THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT

Altera nunc rerum facies. me quero, nec adsum
Non sum qui fueram non putor esse: fui.

JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT.
a l âge de 63 ans

[*Frontispiece.*

THE MEMOIRS OF JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT

THE PRINCE OF ADVENTURERS

A New and Abridged Edition, with
Introduction, Two Portraits,
Notes, and Appendices

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL
LIMITED
1902

CONTENTS

FRONTISPIECE—JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT
at the age of 63 years

INTRODUCTION

La Piste Casanovérienne, as it is fondly called, has long held a quite reasonable fascination for all students of social history and psychology. These famous *Mémoires* furnish an unique tableau of the eighteenth century, painted for us by a man whose personality was itself unique. The trail has been carefully followed by Englishmen and Frenchmen alike. Mr. Arthur Symons and Mr. Havelock Ellis in our own country have displayed a passionate interest in the wonderful Venetian; while Messieurs Armand Baschet and Octave Uzanne have foraged in the lockers of the Maison Brockhaus at Leipzig, in the Archives of the Venetian Senate, and have given us the results of their researches. Mr. Symons has in person turned over the papers lying mouldering in the white library at Dux, where the restless old adventurer spent the last tame years of his life, and relieved his solitude *en broyant du noir sur le papier*. Thus does he, in a fit of depression, deprecatingly characterise his own excellent piece of work. It is to these writers that we owe the discovery that Casanova was not a mere retailer of impossibly indelicate stories, but a memoirist of the first order, and the author of one of the most vivacious and artistically faithful pictures of the romantic age in which he moved, that we are lucky enough to possess. This 'passionist,' as the French love to call him, this prince of adventurers, was a man of action, who cared to analyse the springs of that action, and posed to himself, and to all his friends, as a philosopher. The list of his philosophical and metaphysical works would startle and weary. The *Mémoires* alone survive. Here he was his

own subject, and he gloated on it! *Les choses vues* were with him also *les choses vécues*. He was an author-actor who actually lived the scenes he described, and his strong histrionic instinct points and modifies every incident. That is how he saw life—not steadily, not whole, but dramatically. In one of the many unused prefaces to the *Mémoires* found among his papers, he tells us that 'life is a stage, where the great author, God, sets the piece, in whose presentment audience and company change places, and a man is now actor, and now spectator.' Casanova may be said to have been both at one and the same time, so deeply developed always was his dual consciousness.

The stage of Casanova—the field of his vital operations—has been razed and abolished by the tremendous upheaval and alteration worked by the Revolution, but the world before the flood, of Madame de Pompadour's lurid prediction, lives again in the Venetian's pages. Though he survived the Revolution, watching its wild progress from his lonely home in Bohemia, his day was over before it broke out. From the circumstances of his life and training, he was an aristocrat at heart, a monarchist indeed, as his wordy contention with Voltaire shows, and the narrow spirit of his generation and the short-sighted political outlook of those with whom he ranged himself are evidenced by his absurd view of the causes of 'the outbreak.' We come across these views in the *Mémoires* and in a short essay of his entitled *Causes of the French Revolution*. He attributes the fall of the monarchy to the untoward existence of the Duc d'Orléans—Egalité—whose presence on this planet was the unfortunate result of cabbalistic experiments on the complexion of Egalité's mother, the Duchesse de Chartres!

But indeed the abuses of the old *régime* prevalent in all countries did not affect Casanova's welfare in the least. On the contrary, the careless, reckless whirlpool of society, the survival of the feudal instinct, made the world, as it was then, a happy hunting-ground for the adventurer. For fully half a century did he range at will over Europe; a *débonnaire* free-lance, taking

to himself a most unfair proportion of the good things of this world, interviewing Popes and Sovereigns on equal terms, cheating men and betraying women. Only one woman, according to his own showing, betrayed him, and, curiously enough, the self-assigned date of the reflux of his fortunes, and the failure and decay of his wonderful vitality, is coincident with his English visit, and his acquaintance with the London lady who led him literally through the Maze, and befooled him as he had befooled others. Here the *Mémoires* do indeed begin to drag a little and he to write regretfully of the period —*nel mestro camin nostra vita.* He practically gave up the game. Yet, according to contemporary accounts, he seems to have reversed the process of the modern man: he looked young and felt old, or said he did. As to his youthful appearance there is no doubt; at no time did he look within ten years of his age. Here is a description of him as he appeared at the age of forty-seven, after his disgrace, drawn up by the official pen of the Venetian agent at Ancona :—

'I saw him with my own eyes. Some one told me it was he, for I had never seen the man before. He comes and goes freely, holds his head high, and looks every man in the face. He is received in several good houses. He does not look more than forty. He is tall and handsome and well made, his skin is very dark, and his eyes very bright. He wears a short chestnut *perruque.* From what they tell me, I gather him to be of a bold disposition and a disdainful. He has plenty to say for himself, and he says it well too.'

He was forty-seven then, and considered that he had already lived his life and was longing to be received into the favour of the mighty potentates who had banished him from his beloved native city, for he was a Venetian born, with a dash of Spanish blood in him. The details of his parentage and childhood as retailed by himself are interesting. 'I was an idiot till I was eight and a half,' he says somewhere, and a medical diagnosis founded on his own account of his symptoms would suggest that the boy suffered from the now fashionable childish com-

plaint of adenoids. But at that age his health became established, and he was able to start on his career with a perfect physical equipment—a veritable constitution of iron. His wonderfully executed and planned escape from prison proves him a man of prodigious nervous strength and staying power. But, like the lilies of the field, he toiled not, neither did he spin, but lived freely at the world's expense. His attitude towards gambling-tables, and the amount of support and sustenance to be fairly derived thence, is sufficiently indicated in a casual remark of his. He called his successes there 'getting the better of fortune.' This feat 'was to be accomplished by some happy stroke of calculation, some touch of dexterity *independent of* luck.' 'I consider,' he continued, 'that a prudent player can make use of either or both of these means, without incurring blame or being taxed with cheating.' But all Casanova's lucky *coups* were not made at the tables, for instance the treasure of gold and silver and jewels wrung from poor old *Semiramis*, whose leaden substitutes were thrown into the sea near Marseilles, to propitiate *Selenis*, the cabbalistic spirit he had evoked for her ruin.

Though Casanova is 'damned to everlasting fame' for his treatment of the crack-brained 'Egeria' of the Regent, he shares the obloquy of exploitation with two other adventurers, Saint Germain and Cagliostro. The memoirs of the time are full of the tragi-comic history of the doting old marquise —her alembics, her retorts, and absurd processes of the science of alchemy, the fashionable sport of a superstitious age. Casanova is credited with dragging in the mire one of the noblest names in France; but we may point out that the marquise was only the widow of the last of the d'Urfés, and that only by the insistence of the Regent, who wished to establish Mlle. Jeanne Camus de Pontcarré, a member of his '*plus étroit intrinsèque*,' creditably. In the scene where the old lady of seventy-three flings her lace cap up to the ceiling on receipt of some good occult news from Casanova, we are irresistibly reminded of Barnave's cynical saying, when

her like went in scores to the scaffold, '*Le sang qui coule, est-il donc si pur?*' and there is a ribald French song current still in Paris, '*Ah, quel malheur, Madame Camus!*'

These volumes show Casanova to us a great lover, a great eater, a great talker; he was not a coward, but he disliked fighting according to the rules, and a diplomatic evasion of the laws of 'honour' often stood him in stead. He was a normal rather than an abnormal subject; the healthy materialism of these pages prove it. He would have us believe him a metaphysician and even an idealist, but he only used metaphysics to justify his actions, and idealism to add poignancy to his amours. He had no heart, according to the modern acceptation of the word, but he was benevolent and liked to see people happy about him. Greedy as he was in pursuit of the gratification of all his senses, and remorseless when thwarted in that pursuit, he was not actually averse to the sight of the enjoyment of others.

