at the department, in the secretary general's office. When his eye fell upon Lucien, that functionary started back in surprise and glanced at Des Lupeaulx.

"What! you dare come here, monsieur?" said the secretary general to Lucien, who was completely taken aback. "His Grace has destroyed your ordinance, which was all drawn up—here it is!"—He took up the first torn paper that met his hand.—"The minister was determined to discover the author of the shocking article that appeared yesterday, and here is the copy for the number," he added, handing Lucien the manuscript sheets of his article. "You call yourself a royalist, monsieur, and yet you write for that infamous sheet that is turning ministers' hairs gray, annoying the members of the Centre and dragging us into a bottomless pit. You breakfast with *Le Corsaire*, *Le Miroir*, *Le Constitutionnel* and *Le Courrier*, you dine with *La Quotidienne* and *Le Réveil*, and you sup with Martainville, the most dangerous antagonist of the ministry, who is urging the king toward absolutism, which would lead to a revolution as swiftly as if he were to put himself in the hands of the Extreme Left! You are a very clever journalist, but you will never be a politician. The minister has denounced you as the author of the article, to the king, who scolded Monsieur de Navarreins, his first gen-

tleman-in-waiting. You have made enemies of men whose enmity will be the more harmful to you because they have been most favorably disposed toward you! Things that seem natural in an enemy are shocking in a friend."

"Why, you're nothing but a child, my dear fellow!" said Des Lupeaulx. "You have compromised me. Mesdames d'Espard and de Bargeton and Madame de Montcornet must be furious with you, for they all vouched for you. The duke probably vented his wrath on the marchioness, and the marchioness will blame her cousin. Don't go there! wait."

"Here comes His Grace, go!" said the secretary general.



\*

Lucien found himself on Place Vendôme as dazed as a man who has just received a heavy blow on the head. He returned home on foot by the boulevards, trying to pass judgment on himself. He saw that he was a plaything in the hands of envious, grasping, treacherous men. What was he in that world of struggling ambitions! A child running after the pleasures and delights of vanity and sacrificing everything to them; a poet, incapable of deep reflection, flying from light to light like a moth, with no fixed plan, the slave of circumstances, meaning well but acting ill. His conscience was a pitiless executioner. He had no money, and felt exhausted with work and grief. His articles were subordinated to Nathan's and Merlin's. He walked aimlessly along, lost in thought; as he passed certain book-stalls which were beginning to keep books for reading with the newspapers, his attention was attracted by a poster bearing his own name beneath a strange title, entirely unfamiliar to him: *By Lucien Chardon de Rubempré*. His book had appeared and he knew nothing of it; not a newspaper had mentioned it. As he stood with his arms hanging by his sides, he did not see a group of ultra-

fashionable young men, among whom were Rastignac, De Marsay and some others of his acquaintance. Nor did he notice Michel Chrestien and Léon Giraud, who were coming toward him.

“Are you Monsieur Chardon?” said Michel in a tone that made Lucien’s entrails ring like the chords of an instrument.

“Don’t you know me?” he replied, turning pale.

Michel spat in his face.

“That’s the fee for your articles against D’Arthez. If every man, in his own cause or his friend’s, would copy my conduct, the press would be what it should be: a respectable and respected priesthood!”

Lucien had staggered back; he leaned against Rastignac, saying to him and de Marsay:

“Messieurs, you surely will not refuse to be my seconds. But I desire first to make the game even, and place the matter beyond the possibility of settlement.”

As he spoke, he dealt Michel a blow across the face, which he did not expect. The dandies and Michel’s friends threw themselves between the republican and the royalist, so that the affair should not degenerate into a street row. Rastignac grasped Lucien’s arm and led him to his own rooms on Rue Taitbout, not two steps from the scene of the affray, which took place on Boulevard de Gand about the dinner hour. That circumstance was responsible for the absence of the crowd that usually



## IN THE RUE DE LA LUNE

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*At noon the unfortunate boy was in his own room and in bed ; it took five hours and the greatest care to transport him safely. Although his condition was not dangerous, it required precautions ; the fever might lead to unpleasant complications. Coralie stifled her despair and her grief. During the whole time that her lover was in danger, she passed her nights with Bérénice, learning her parts.*

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"Are you Monsieur Chardon?" said Michel in a tone that made Lucien's entrails ring like the chords of an instrument.