In one of the several prefaces he wrote for the *Mémoires*, of which that one definitely selected by him or his literary executors is the least characteristic, he enters into a very subtle form of *apologia pro vita sua.* He wishes to 'demonstrate in these very *Mémoires* the fact that the chain of events is independent of method, *i.e.* conduct.' If, as he owns, he has 'sometimes been led into altruistic courses, the result unfortunately has not always been for the best,' as, for instance, in the case of the moderation shown to Lucy of Paséan, whose grey, ruined ghost appears three times in the *Mémoires*, with a sort of rhythmical reminder. On the other hand, good has often been the result of evil, so far as he has been concerned. To sum up, he attributes all his vices and follies to the *survenance* of a 'moment of madness, an oscillation of the pulses, when a man is not himself,' but the blind puppet of 'something not himself' that makes for evil. 'Virtue,' he declares, 'consists, practically, in a man's keeping control of himself, and being able to suspend action till the vibration is over-past.'

This useful philosophy, so well adapted to the degree of

moral stress suffered by a man like Casanova, though it would not cover the deliberate and long-sustained trickery of poor old Madame d'Urfé, which eventually led to her death, in a state of mind that would have made her a fit inmate of the Paris Bedlam, might account for his other actual crime—the cold-blooded murder of the lay sister, in furtherance of his amour with the artless nun of Chambéry.

His betrayal of the Spaniard, Manucci, caused him some actual remorse, but that was because it implied a public reflection on his honour. His sins of omission, such as the neglect of his old benefactor, M. de Bragadin, his ingratitude to the kind little actress, La Binetti, who saved his life at Stuttgart, to be cruelly insulted by him at Petersburg, did not distress him. Jules Sandeau has called him 'the most moral of Don Juans.' That must have been because, though he loved many women, he broke few hearts or none. He loved and he rode away indeed, but he always paid the bill. He found a husband for Cristina, and though Mlle. de La Meure was fascinated by him, he allowed her to see clearly the kind of man with whom she was dealing, so that although she flirted outrageously with the brilliant Casanova, she took care to secure the plain, complaisant merchant from Dunkirk. C. C. consoled herself with the Cardinal de Bernis, and the prudent Dubois (who 'read and enjoyed Locke,' and who reminds one a little of George Sand) took as a *pis aller* the *maître d'hôtel*, Lebel.

His relations with the freethinking nun and her weaker sister in religion—that *partie carrée* in the Venetian casino—form at once the blot and the curiosity, psychologically speaking, of the *Mémoires*. To abate the pure cynicism of the episode is to coarsen it. Love was a game in the eighteenth century, and women played it as skilfully as men. The two nuns of Murano, M. M. and C. C.—Matilda and Caterina—it is easy to reconstruct their names from the hints which their lover lets slip—are the best pair of portraits in the book, the blue ribbon of his gallantries. Matilda with her philosophy and

her wicked books, and the sweet, weakly imitative Caterina, would make a novel by themselves. But what a gallery of charming persons he gives us! His early love Bettina; and the ill-fated Lucy of Paséan; Cristina, the naïve peasant girl of Mestre; Esther Hope, the banker's daughter of Cologne, who loved him, but who would only admit an honourable courtship; the sagacious Marcolina; Clementina, the dreamy *bas bleu*; the naïve English Miss and the sprightly housekeeper; the fair Amazon lady to whom he played butler at Zurich; the ladylike Pauline; the astute Madam Cornelys; the proud little Spanish countess who studies revenge; and last, sweetest and most complete portrait of all, Henriette, the French spy, for whom Casanova really cared, if he ever cared for any one.

With male portraits Casanova is naturally not so happy. He was not interested in men, they were mostly merely husbands to deceive, or victims to defraud. His descriptions of Voltaire and of the great Frederick are perfunctory and marred by the intrusion of his own vanity. The only man that really dominated him was the Cardinal de Bernis, who, though a fribble and a courtier, was his equal in brains and perversity. The 'flower of abbés'—*Suzon la Bouquetière*, as Madame de Pompadour called him—from whose breviary, scurrilous *vers de société* used to fall as he fared, powdered and scented, and pink as a girl, to Mass—was a match for the Venetian, and adroitly contrived to leave his deserted mistress on the hands of the latter when summoned home from Venice. Oddly enough, he chose to give a very different colour to his life there from that suggested by Casanova. He says in his own memoirs that 'the air of Venice did not suit' him. He was bored there—'*Je n'avais pas de maîtresses, et les soirées étaient longues.*' He left Venice in 1755. Casanova's date differs as usual.

This wonderful processional novel, to give it its lowest claim to consideration, was conceived and written by the worn-out old *roué* to combat the deadly *ennui* that must necessarily over-

take a whilom man of action, self-condemned to vegetate in inactivity. By its means he fondly hoped to 'cheat his grief' and 'cheer his old soul' in those dreary last ten years of his life, spent in the castle of Dux in Bohemia, where he fulfilled the nominal post of librarian to Count Waldstein at a thousand florins a year. His master, *ce grand moderne*, understood him and loved him, but he was a continual prey to indigestion, and the stupid malice of stolid German servants, unable to sympathise with his hasty Italian temperament.

Waldstein, who had come across Casanova in Paris, during a period of dejection, took a violent fancy to him, and carried him off to Bohemia. Count Waldstein's *esprit Cabalon* was obviously the link between the adventurer and himself. Casanova never dropped his mystic pretensions, of which he had made so much use in his days of action. Cabbalism was the social weapon of the day, and alchemy its serious amusement. The old Prince de Ligne, the count's father-in-law, living at his neighbouring castle of Toeplitz with his daughter, the Princess Clary d'Aldringhen, was captivated by the fascinating adventurer on more literary grounds, and 'believed him as he did the Credo.' 'Amiable, celebrated man, and profound thinker!' he says in one of his letters, 'you are logical as an iceberg and hot as a volcano.' 'You are finer than Montaigne.' 'I am Atticus to your Cicero.' The prince himself was an author, but is not particular about the laws of composition and spelling. He advises his friend not to try to 'eliminate his Italianisms, or to trouble over the stupid French grammar.' He was heart and soul interested in the progress of the *Mémoires*, which were sent to him volume by volume, and pored over—'eagerly devoured'—by himself and General Souvaroff and Count Salmond and others. Moreover they were read aloud by the foolish, vain old man to the family circles at Dux and at Toeplitz in the evenings. It is plain that Casanova reaped the harvest of vanity in his lifetime.

The prince is anxious that the *Mémoires* should be given

to the world in their entirety. He would not have posterity lose a word of *ces caractères de feu.* 'All the people you write about will be dead by the time you are published,' he says. Casanova appears, in an access of prudery, to have proposed to burn the *Mémoires.* 'Nothing of the kind,' says the prince. 'Follow my example, go to my publisher, Walter, and stipulate for a hundred ducats' annuity on the book. Then go to bed, send for a priest, and let him throw a few reams of paper on to the fire, to represent your works, which you offer as a sacrifice to the Holy Virgin. Walter will not tell. He will give you two hundred copies for yourself, and the rest to be printed after your death. This is my own arrangement with him; perhaps in the place where we shall be by then, we can afford to laugh at the faces of the people on earth who are reading us!'

A further piece of advice bears on the lost last volume.

'Don't talk of dying. Reserve a volume for the account of what may yet befall you of an agreeable nature.'

Perhaps the wily Italian himself demurred at the publication of details which would doubtless concern the persons in whose company he was then living, and though he declared his intention of carrying the *Mémoires* on to 1797, they stop abruptly in 1774. That he actually wrote at least a volume more is proved by the *Mémoires* of this very Prince de Ligne, who gives a *résumé*, careless and inaccurate, of some of the more salient facts in that volume, including certain incidents that do not appear in the *Mémoires* so far as we have them.

It is impossible to doubt the fact that Giacomo Casanova, or Jacques as he preferred to be styled, with the territorial addition of Seingalt, which self-applied name held a vague reminiscence of the canton of St. Gall, where he once made a long stay, did himself compose a manuscript of six hundred infolio pages, which he entitled *Histoire de ma vie, jusqu'à l'an* 1797. He declares, in the preface to a little volume, *The Flight*, written and published in his lifetime (because he got so tired of telling the story!), that he would not call his book

'Confessions' because '*un extravagant* had sullied the glory of the title.' This was Rousseau, the man of thought, whom, for obvious reasons, the man of action detested.

The fact that Casanova wrote his own *Mémoires* has actually been questioned! M. Paul Lacroix (*Le Bibliophile Jacob*) says that 'Casanova was incapable of writing French, or of producing a work of any imagination of style whatever. . . . It is certain the celebrated Chevalier d'Industrie left notes, and a clever man, no less a personage than Beyle himself, put them together.'

The style of Casanova is at times intensely dramatic and always flowing; his imaginative power is undeniable. That he was quite aware that he could not write good French is evidenced by the Prince of Ligne's advice to him, but this goes to prove the authenticity of the *Mémoires*. And let the reader turn to a paragraph in the original work, quoted by M. Baschet, before it was shaped by M. Laforgue at the instance of M. Brockhaus of the publishing house of Leipzig, and he will see that though Casanova's French was by no means perfect, a very slight 'derangement' of the turn of the sentences gives us a practically unaltered version of the *Mémoires* as originally written.

His veracity is very much more difficult to establish, though in the collation of his arrangement of public events with the actual happening of them, as shown by dates and the testimony of contemporary chronicles, Casanova does not come off badly. It has been contended, with regard to his escape from the Venetian State prison, that the State Inquisitors were in the habit of opening doors to certain prisoners and winking at their escape. This is to make Casanova truly ridiculous, as a person of so little account politically that his treason was a negligible quantity. But as a matter of fact, his minute description of the various stages of his flight and the material checks he met with tallies exactly with the *locale*. An ardent Casanoverian even went carefully over the scene of the flight *backwards*, beginning at the *Scala d'oro*, and ending in the attics of the Chancellery, and the cell whose ceiling the fugitive

spoiled. The bill for its reparation, amounting to six hundred and eighty-nine livres, is still extant. To disbelieve Casanova is to believe in the ridiculous collaboration of the terrible Three in his flight, and their theatrical arrangement of its details!

On the other hand, an exhaustive search has failed to discover the famous paragraph in the *St. James's Chronicle* mocking the placard which appeared in the window of Casanova's house in Pall Mall, and which resulted in his acquaintance with the mysterious and dignified Pauline, whose own history, reported by Casanova to be absolutely consonant with contemporary events in Portugal, is not to be collated therewith. The tale of the Talking Parrot receives no confirmation, as Casanova says it does, in the pages of *The Daily Advertizer.* The memoirs of the time are strikingly innocent of allusion to this man, who, by his own showing, made such a hole in the world. Sir Horace Mann, with whom he dined in Florence, never advises Sir Horace Walpole of the fact; and the record of the famous Madam Cornelys is clear of any mention of that old lover of her salad days whom she exploited so heartily in London.

The fact is that Casanova was by nature extremely untidy and inaccurate. But a quality inherent to a superb memory like his is that accuracy in detail often predominates over the recollection of the broader facts of time and space. He remembers, for instance, that the candles were of tallow, not wax, at the hotel at Chambéry, and that there were four at the cardinal's *petite maison* at Murano; he forgets to tell us what became of that famous blue diamond, commonly supposed to have been the 'Regent,' that his partner in *escroquerie*, the Count of Saint Germain, was sent into Holland to pawn, and which came into the hands of Casanova's friend, M. d'O—— (otherwise Hope). The name suggests a connection with another famous diamond, whose late possessors bear that of the diamond merchant of Amsterdam. Casanova could perhaps have told us something about it, but here he allows his usual vagueness to prevail and obscure history.

As Mr. Havelock Ellis says somewhere, 'There is reason to believe that an organisation like Casanova's, for whom the external world is so vivid, is associated with memory power of a high order,' and the presumption is that the actor-author did as well as he could. He wrote a rough synopsis of every chapter, as his papers found at Dux prove, and filled in the details afterwards. He had no wish to throw dust in the eyes of posterity. He is candid enough about the many checks incidental to the adventurous life. Indeed, the latter half of the *Mémoires* is more or less a record of the snubs the *Chevalier d'industrie* received in the exercise of his profession from different governments. His relations with the authorities were always pleasant enough, on condition that he 'moved on' when asked to do so. He describes the scenes fully. We seem to see the smile of Prince Kaunitz, as he shows the amusing, garrulous fellow the door. 'Go and sin the more—but not in Vienna!' The great Frederick toyed with his pretty wit, and praised him for his true qualification. 'You are a very fine-looking man!' The great Catherine flirted with him a little, but Panin was always watching. With regard to his relations with women he was not so sincere. His dramatic instinct led him to 'arrange' life pictorially and sympathetically, to trim off the raw edges of reality, to bring his best characters 'on' again, as, for instance, Henriette's several effective and pointed re-appearances. The same may be said of the story of the renewal of his relations with Teresa at Florence, with the addition of her accommodating husband, which is so amusing. We may or may not believe the stories of that sleep in the very jaws of danger which arrested the Flight for two hours, the three meetings with Lucy of Paséan, the episode of Mlle. de Roman-Couppier, and his cabbalistic influence in her fortunes, which is not borne out, nay, is contradicted, by contemporary accounts, but they certainly add intensely to the *rondeur* and pointedness of his narrative.

There are actually no contemporary records to corroborate

the statements of Casanova, till we come to the causes of his condemnation in 1755, when his *dossier* begins to form part of the Venetian archives. With the Flight, and his own verbal account of it, Casanova became a famous man; before this he was, in the eyes of the State at least, a mere commonplace roysterer, a dangerous subverter of authority, a plausible dabbler in forbidden arts of necromancy. He was actually bred up for the Church, and was made Doctor of Civil Law at the age of sixteen. The *Mémoires* tell how he filled the part with cleverness and *aplomb*, till his natural bent came uppermost, and he made a fool of himself. We realise the vanity which bore him up, and admire the *bonhomie* with which he explained the dangers and advantages of his temperament to the good Bishop of Martorano—all the future Casanova lies revealed in these first few flippant pages. Vanity, which impelled him as an abbé to bestride a horse for the first time in his life, made him fling away his cassock and don the uniform. As a soldier he meets Teresa, and sets the note of all his dealings with women in his treatment of her. Fully disillusioned as she must have been, she meets him again with open arms at Florence. So did all Casanova's loves, in response to his indestructible charm. On his return to Venice, the loosely poised pendulum of an adventurer's life has swung to the other extreme—he is a humble fiddler in the orchestra of a Venetian theatre.

It is in this capacity, when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb, that the great opportunity of his life comes to him. He is able to be of use to the noble senator, de Bragadin, and the cabbalistic leaning of the fond old man is the basis of the *entente* between them, as it is later in his friendship with Waldstein.

Casanova gives his own version of his relations with the credulous senator, the evolution of the spirit *Paralis*, whom he makes responsible for the devilish suggestions that he does not like to father on himself. *Paralis* and de Bragadin find a husband for Cristina. Enriched by the old man, whose gondola he uses and whose liveried servants he orders about, Casanova leaves him to visit Italy, France, Germany and

Austria. When he returns to Venice in 1753, on the day of the Feast of the Ascension, he is being watched, and memoranda concerning him and his doings begin to appear in the archives.