"Don't you know me?" he replied, turning pale.

Michel's face was pale.

"That's the fee for your articles against D'Arthez. If every man, in his own cause or his friend's, would copy my conduct, the press would be what it should be: a respect to the respected priesthood!"

Lucien had staggered back; he leaned against Rastignac, saying to him and de Marsay: "Messieurs, you are being unjust not to refuse me my seconds. But I desire first to make the game even, and place the matter beyond the possibility of settlement. During the affair my husband and her grief."

Lucien spoke, but Michel's hand was across the face, which he did not expect. The dandies and Michel's friends threw themselves between the republican and the royalist, so that the affair should not degenerate into a street row. Rastignac grasped Lucien's arm and led him to his own rooms on Rue Taitbout, not two steps from the scene of the affray, which took place on Boulevard de Gand about the dinner hour. That circumstance was responsible for the absence of the crowd that usually

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collects at such times. De Marsay joined them, and the two dandies compelled Lucien to dine sumptuously with them at the Café Anglais, where they all drank too much.

“Are you an expert with the sword?” said De Marsay.

“I never had a sword in my hand.”

“With the pistol?” said Rastignac.

“I never fired a pistol in my life.”

“You’re a terrible antagonist, for you have chance on your side; you may kill your man,” said De Marsay.

Luckily Lucien found Coralie in bed and asleep.

The actress had played unexpectedly in a small piece, and had taken her revenge by receiving legitimate, spontaneous applause. That evening’s experience, for which her enemies were not prepared, determined the manager to give her the principal part in Camille Maupin’s play; for he had at last discovered the cause of Coralie’s failure at her début. Angered by the intrigues of Florine and Nathan to cause the failure of an actress in whom he believed, the manager had promised Coralie the protection of the management.

At five in the morning Rastignac called for Lucien.

“My dear fellow, your quarters correspond with your street,” was his only greeting. “Let us be first at the rendezvous, on the Clignoncourt road. It’s good form, and we should set a good example.”

“This is the programme,” said De Marsay, as

the cab drove through Faubourg Saint-Denis. "You are to fight with pistols at twenty-five paces, walking toward each other at will until you are within fifteen paces. You can each take five steps and fire three times, not more. Whatever happens, you both agree to stop there. We load your adversary's pistols and his seconds load yours. The weapons were selected by the four seconds together at an armorer's. I give you my word that we did our best to assist chance; you have horse pistols!"

To Lucien life had become a bad dream; it was a matter of indifference to him whether he lived or died. The courage peculiar to the suicide made it possible for him to appear in fine guise of bravery before the witnesses of his duel. He stood in his place without moving. This recklessness was considered to be a shrewd device; they thought the poet very clever. Michel Chrestien walked forward as far as he was allowed. They fired at the same time, for the insults were regarded as of equal gravity. At the first shot, Chrestien's bullet grazed Lucien's chin, while his went ten feet above his adversary's head. At the second shot, Michel's bullet lodged in the collar of the poet's coat, which, fortunately, was wadded and lined with buckram. Lucien received the third bullet in his breast and fell.

"Is he dead?" asked Michel.

"No," said the surgeon, "he will pull through."

"So much the worse!" rejoined Michel.

“ Ah! yes, so much the worse,” echoed Lucien, weeping.

At noon the unfortunate boy was in his own room and in bed; it took five hours and the greatest care to transport him safely. Although his condition was not dangerous, it required precautions; the fever might lead to unpleasant complications. Coralie stifled her despair and her grief. During the whole time that her lover was in danger, she passed her nights with Bérénice, learning her parts. He was critically ill for two months. The poor creature sometimes played a part which required her to be cheerful and gay, while she was saying to herself:

“ My dear Lucien may be dying at this moment!”

“ Throughout his illness, Lucien was attended by Bianchon; he owed his life to the unremitting care of that friend whom he had so deeply wounded, but to whom D’Arthez had confided the secret of Lucien’s visit, and had made excuses for the unfortunate poet. During a lucid interval, for Lucien’s fever was alarmingly grave, Bianchon, who suspected D’Arthez of being too generous, questioned his patient. Lucien told him that he had written no other article on D’Arthez’s book than the serious and thoughtful one published in Hector Merlin’s paper.

At the end of the first month, the house of Fendant and Cavalier went into bankruptcy. Bianchon told the actress to conceal that crushing blow from Lucien. The famous novel, *L’Archer de*

*Charles IX.*, published under an extraordinary title, did not meet with the least success. To procure a little money before filing his schedules, Fendant, without Cavalier's knowledge, sold the work in bulk to certain dealers, who sold it at a low price through the medium of book peddlers. At that moment Lucien's book adorned the parapets of bridges and the quays of Paris. The publishers on Quai des Augustins, who had taken a considerable number of copies of the book, found themselves in a fair way to lose a large sum as a result of the sudden fall in price; the four duodecimo volumes for which they had paid four francs fifty centimes were offered for sale at fifty sous. The trade made a great noise, and the papers continued to maintain the most profound silence. Barbet had not anticipated such a shrinkage, for he believed in Lucien's talent; contrary to his habit, he had pounced upon two hundred copies, and the prospect of a loss drove him wild; he said terrible things about Lucien. Barbet adopted a heroic course; he stored his copies in a corner of his shop, with the obstinacy peculiar to misers, and allowed his confrères to sell theirs for a song. Later, in 1824, when D'Arthez's fine preface, the intrinsic merits of the work, and two articles written by Léon Giraud had restored its true value, Barbet sold his copies, one by one, at ten francs.

Despite the precautions of Coralie and Bérénice, it was impossible to prevent Hector Merlin from coming to see his dying friend; and he made him

drain drop by drop the bitter cup of that *bouillon*—a word used in the publishing trade to describe the unworthy speculation engaged in by Messieurs Fendant and Cavalier in publishing a beginner's first book. Martainville, who alone was true to Lucien, wrote a magnificent article in favor of the work; but the exasperation against the editor-in-chief of *L'Aristarque*, *L'Oriflamme* and *Le Drapeau Blanc*, was so great among liberals and ministerialists alike, that the efforts of that courageous athlete, who always returned the liberals ten insults for one, injured Lucien. No paper took up the gauntlet of discussion, however sharp the attacks of the royalist bravo. Coralie, Bérénice and Bianchon closed the door to all Lucien's self-styled friends, who complained loudly; but it was impossible to close it to the sheriff's officers. The failure of Fendant and Cavalier rendered their notes payable at once, by virtue of one of the provisions of the Commercial Code—a provision most harsh in its effects upon indorsers who are thus deprived of the benefits of the time stipulated in the notes. Lucien was hotly pursued by Camusot. When she saw that name, the actress understood the fearfully humiliating step that her poet, so angelic to her, must have taken; she loved him ten times better for it, and would not sue to Camusot. When they came to arrest their man, the officers found him in bed and shrank from the idea of removing him; they went to Camusot before applying to the president of the tribunal to designate the hospital to which they should take the

debtor. Camusot hurried to Rue de la Lune. Coralie went downstairs and returned with the papers in the suit, which declared Lucien to be a tradesman in view of his indorsement on the notes. How did she obtain the papers from Camusot? What promise did she make? She preserved a gloomy silence; but she was like a dead woman when she came upstairs.