He was then in his prime, twenty-eight years old, a brilliant satirist, verbal fencer and conversationalist. It is said of him about this period, 'He goes about among lords and ladies, making money out of them and living at their expense. He always selects for his subjects credulous persons and those disposed to dissipation, whose evil passions he takes care to foster. . . . Just now he is exploiting the noble Bernardo Memo to the best of his ability.' Lorenzo da Ponte, Mozart's librettist, met him at the houses of the Zaguri and the Memi, 'who were delighted with what was good about him, and forgave him what was not.'

In 1754 the first *riferta* of the inquisitor G. B. Manuzzi appears. It gives in brief the material of several of Casanova's own chapters. The zealous and acrimonious spy grants him 'cultivated but intriguing.' . . . 'He has insinuated himself into the good graces of the noble Zuan Bragadino at Santa Marina, and has fleeced him grievously.' 'A certain Benedetto Pisano tells me that Casanova is by way of being a cabbalistic philosopher, and by means of false reasoning, cleverly adapted to the minds he works on, contrives to get his livelihood. . . . He has made the noble Zuan Bragadino believe that he can evoke the angel of light for his benefit. It is strange that such an intelligent man as the senator, and such a figure in the State, should be so gullible. . . . This Casanova frequents the café Menegazzo on the Merceria, and Philip, the landlord of it, tells me that he consorts with Marc Antonio Zorzi, Bernardo Memo, and Antonio Braida there.' Don Zini, a friend of Casanova's, admits, when pressed, that these gentlemen are 'Epicureans.' Manuzzi 'actually believes' that they meet to compose a satire against a certain Abbé Chiari. This 'terrible satire' is, according to Casanova, the chief ground of his arrest.

But his defence of Goldoni, for that was the ostensible object

of these satires, was probably only a stalking-horse for more serious griefs. A man of Casanova's character was a danger not so much to the State as to the citizens, and a paternal government like that of Venice was likely to take cognisance of it. He was a corrupter of youth, a professed atheist. 'He read, on Monday, at the Rinaldo Triomphante, a most impious composition in Venetian. I know of nothing so erroneous.' The righteous Manuzzi, in order to obtain a copy of this production, visits Casanova at his lodgings and plays on his vanity. The wily Venetian refuses to lend him a copy of the composition in question, admitting that it verges on 'the stupendous, on the startling,' and that his life would be imperilled if he were to show it. But he wants to read Manuzzi something else, and searches for it in vain in his coffers, and thus discloses to the zealous eyes of the inquisitor 'a white skin cut in the shape of a girdle or apron.' Manuzzi connects it with the rites of Freemasonry, on whose advantages Casanova has previously been enlarging.

The mischief was done. That very day the spy writes a description of the dwelling of the victim with great exactitude, so that Messer Grande, the chief inquisitor, has no difficulty in finding it.

'Behind the Cavalerizza, in the street called di Mezzo, the fourth door on the right-hand side. . . . I am told that the house belongs to the widow of Leopold del Pozzo, a worker in mosaic. Casanova's door is the one with a table beside it. The table is exactly opposite the head of the stairs; on it there lies a casket in lapis-lazuli and other coloured stones. I fancy there is another door in his room, masked and hung with pictures.'

The old Merceria is there, but the houses have been refaced. Messer Grande found him there on the 27th of July 1756, with the unedifying books that the nun Matilda had given him, and impounded both man and seditious literature. The record of the trial is not discoverable, but Domenico Cavalli, the secretary who registered the condemnation to five years' imprisonment, set the guilty man's crime down as 'irreligion.'

Witnesses were called—the landlord of a certain café, La Malvasia, in the Frezzeria—and Casanova got his five years. In fifteen months he made his escape.

From 1756 to 1763 his name disappears from the State records.

He went to Paris and lived on the reputation of his marvellous adventure, writing and publishing a long account of it, at the instance of de Bernis, to save himself the pleasant annoyance of retailing the incidents of his escape. The minister's version does not appear. The edition we have was published in 1787 at Prague, where he himself presided over the printing. He makes several attempts to fleece the confiding Parisians. His memorandum concerning his famous lottery bureau is said to exist; there is among the Papers of France an unsigned document of that description. His shop in the quarter of the Temple for the production of stamped patterned material was another business undertaking of his, not quite so happy. His master-stroke was his getting hold of the Marquise d'Urfé. He combined all these industries with the trade of espionage, in which he was never very proficient. He went to Dunkirk, at the instance of the Abbé de la Ville, to reconnoitre the English Fleet at a fee of five hundred louis. He went twice to Holland to try to raise a loan for the French king. The second visit was not so successful, socially, as the first. The members of the various embassies had had time to make inquiries and examine his letters of introduction more carefully. Private official letters preserved in the Paris archives enable us to collate Casanova's own story with the facts. It is amusing reading. He was never in quite such good odour as he fancied, and gives us to understand. For instance, M. D'Affry, the French minister to Holland, notifies de Choiseul of the advent of M. de Casanova, and hints at some discreditable incidents of his previous visit to The Hague. He will be civil to M. de Casanova, but would like to know how far the duke would like him to go, and wonders if the letter of introduction was not obtained by an intermediary while the

Venetian remained unknown to the duke? He complains of Casanova's notable indiscretion. 'He seemed to me terribly irresponsible, with no sense of the seriousness of his mission, or else *he has great powers of dissimulation.*' He has heard that 'the man is the son of an actress,' and is distressed 'to hear him abuse his own countrymen.'

The duke, in reply, informs M. D'Affry that his surmises are correct, that the introduction was obtained second-hand through the duke's brother, and he advises the minister to have nothing to do with the Venetian. Casanova, who at all times seems to have had a secret sense that warned him when it was time to decamp, left for Bonn and Cologne, and tells us so, but nothing more.

The minister at Bonn notifies to his Government that an unknown Venetian has arrived, who spends money, flaunts diamonds, and plays high, speaks of Versailles as if he were an intimate there; a banker of Cologne [the credulous, upright Hope?] answers for him.' Later on he got into trouble again. The minister, who has by now discovered his name, mentions his having 'an adventure which made some noise.' Casanova relates this adventure, but from his own point of view. The minister's curt relation is that Casanova owed a certain Baron de Vidau some money, and was arrested as he was coming away from the Comte de Torcy's house, where he had dined. He disclaimed the debt, but he paid in a ring, a box, and watch and some money, 'to avoid prison.'

This differs somewhat from the spirited, dashing account vouchsafed us by the man himself. In these official documents we come across the good Baron Kettler, whom Casanova plagued so adroitly. Kettler submits that Casanova is a traitor, a plotter, and bears about with him the proofs of his treason in a certain casket. But, as usual, the Duc de Choiseul takes a lenient and uncomplimentary view of the extent of the peril, and bids Kettler to ignore the harmless spendthrift. He had probably learned from Madame de Rumain that her gallant friend was not politically dangerous. Casanova, as

usual, departs appositely, and hies him to Switzerland, to incur the idyllic adventure of Soleure, to argue literature and politics with Voltaire, and to trifle with an abortive conversion at the altar of our Lady of Einsiedel.

Three years later he is at Marseilles preparing for the comic martyrdom of that fine old piece of credulity and folly, Madame d'Urfé, whose dignity survives all the affronts which the adventurer puts on her, and who is most truly *grande dame* when most grotesque.

The adventurer all through these his wanderings is swayed by what we may call most intense love of country. He leaves no stone unturned to induce the inquisitors to grant him a safe-conduct, and eventually a pardon. From London, in 1763, he unfolds to them a commercial scheme. It is his own secret of dyeing cotton Turkey red, which he offers to the Government, and will test his method in the presence of Zucatto, the Venetian ambassador in London. Patterns he will send from London, and, for ten sous, he can make a handsome bandanna handkerchief, that Venetians buy for ten livres (ten shillings), and—here is the thin end of the wedge—he offers to escort a company of workmen to Venice!

To this proposal he probably received no reply.

The London visit is of extreme interest to English people. He sees our customs with his naïve, foreign eyes, and describes them in his frank, outspoken, Italian fashion. *Le boxe* and its eccentric laws impressed him deeply. Madam Cornelys takes care that her old admirer purchases a seven-guinea ticket for her series of balls in Soho Square. London taverns, *Le Canon* and *Le Star*, knew him. He treated a new conquest in true British fashion to cakes and ale at Marylebone Gardens. He infests the British Museum, and Milady Harrington's card-parties. He joins in a queer dance called the *rhompaipe* [horn-pipe ?], and a queer game called a *rober* [rubber ?]. He sees a disturbance at Drury Lane Theatre, and Garrick on his knees to the audience; he hobnobs with 'Kety' Fisher and 'Miss' Charpillon and Lady Betty 'Germen,' Sir Augustus Hervey,

and Lord Pembroke. Miss 'Chodeleig,' from the window of her house at Kingston, sees him fall from his horse, and succours him. He abuses the puritanical British Sunday, but indemnifies himself for its dulness by driving out to 'Harwich' [Hackney?] and 'Bames' [Barnes?] after dinner.

Then he forged a bill of exchange—backed a friend's bill, he says—and had to leave the country. He had, he admits, been living at the rate of four hundred guineas a fortnight.

Belgium, Brunswick, Berlin, Warsaw, and Petersburg are next on his list. At Petersburg he met the Empress Catherine walking in the Summer Gardens. She asked 'who the tall, remarkable man was?' At Moscow he fought a duel with that heroic personage Branecki—not the famous marshal of that name. Dresden, Prague, and Vienna next had the honour of his sojourn. At Aix he came across Cagliostro, 'sewing cockles on to his cloak.' He and his wife were pilgrims to Turin and the relic of St. Veronica. (Cagliostro, says a contemporary, had been included by the heirs of Madame d'Urfé, long since dead, with Casanova in their prosecution of her betrayers.)

In Spain, where he passed the greater part of the year 1768, he behaved disloyally, and has the grace to admit it. He betrayed the confidence of a certain Manucci. A foolish intrigue with the mistress of one in power—Casanova was always colliding with the authorities in this way—resulted in his close acquaintance with the donjon of Barcelona, where he was shut up forty-three days. From these prison shades he wrote his refutation of Amelot de la Houssaye's indictment of the Venetian Republic. This was another attempt to conciliate the Most Serene Prince, which was the polite way of addressing the ruling body of Venice. Casanova knew all the forms of diplomacy. He went to Turin to get the *Refutation* printed, and presented himself to Giovanni Berlendis, the Venetian minister at Sardinia, who harboured him pending the result of his application to the Three. The result was not what Casanova anticipated. Flamineo Corner, Barbarigo, and Alvise Renier

recommended Berlendis to have an eye on the author of the *Refutation*, and to show him no special courtesy, as one still under the ban of the Tribunal.

Presently Berlendis informed the Three that his subject has gone to Leghorn to join the Russian Fleet there, and to solicit the good offices of his friend Orloff. Casanova had actually offered his services to the Russians, with the reservation that in the event of a Russian incursion on Venetian territory, he was to be 'counted out.' The *entente* between the Russian and the Venetian was, however, not complete—Orloff would not give Casanova an official position, but treated him as an amusing guest—and the disappointed adventurer went to Rome, where he met his old friend, de Bernis.

De Bernis was fifty-five, and in disgrace. The Pompadour had ruined him. Like his friend Casanova, he had been obliged to *subir du temps l'irréparable outrage*, and he was sad and lack-lustre. 'I look all right,' he said, 'but the truth is, I am not what I was. I am still the slave of the ladies, but the humblest slave of all!'

Casanova was then only forty-seven, and counted his life over. The *Mémoires* are not carried far beyond this date, 1774; but the history of this period of his life is continued in his other book, *The Flight*.

'On the 12th September of the year 1774, Signor de Monti, Consul of the Venetian Republic at Trieste, gave me a note from the State Inquisitors, in which they ordered me to present myself within a month to the *circospetto*, Marc Antonio Businello, their secretary, to learn their good will and pleasure. I went within the twenty-four hours!'

After nineteen years of exile, he was permitted to re-enter Venice, 'and I began to enjoy the pleasure of showing myself openly in the great city, where I had become the talk of the day. I went to thank the Three. They received me graciously, and invited me to dinner, eager to hear from my own lips the story of my escape. This I told them, keeping nothing back.'

Had Casanova only realised the insulting indifference, so

like De Choiseul's and Maria Theresa's, as to his capabilities for good or evil, implied by the good-humoured tolerance of these gentlemen! But he had all the obtuseness of vanity, and considered himself a very big man indeed. 'Whether it was self-love, or love of my country,' he says ingenuously, 'I do not know, but the first moments of my return were the happiest of my life. . . . The extraordinary plenitude of my pardon proclaimed me innocent in the eyes of all Europe. . . . Every one expected to see me provided with some suitable employment which would enable me to live at my ease. Every one was mistaken, except myself.'

A post was given him: it was that of a spy in the service of the Government, and he did not prove a very good spy. He has even been accused of treason to Venice, and took, it was said, pay from both sides. But it is a fact that the inquisitors had to complain that his reports contained too much philosophy, and too little information. There are even contemptuous marginal annotations in their own hand discoverable. 'Read, and judged of no importance,' or else 'Wait for better and more practical information.' In a very short while he was virtually dismissed, but continued to send in unofficial communications. Socially his facile and libellous pen got him into more trouble: he perpetrated an insulting satire on a patrician, Grimani, and was 'advised to leave Venice.'

He did so in 1782. We have his own reasons for the step—

'"I am not made for Venice," I said, "or Venice is not made for me, either one or the other!" . . . I left my country as one leaves a house which one likes, but which has grown insupportable because of an unpleasant fellow-visitor. . . . At the age of forty-seven, which was mine then, I realised thoroughly that Fortune had no more to say to me. She is merciless towards men of a certain age.'

From Vienna, where he took refuge, an anonymous letter, predicting an earthquake, threw all Venice into a panic, and is confidently attributed to the firebrand Venetian. At Spa he met Pachiarotti, Browning's famous musician, and in Paris

Count Waldstein. His last fourteen years were spent at Dux, whence he dated his other serious production, the *Iocosameron*, a 'strange and indigestible' work of the nature of *Gulliver's Travels*, and of which the scene is laid in England. He also published *The Dream, a metaphysical Dialogue between God and Me*, in which we recognise our Casanova, whose more salient characteristics, indeed, survived his living death at Dux.

The Italian Da Ponte, Mozart's librettist, several times mentions Casanova in his memoirs. Finding himself one day in the neighbourhood of Dresden and Dux, he remembered that the count's librarian owed him some hundred florins. So he visits Casanova and received, naturally, a warm welcome but no money. Casanova was always poor, in spite of his salary of a thousand florins. He moreover offered to accompany Da Ponte as far as Toeplitz, where the latter sold his chaise and horse for sixty piastres, considering it, for some reason or other, unsafe for travelling. Casanova kindly conducted the negotiations, and two sequins were retained by him for his homeward journey.

'As I can never repay you these, any more than the others I owe you, I will give you three pieces of advice which will be of more use to you than all the treasures of this earth. My dear Da Ponte, if you want to make a fortune, don't go to Paris but to London. But when you are there, never enter the doors of the *Café des Italiens* in that city, and, lastly, never give your signature.'

Da Ponte admits that the advice was good, and that he had cause to rue his infringement of the two last prohibitions. That he did not grudge his lost money is a proof of the influence exerted over every one by the extraordinary old man. It is the wife of Da Ponte who speaks for Casanova and extols 'his sincerity, eloquence, and knowledge of the world.'