Coralie acted in Camille Maupin's play and contributed materially to the illustrious literary hermaphrodite's success. The creation of her rôle in that play was the last gleam from that lovely lamp. At the twentieth performance, just as Lucien was convalescent and was beginning to walk and eat, and talked about resuming his work, Coralie fell ill; some secret grief was consuming her. Bérénice has always believed that, in order to save Lucien, she had promised to return to Camusot. The actress had the mortification of seeing her part given to Florine. Nathan declared war on the Gymnase unless Florine should succeed Coralie. By playing the part up to the last possible moment to prevent her rival from assuming it, Coralie overtaxed her strength; the Gymnase had made her some advances during Lucien's illness, so nothing was due her from the treasury of the theatre. Notwithstanding his earnest desire, Lucien was still incapable of working; he had to nurse Coralie, too, in order to let Bérénice rest; thus the poverty-stricken household was reduced to absolute want; they had, however, the good fortune to find in Bianchon a skilful

and devoted physician, who procured credit for them at a druggist's. The plight of Coralie and Lucien was soon known to the tradespeople and to their landlord. The furniture was seized. The dress-maker and tailor, having now no fear of the journalist, hunted the two Bohemians without mercy. At last only the druggist and the pork-butcher would give credit to the ill-fated young people. Lucien, Bérénice and the invalid were compelled, for about a week, to live exclusively on odds and ends of pork prepared in the ingenious and varied forms in which they are sold by pork butchers. This sort of food, which naturally tends to produce inflammation, aggravated the actress's disease. Lucien was compelled by poverty to go to Lousteau and demand the thousand francs which that former friend, that traitor, owed him. Amid all his misfortunes, he had to do nothing that came so hard to him as that.

Lousteau no longer dared to go to his own room on Rue de la Harpe, but slept about among his friends, for he was tracked and hunted like a hare. Lucien could not find his ill-fated sponsor in the literary world, until he went to Flicoteaux's. Lousteau was dining at the same table at which Lucien met him, to his undoing, on the day he turned his back upon D'Arthez. Lousteau offered him a dinner and Lucien accepted! When, upon leaving Flicoteaux's, Claude Vignon, who dined there that day, Lousteau, Lucien, and the great unknown who pawned his clothes at Samanon's, proposed to go to the Café Voltaire for a cup of coffee, they could not

make up thirty sous between them with the small change they had in their pockets. They strolled along to the Luxembourg, hoping to meet a publisher there, and they did, in fact, fall in with one of the most famous printers of the time, who, at Lousteau's request, gave him forty francs. Lousteau divided it into four equal parts, of which each of the writers took one. Want had extinguished all semblance of pride and sentiment in Lucien's breast; he wept before those three artists as he told them of his sad plight; but each of them had as horrible and ghastly a story to tell him; and when they had all told what they had to tell, Lucien felt that he was the least to be pitied of the four. Thus they all longed to forget their misfortunes, and their thoughts which magnified their misfortunes. Lousteau ran to the Palais-Royal to gamble away the nine francs that remained of his ten. The great unknown, although he had a divine mistress, went to one of the vilest houses of ill-fame to wallow in the mire of perilous debauchery. Vignon betook himself to the *Rocher de Cancale*, with the intention of drinking two bottles of Bordeaux to drown his reason and his memory. Lucien left him on the threshold of the restaurant, declining to share that sort of supper. The grasp of the hand that the provincial great man bestowed upon the only journalist who had not been hostile to him was accompanied by a horrible oppression at the heart.

“What can I do?” he asked.

“We must take things as they come,” said the



great critic. "Your book is fine, but it has made some people envious, and you have a long, hard struggle before you. Genius is a horrible disease. Every writer carries in his heart a monster which, like the tapeworm in the stomach, devours the emotions as fast as they appear. Which will triumph, the disease or the man, the man or the disease? A man must be great indeed to hold the balance even between his genius and his character. Talent grows, the heart withers. Unless a man be a colossus, unless he have the shoulders of Hercules, he is left either without heart or without talent. You are slender and weakly, you will succumb," he added as he entered the restaurant.

Lucien returned home, meditating upon that terrible judgment, whose profound truth cast a bright light upon the life of literary men.

"Money!" cried a voice within him.