The reader will remember Costa, Casanova's rascally secretary, who ran off with the diamonds, jewels, and money, with which Madame d'Urfé had charged him for Casanova, who did not, in this case, secure the wages of sin. In the *Mémoires* is the

phrase with regard to this Costa, 'I met the rogue again at Vienna in 1785,' and Da Ponte actually gives an account of the meeting, the assurance of the one thief, and the delightful *bonhomie* of the other:

'I was one day walking on the Graben with Casanova, when I suddenly saw him knit his brows, grind his teeth, and twist himself about. Flinging his hands into the air, he rushed up to a man, and catching hold of him, cried out, "Assassin! I have got you at last!" A crowd gathered. I took Casanova by the hand and led him away. He then told me with many ejaculations and gestures the story of the old lady and this man. Costa was then valet to the Comte de Hardegg. While I was walking about with Casanova, Costa went into a café, and wrote these lines in Italian and sent them to him by a small boy. Their significance is as follows:—

"Casanova, don't make a scene!
We are both rogues together,
Thou the master, I the man.
I learned the trade from thee.
Thou hast given me bread, I gave thee cake.[1]
Thy best course is to keep silence."

'Casanova began to laugh, and whispered in my ear. "The scoundrel is right." He went into the café, and I made a sign to Costa, who came out, and they walked up and down together as if nothing had happened, and parted after shaking hands several times. When Casanova came back he showed me a ring, a cameo cut in the likeness of Mercury, the protecting god of thieves. This was all that remained of the immense plunder of the poor old dead marquise.'

The admiring Da Ponte gives another instance of the mother-wit that inspired Casanova to repartees that either made or marred him in the minds of his hearers. His retort to the swashbuckler at La Haye in defence of the Venetian Republic, his really dignified rebuke of De la Tour d'Auvergne, who pays his debts with a non-negotiable security—his word

[1] Italian proverb.

of honour—are all instances of the little gems of verbal *riposte* scattered through his book.

The object of his blunt impertinence was as often as not a crowned head, if we are to believe his version of his famous retort to Joseph II. 'I have no opinion of those who are ready to buy honours,' says the king. 'And what about those who are willing to sell them, sire?' Da Ponte says this retort could never in the nature of things have been made. But the monarch was not averse from trifling amiably with the witty conversationalist. On one occasion, when the emperor was in immediate need of money, Casanova suggested an expedient analogous to that which he had proposed with success to the advisers of the French king—a Lottery. This project was a Chinese fête, which was to amuse the Viennese and profit the promoter. His memorandum on the subject ended with the phrase: *Cur, quia, quomodo, quando?*

'After the presentation of this memorandum,' says Da Ponte, 'he paid me a visit, and putting a pen in my hand, said—

'"Da Ponte, are we friends?"

'"Certainly."

'"I admit your strict sense of honour, you admit mine."

'Here I was discreetly silent, and he continued—

'"I have done everything in the world except deceive a friend."

'I smiled. The Abbé Della Lena and young Foscari were great friends of Casanova, and yet——

'"For the execution of my project," he went on, "I only need one thousand piastres. Sign a bill for me for this sum, payable two months from date, and I will see that it is duly met."

'I laid down the pen, excused myself as well as I could, and went out of the room. In the course of a few days I heard that Foscari, who had already lost heavily to him, had given him a bill by which he hoped to raise the money necessary for his Chinese fête.

'One morning when I was with the emperor, Giacomo requested an audience. He came in, bowed low, and presented the memorandum. The emperor took it, but on seeing its length, folded it up again, and asked him what he wanted. He exposed his project, and Joseph asked his name. "Giacomo Casanova is the humble person who asks this favour from your Majesty," he answered.

'After a moment's silence, the emperor said with his accustomed affability that Vienna did not care for such spectacles, then turning his back he began to write. Casanova withdrew with a crestfallen air, and I should have followed him, but the emperor retained me, and after repeating three times the name "Casanova," he began to talk about the theatre to me.

'I met my friend shortly afterwards; he was perfectly furious; it is impossible to imagine all the things he said of the sovereign!'

Casanova was of a highly irascible, but yet placable, disposition. The grounds of the long quarrel with the steward Faulkircher which embittered his last years is set forth in his letters to that gentleman found among his papers, and never sent or intended to be sent. It was a mere expenditure of gall on paper that gave relief. He was very miserable. He resented affronts where none were intended, and even the sincere regard of the Prince de Ligne and others could not dissipate the clouds of melancholy that came over him latterly. Yet it would seem that some of the glamour cast by dazzled posterity over legendary heroes had gathered round his name, like Holger Dansk or Barbarossa. It is asserted that he lived till 1811. The matter-of-fact reason for this misapprehension is the confusion between him and his more legitimately famous brother, François, the painter. He really expired, as the register of Oberlestendorp, in the diocese of Leineritz, where lies the seignory of Dux, proves, on the 4th of June 1798, at the age of seventy-eight.

He died in the odour of sanctity, in the presence of several witnesses, with, it would seem, a faint attempt at epigram. This characteristic utterance, according to the Prince de Ligne, who was present at this strange deathbed, ran as follows—

'I have lived, a philosopher, and I die, a Christian!'

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I TAKE some pride in stating, at the very outset of these Memoirs, that throughout the whole course of my life I have been my own master, and a free agent.

The doctrine of the power of destiny, as taught by the Stoics and some other sects, is a mere figment of the imagination, smacking of atheism. I am not an atheist, but a monotheist, and a Christian. My Christianity, however, is fortified by philosophy, for which no man is the worse. I believe in the existence of a spiritual God, Lord and Creator of all forms of matter. I have never doubted His existence, and that is proven by the fact that I have always counted on His providence, have always turned to Him in prayer in my troubles, and have always been heard. Despair kills, but religion banishes despair; fervent prayer restores confidence, and the power of action. As for the means which the Supreme Being employs to avert the misfortunes hanging over those who implore His help, the knowledge of these is beyond our understanding. Man, musing on the inscrutability of Divine Providence, is impelled to worship it. Our ignorance is our only refuge; happy are they who cherish it. We must pray, and believe that our prayer is granted, even when appearances are against it. Man is free, but he ceases to be so when he ceases to believe in his liberty; when he comes to look on himself as a mere tool in the hands of fate, he abnegates the divine gift of reason. If that great gift tends to make us submissive and reasonable, we surely please Him who has bestowed on us this intelligence. God

only ceases to be God to those who deny His existence, and this is the greatest punishment He can inflict on them.

My readers will see that, having no particular object in view, I have let myself drift in the preparing of these Memoirs. My successes and my reverses, the good and evil fortune which has befallen me alternately, go to prove that in this world good can come out of evil and evil out of good,—moral good as well as physical good. My deviations may perhaps serve to show others how to keep in the straight and narrow path. Courage is the one thing needful, strength without confidence is useless. I have often thriven after some most imprudent proceeding which ought by rights to have pushed me over the brink of disaster, and, while acknowledging my error, I have thanked God for averting its just consequences from me. On the other hand, I have sometimes suffered most when actuated by the most virtuous motives.

In spite of my basis of moral principle, I have all my life been victim of my senses. I enjoyed going astray, knowing that I *was* astray. You must not, reader, set me down as an empty boaster, but as one who is making a full and general confession. Do not expect me to put on the airs of a penitent, or affect to blush for my misdemeanours. I can laugh at the follies of my youth, and if you are kind you will laugh with me.

You will laugh to see how little I scrupled to cheat empty-headed people, scoundrels, and fools, if I could do it to my own advantage. So far as women are concerned, the inevitable mutual deception must be considered a matter of give and take: of two lovers one or the other must needs be dupe. As to the fools, I congratulate myself on the recollection of every opportunity I had of ensnaring such, for a fool is insolent, presumptuous, and sets wisdom at defiance. To take in a fool is to avenge oneself: a fool is armour-clad in his folly, and the wise man knows not where to have him;

in short, to dupe a fool is a worthy exploit. I hate them so that I feel myself degraded in a fool's company. But a fool must not be confounded with a stupid man: the latter is only stupid from lack of education, is often well meaning enough, and in spite of his stupidity has a native intelligence and a common sense which the fool lacks.