With his own hand he drew three notes for a thousand francs each, to his own order, payable in one, two and three months, imitating with marvellous accuracy the signature of David Séchard; he endorsed them, and on the following day took them to Métivier, the paper dealer on Rue Serpente, who discounted them without question. Lucien wrote a few lines to his brother-in-law to tell him of this assault on his purse, promising, according to the invariable custom, to pay the notes at maturity. When his debts and Coralie's were paid there remained three hundred francs, which he placed in Bérénice's hands, telling her to refuse to give him

any money if he asked for it; he was afraid he would be seized by the craving for play. Acting under the pressure of cold, sombre, taciturn fury, he wrote some of his cleverest articles by the light of a single lamp, as he watched by Coralie's bedside. When he looked up in search of an idea, his eyes fell upon that adored creature, as white as porcelain, beautiful with the beauty of the dying, smiling at him with her pallid lips, her eyes gleaming like those of all women who succumb to grief no less than to disease. Lucien sent his articles to the papers; but as he could not go in person to the offices to worry the managing-editors, the articles did not appear. When he made up his mind at last to go to the office, Théodore Gaillard, who had made him some advances, and who at a later period made use of those literary diamonds to his own profit, received him coldly.

“Look to yourself, my dear fellow, you have lost your spirit; don't allow yourself to be cast down, but have some pluck!” he said.

“That little Lucien had nothing but his novel and his early articles in his stomach,” cried Félicien Vernou, Merlin and all the others who hated him, when his name was mentioned at Dauriat's or at the Vaudeville. “He is sending us wretched stuff.”

*He has nothing in his stomach*—a consecrated remark in journalistic slang—constitutes a sovereign decree from which it is difficult to appeal when it has been once pronounced. That remark, hawked about everywhere, made an end of Lucien without

his knowledge, for he was at that time tried beyond his strength. In the midst of his exhausting labors, he was sued on the Séchard notes, and he thereupon had recourse to Camusot's experience. Coralie's former lover was generous enough to advise Lucien. This ghastly condition of affairs lasted two months, which were embellished with great numbers of stamped papers, all of which Lucien, at Camusot's suggestion, sent to Desroches, a friend of Bixiou, Blondet and Des Lupeaulx.

Early in August Bianchon told the poet that Coralie was doomed, that she had but a few days to live. Bérénice and Lucien passed those fatal days in tears, unable to hide them from the poor girl who was in despair at the thought of dying, on Lucien's account. Strangely enough, Coralie insisted that Lucien should bring her a priest. She wished to become reconciled to the Church and to die in peace. Her repentance was sincere, and she died the death of a Christian. Her last moments and her death took from Lucien the little strength and courage that remained to him. He sat in an armchair at the foot of Coralie's bed, completely prostrated, never taking his eyes from the actress's face, until her eyes were closed by the hand of death. It was then five o'clock in the morning. A bird alighted among the flower-pots that stood outside the window and sang a few notes. Bérénice knelt and kissed Coralie's hand which grew cold beneath her kisses and tears. There were eleven sous on the mantelpiece.

Lucien went out, impelled by a feeling of desperation that bade him ask alms to bury his mistress, or to go and throw himself at the feet of the Marquis d'Espard, the Comte du Châtelet, Madame de Bargeton, Mademoiselle des Touches, or the redoubtable dandy De Marsay ; he felt that his strength and his pride were alike exhausted. To obtain a little money, he would have enlisted ! He walked with the feeble, uncertain gait familiar to the unfortunate, as far as Camille Maupin's, entered the house, heedless of the disordered condition of his clothing, and sent up his name, with an earnest request that she would receive him.

“ Mademoiselle retired at three o'clock, and no one would dare enter her room until she rings,” the footman replied.

“ When does she ring ? ”

“ Never before ten o'clock.”

Thereupon Lucien wrote one of those pitiful letters in which fashionable beggars throw pride to the winds. One evening he had expressed a doubt of the possibility of such abasement, when Lousteau told him of the requests young writers sometimes made of Finot ; and now his pen carried him beyond the utmost limits to which misfortune had driven his predecessors. As he returned, feverish and almost insane, along the boulevards, not suspecting what a masterpiece of wisdom his despair had just suggested to him, he met Barbet.

“ Five hundred francs, Barbet ? ” he said, holding out his hand.

“No, two hundred.”

“Ah! then you have a heart!”

“Yes, but I also have an eye to business. You have helped me to lose a good deal of money,” he added, after he had told him of the failure of Fendant and Cavalier; “will you help me to make some?”

Lucien shuddered.

“You’re a poet, and you should be able to write all kinds of verse,” continued the bookseller. “At this moment I want a few broad songs to put with some ballads selected from different authors, so that I can’t be sued as a plagiarist and can sell a choice collection of ballads on the streets for ten sous. If you choose to send me ten good drinking songs, or something a little—off color—you know, eh? I’ll give you two hundred francs.”

Lucien returned home to find Coralie stretched out straight and stiff on a cot-bed, wrapped in a coarse sheet which Bérénice, weeping bitterly, was sewing up. The stout Norman had lighted four candles at the corners of the bed. On Coralie’s face shone the flower of beauty that speaks so loudly to the living, expressing absolute calm; her appearance was that of a young girl afflicted with chlorosis; it seemed at times as if the purple lips were about to open and whisper the name of Lucien; the name which, coupled with that of God, was the last word she uttered. Lucien bade Bérénice go out and order a funeral that would not cost more than two hundred francs, including the services

at the wretched little church of Bonne-Nouvelle. As soon as she had left the house, the poet took his place at his table, beside his poor mistress's body, and composed ten chansons for which he had to invent lively words to be sung to popular airs. He found it difficult beyond words to make a beginning; but at last his intellect placed itself at the service of necessity, as if he had not suffered. He was already putting in force the terrible decree of Claude Vignon as to the separation between the heart and the brain. What a night the poor boy passed, cudgeling his brain for rhymes to be sung in the wine shops, writing by the light of the tapers, beside the priest who was praying for Coralie! The next morning, having finished the last song, Lucien was trying to adjust it to a popular air. Bérénice and the priest feared that he had gone mad when they heard him singing:

My friends, morality in song  
 Annoys and wearies me;  
 Why call on Reason when among  
 The slaves of Folly we?  
 Besides, there's no refrain too strong  
 For blades who push the glass along:  
 'Tis Epicurus' hest  
 We should not seek the God of Song  
 When Bacchus leads our festive throng;  
 Let's laugh! sip long!  
 And a fig for all the rest.

Hippocrates to toppers loud  
 A hundred years assigned.

What matters then if Fate have vowed  
The tottering legs should find  
They cannot chase the hussy throng,  
If but to drain a flagon strong  
The hand can stand the test?  
If still we toast true toppers 'mong  
Till three score years have slipped along,  
Let's laugh ! sip long !  
And a fig for all the rest.

To trace our source one can't go wrong,  
That task were surely plain ;  
But whither going and whom among,  
In truth demands more brain.  
But why all anxious, grope along,  
Let's use until we hear death's gong  
All gifts that Heaven has blessed !  
To die's our lot, decreed since long ;  
But now we live, that fact is strong :  
Let's laugh ! sip long !  
And a fig for all the rest !

Just as the poet was singing this last horrible couplet, Bianchon and d'Arthez entered the room and found him utterly prostrated ; his tears flowed in torrents, and he had not the strength to make a fair copy of his songs. When, through his sobs, he had explained his plight, he saw tears in the eyes of those who listened.

“ This wipes out many faults,” said D'Arthez.

“ Blessed are they who find hell on earth !” said the priest gravely.