If you will enter carefully into the spirit of this preface, dear reader, you will understand the object I have in view. I want you to know me before reading the story of my life. It is only at a *café* or a *table d'hôte* that one talks to strangers.

One of the ancients has said, 'If thou hast done nothing worthy of being written, at least write something worthy of being read.' This is a fine saying, but not, I fear, applicable to me. I am not writing a romance, or the biography of an illustrious person, and, worthy or unworthy, my life is my material, and my material is my life.

At the age of seventy-two, in the year 1797, when I can say *vixi*, although I am still living, I can find no such satisfactory entertainment as recalling my past adventures, and in setting them down I furnish subject for amusement to my listeners. I have lived in good society, I hope to find readers among the same. As for the vulgar, I am not writing for them. I have enjoyed every variety of temperament successively—I was phlegmatic in my childhood, sanguine in my youth, bilious in mid-life, and melancholy in my old age, in which last state I shall probably continue to the end. I have always had good health, principally, I think, because I suited my diet to my circumstances. At an early age I learned that what is most harmful is excess, either of food or fasting, and I must admit that the excess of too little is more dangerous than the excess of too much, for if one brings indigestion, the other brings death. Another reason for my excellent health—I have always been my own doctor!

The cultivation of the pleasures of the senses was ever my

principal aim in life. Knowing that I was personally calculated to please the fair sex, I always strove to make myself agreeable to it. To the last years of my life I have taken an active interest in whatever came under my notice or aroused my curiosity. I have had many friends who have been good to me, and to whom I have been able to prove my gratitude. I have also had enemies, and if I have not exterminated them it is because it was not in my power to do so. I have never forgiven an injury, though I have often forgotten one; but the man who forgets does not necessarily forgive; forgiveness is a heroic and generous sentiment, whereas forgetfulness is due merely to weakness of memory, or the mere necessity for peace and quietness, for hatred implies energy, and in the long-run wears out the man who indulges in it.

I have always loved good cheer. I like highly-spiced dishes, maccaroni made by a Neapolitan cook, the *olla podrida* of Spain, fine, white salt cod from Newfoundland, high game, and strong cheese; the latter I consider perfect when the little creatures which form in it become visible.

I have always been an ardent lover of truth; and my readers will forgive my emptying my friends' purses to gratify my own caprices, when they learn that these friends were mostly full of some wild scheme or other, which by seeming to encourage I have often frustated, thus showing them the folly of their ways. I only employed money for my own pleasure, which they destined to purposes quite impossible of realisation. Had I profited by that money, and become rich, I might to-day feel guilty, but I am penniless. I have thrown away everything, and this consoles and justifies me. All my adventures are not written down here. I have omitted some which might displease certain persons who took part in them. If wisdom comes to me before my death, and while I still have strength to act, I shall burn every page. At present I have not the courage to destroy what has given me so much pleasure to write.

The device which I have adopted justifies my digressions and my too frequent comments on my own acts—

'Ne quidquam sapit qui sibi non sapit.'

I prefer to consider myself the principal cause of all, good or evil, which has befallen me; I have considered it a pleasure to be thus my own pupil, and a duty to love my preceptor.

JACQUES CASANOVA.

MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT

CHAPTER I

HIS EARLY LIFE

Don Jacopo Casanova, born at Saragossa, illegitimate son of Don Francisco, carried off Donna Anna Palafox from her convent in the year 1428, the very day after she had taken the perpetual vows. He was King Alfonso's secretary. The lovers went to Rome, where they were imprisoned for a year, before Pope Martin the Third would grant a dispensation, and give the young couple the nuptial benediction. All the children born of this marriage died in infancy, except Don Juan, who joined Christopher Columbus, and died during his travels in 1493. He left one son, Mark Antony, a satirical poet, who was carried off by the plague during the sack of Rome by the Imperialists in 1536. Three months after his death his wife gave birth to a son, Jacques Casanova, who emigrated to France and there lived to be very old. He fought with Farnese against Henry of Navarre, and was my great-great-grandfather. Thus far I can establish my pedigree by aid of my father's papers, the rest I learnt from my mother.

His ancestry.

Gaëtan Joseph Jacques fell in love with an actress named Fragoletta, and joined her troupe, first as dancer, then as comedian. After living together five years they parted, and he married a beautiful young Venetian, Zanetta, daughter of Jerome Farusi, a shoemaker opposite the theatre of Saint Samuel. This was in spite of the opposition of her family,

in whose pious eyes an actor was an abomination. Nine months after the marriage I was born, on the 2nd of April 1725.

My mother adopted her husband's profession and became an actress. When I was a year old, my parents left me in charge of my maternal grandmother, and went to London to play, where two years later my brother François was born: it was he who afterwards became the celebrated painter of battle scenes. My brother Jean was also born in London; he too had a talent for art, and was appointed Director of the Academy of Painting of Dresden. My youngest brother was a posthumous child: he took holy orders, and died in Rome about fifteen years ago.

His earliest recollections.

The earliest fact my memory can furnish occurred in the year 1733. I was eight years old, and until then my mind is blank. I have a distinct recollection of standing in a corner of the room holding my head in my hands, while blood flowed abundantly from my nose and splashed in a pool on the floor. Marzia Farusi, my grandmother, whose pet I was, came to me and washed my face with cold water; then she took me with her in a gondola to Murano, a densely populated island about half a league from Venice. Here we landed, and walked some distance till we came to a miserable hut, in which was an old woman seated on a stool. She held a black cat in her arms, and five or six others purred round her. She was, I suppose, a witch. After a long discussion in Forliote patois, my grandmother gave her a silver ducat, whereupon the witch took me up and carried me across the room, depositing me in a huge chest which stood in a corner. She closed the lid and told me not to be frightened. I lay still, holding my handkerchief to my nose, which had not ceased bleeding. I could hear laughter, weeping, singing, screams, and cries, going on outside, but loss of blood and stupidity made me indifferent to the uproar. By and by the old woman lifted me out of the box, undressed me, and put me into her bed: she burnt drugs and muttered spells over

me, rubbed my temples and the back of my neck with a sweet-smelling ointment, and gave me five sugar-plums to eat. She told me I should get well, but only if I was careful not to tell any one what she had done to cure me; if I spoke of what had taken place, she said, I should most surely bleed to death. Moreover, a beautiful lady would come to see me on the following night, but I must not mention her visit. When we got home I was put to bed, where I soon fell asleep, thinking no more of the promised visitor, but on awaking some hours later I saw, or thought I saw, a lovely woman wearing a crown on her head, who spoke to me kindly, kissed me, and disappeared.

When my grandmother came to dress me in the morning she threatened me with all sorts of penalties, of which death was the least, if I dared to tell any one of the lady. As I was accustomed to obey her orders blindly, I kept my counsel; besides, there was really no one to whom I could have spoken, for I was a dull, uninteresting child, whom people pitied and left alone.

After the voyage to Murano and the nocturnal visit, my nose continued to bleed, but less and less violently every day, my faculties began to develop, and in a month I learned to read.

The next thing I remember is being with my brother François in my father's room. A large crystal lying on the table attracted my fancy, and I put it in my pocket. By and by my father got up to look for the crystal, and not finding it, he naturally accused us of taking it. My brother denied this, and so did I, whereupon my father said we should be searched, and the one in whose possession it was found should have a good beating. While pretending to hunt for the crystal in all the corners of the room, I slipped it adroitly into my brother's pocket. I regretted having done so, for I might have pretended to find it on the floor, but it was too late. The fatal ball was found on the innocent boy, and he got the punishment. Three or four years later I was

His first crime.

fool enough to boast to François of the trick I had played him. He never forgave me, and never missed an opportunity of revenging himself. But my Jesuitical confessor told me that in this action I had been true to my name, for in the Hebrew language Jacob means 'supplanter.'