The sight of that lovely body smiling in death, the thought of her lover purchasing a tomb at the price

of obscene songs, and of Barbet paying for a coffin, the four candles around the actress whose short skirt and red stockings with green clocks had but yesterday stirred the pulses of a great audience, and at the door the priest who had made her peace with God returning to the church to say a mass for her soul's repose who had loved so well! this combination of grandeur and degradation, this grief trodden under foot at the bidding of necessity, stunned the great writer and the great physician so that they sat down powerless to find a word of consolation. A footman appeared and announced *Mademoiselle des Touches*. The sublime, beautiful creature understood the situation at a glance; she went hastily to Lucien, grasped his hand and slipped two thousand-franc notes into it.

"It is too late," he said, looking at her with the expression of a dying man.

D'Arthez, Bianchon and *Mademoiselle des Touches* did not leave Lucien until they had soothed his despair with most kind and consoling words, but all the springs of life were broken within him. At midday the club, except Michel Chrestien, who, however, had learned the truth as to Lucien's culpability, met at the little church of *Bonne-Nouvelle*, and found there *Bérénice* and *Mademoiselle des Touches*, two supernumeraries from the *Gymnase*, *Coralie's* dresser, and the unhappy *Camusot*. All the men followed the body to the cemetery of *Père Lachaise*. *Camusot*, weeping bitterly, solemnly promised Lucien that he would purchase a lot in perpetuity and



erect a column, upon which should be engraved the word CORALIE, and below :

DIED AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN

AUGUST, 1822.

Lucien remained alone until sunset on that hill from which his eyes embraced the whole of Paris.

“Who is there to love me?” he asked himself. “My true friends despise me. Whatever I did, everything about me seemed noble and good to her who lies there! I have no one now but David and my mother and sister! What do they think of me at home?”

The poor great man from the provinces returned to Rue de la Lune, where his sensations were so painful at sight of the empty apartment that he took lodgings at a wretched hotel in the same street. Mademoiselle des Touches' two thousand francs, with the proceeds of the sale of the furniture, paid all the debts. Bérénice and Lucien had a hundred francs left, which enabled them to live for a month, Lucien passing the time in a state of morbid dejection; he could not write or think, he abandoned himself to his grief. Bérénice took pity on him.

“If you should return to your province, how would you go?” she asked in response to an exclamation from Lucien, who was thinking of his mother and sister and David Séchard.

“On foot,” he said.

“Even so you must eat and sleep on the way.

If you made twelve leagues a day, you would need at least twenty francs."

"I will get them," he said.

He took his clothes and his fine linen, keeping only what was absolutely necessary, and went to Samanon, who offered him fifty francs for his whole outfit. He begged the usurer to give him enough to enable him to take the diligence, but he could not move him. In his frenzy Lucien rushed off to Frascati's, tempted fortune and went home without a sou. When he reached his wretched chamber on Rue de la Lune, he asked Bérénice for Coralie's shawl. By the expression of his eyes, taken in connection with the confession he made her of his loss at play, the honest girl realized Lucien's purpose: he intended to hang himself.

"Are you mad, monsieur?" she said. "Go out and take a walk and return at midnight; I will have the money for you. But stay on the boulevards, don't go toward the quays."

Lucien walked along the boulevards, dazed with suffering, looking at the fine equipages and the passers-by, and feeling very small and lonely in that restless, eddying crowd, spurred on by the innumerable interests that dominate life in Paris. As he saw once more in imagination the shores of the Charente, he felt a burning thirst for the joys of home, and thereupon he had one of those flashes of strength which deceive such half-feminine natures as his; he determined not to give up the battle until he had poured out his heart into the heart of David

Séchard and taken counsel of the three angels who were still true to him. As he strolled along, he saw Bérénice in her best clothes talking with a man on the filthy Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle at the corner of Rue de la Lune.

“What are you doing?” demanded Lucien, dismayed by the suspicions that came to his mind at the sight of the Norman.

“Here are twenty francs ; they may have cost me dear, but you shall go,” she replied, slipping four pieces of a hundred sous into the poet’s hand.

Bérénice made her escape before Lucien could see which way she had gone ; to his credit be it said, the money burned his hand and he wished to return it ; but he was forced to keep it as the last stigma of his life in Paris.



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