Jacob the Supplanter.

Some few weeks after this my father died of an abscess in the head: he was only thirty-six, and was an especial favourite with the aristocracy. Two days before his death he gathered his children round his bed to say farewell. My mother was there, and three Venetian noblemen named Grimani; the latter promised solemnly to be our protectors and patrons. Having given us his blessing, my father made my mother swear that none of us should be brought up to the stage. The three patricians witnessed her vow, and undertook to see that she kept it. She was still young and beautiful, and after her husband's death had many offers of marriage, but she refused them all, trusting to Providence and her own resources to bring us up.

The Abbé Grimani takes him to Padua.

It was decided that I should be put to school at Padua, so my mother and the Abbé Grimani took me, aged seven, to that town in a *burchiello*, by the Brenta canal. A *burchiello* is like a little floating house. There is a dining-room, with a small cabin at each end, a kitchen, and rooms for the servants. We embarked at ten o'clock at night, and were eight hours on the water. At Padua, I was handed over, with my trunk and all it contained, to an old woman, who, for a sequin[1] a month, agreed to board and lodge me, keep me clean, and send me to school. She grumbled at the sum, though she accepted it, and said it was not enough, at the same time eagerly pocketing her six months' pay in advance. I was kissed and told to be a good boy, and that is how they got rid of me.

My bed was in a garret, with those of three other boys, and the servant who looked after us. The old woman was as big and bony as a grenadier. My new companions received

[1] About twenty-two francs present French money.

me kindly. When we sat down to dinner a wooden spoon was given me which I refused, calling out loudly for my pretty silver one, but I was told that at school I must do as the others did, and as they had wooden spoons I must be content with the like. The soup was not bad, but it was served in a big bowl into which we all dipped, and he who dipped quickest got most. After the soup we had a bit of salt cod and an apple. We had no glasses or goblets, but drank from an earthenware pitcher a miserable beverage called *graspia*, which is made by boiling the stalks from which grapes have been stripped in water with a little sugar. After dinner the servant took me to see a young priest, Dr. Gozzi, who agreed to teach me in return for forty sous a month, the eleventh part of a sequin.

After school came supper, which was worse than dinner, and after supper I was put to bed, when the three best-known kinds of vermin prevented me from closing my eyes, while night was made additionally hideous by quantities of huge rats which ran about the floor and turned my blood cold with terror. Such was my first experience of misery, and my first lesson in fortitude and patience.

The next day I was so drowsy that I could not hold up my head, and kept dozing in school. The good priest wanted to know what was the matter with me, and on my telling him, he put on his cloak, took me by the hand, and led me back to the house, where he severely reprimanded my hostess. The result of his sermon was clean linen and a better bed for me.

My master was very kind. I sat by him in school, and tried hard to deserve his approbation.

His life at school.

It was a new life for me, who until then had known nothing outside my own home, where cleanliness and abundance reigned. Nevertheless, I grew and flourished, and had it not been for hunger I should have been fairly happy. To satisfy the gnawing I thieved right and left, and laid hands on whatever I could find. Some fifty red herrings in the kitchen cupboard disappeared one by one, and all the smoked sausages

which hung in the chimney followed them. An egg was no sooner dropped in the poultry-yard than I seized and devoured it.

My progress at school was so rapid that in a few months it was my task to examine the lessons of my thirty companions and to point out their faults to the master. I was very severe at first, but the lazy ones soon found means to soften my rigour; when their themes were full of faults they propitiated me with cold cutlets and pieces of chicken; they even gave me money. This excited my cupidity, or rather my gluttony, and I became tyrannical, with the result that they rebelled against me, and complained to the master, who convicted me of extortion, and deprived me of my functions.

The doctor, however, still continued to like me, and one day asked if I would care to leave the old woman and live with him. I was delighted at the proposition, and he told me to write to my grandmother and the Abbé Grimani for permission. Some time after this, just as we were sitting down to table, my good grandmother unexpectedly appeared. I flung myself into her arms, sobbing and crying, and at sight of the poor little skeleton I was, she mingled her tears with mine. In her presence my courage returned to me, and I told her all my grievances, pointing at the horrible food set before us, and taking her to see my miserable bed. The old woman declared she did the best she could for the money, and my grandmother only told her very quietly to pack my trunk. We went to the inn, and for the first time for many a day I had a real dinner. My grandmother hardly ate anything, she was so busy watching me.

His first love.

Dr. Gozzi was a handsome young priest, about twenty-six years old. The family consisted of his mother, who looked on him as a prodigy, his father, a shoemaker who worked all day long, and never spoke even at meals, excepting on fête-days, when he conscientiously got drunk and came home at midnight singing songs from Tasso; and a sister, Bettina, a pretty girl of thirteen, a great reader of romances. Her

father and mother scolded her continually because she spent all her time at the window, and her brother teased her for reading frivolous books. She was my first love. To her I owe the fact that I am slightly pitted with smallpox. I have three marks. I nursed her through the complaint, so they are honourable scars enough. Six months after my *entrée* into the house the other scholars left, because the doctor devoted all his attention to me. He then determined to start a small school, but it was two years before it became a success; during these years he taught me all he knew, among other things to play the violin.

In the Lent of 1736, my mother sent for me, as she was going to Saint Petersburg, and wanted to see me. She invited the doctor to accompany me. This perturbed him greatly, as he had never been to Venice, and had never been in good company; however, he decided to go.

My mother received him most kindly, but as she was as beautiful as the day, my poor master was sorely embarrassed, not daring to look her in the face, and yet obliged to talk to her. She noticed his embarrassment and maliciously took pleasure in adding to it. As for me, I attracted the attention of the whole *coterie*, for as they had always considered me half an idiot, they could hardly believe in the change that had come over me in two years. Then my mother left for Saint Petersburg, and we returned to Padua, where I continued my studies. At sixteen I was received Doctor of Law. I wanted to study medicine with a view to practising, but was not allowed to. I was forced to study Law, which I hated, because my mother was determined I should be an advocate, and what was worse still, an ecclesiastical advocate. It would have been wiser to let me follow my own taste, and become a doctor, for in Medicine charlatanism is more useful than it is in Law. It ended in my being neither one nor the other, and moreover, I never made any use of one or the other. Law ruins more families than it helps, and more people perish at the hands of the doctors than are cured by them.

He is received Doctor of Law at the age of sixteen.

In my time the students of Padua enjoyed many privileges, the way of the Venetian Government was to pay well-known professors very highly and to leave the students absolute liberty to follow their lessons and lectures or not as they liked. The students were governed by a syndic, who was responsible to the Government for their conduct. It was his duty to deliver them up to justice when they violated the laws, and the students submitted to his sentences, because whenever they had a show of reason on their side he was sure to defend them vigorously.

Not wishing to appear less rich than my comrades, I incurred all sorts of expenses which I could not meet. I sold or pawned everything I possessed, but was still unable to pay my debts. Not knowing what to do, I wrote to my good grandmother and asked for help, but instead of sending it me she came herself to Padua, and after thanking the doctor for his care of me, took me back with her to Venice. The doctor, with many tears, gave me his blessing, and the most precious thing he possessed, a relic of I forget what saint: perhaps I should have it now, only it happened to be set in gold. It got me out of a sore strait once, and that was the miracle it performed.

I have been to Padua many times since those days, and always lodged at the house of the good priest. My first love, the pretty Bettina, married a shoemaker, with whom she led such a miserable life of poverty and ill treatment that after two years of matrimony her brother took her back to live with him. The last time I went to Padua, which was a few years ago, I found her old, ill, and poor, and she died in my arms.

CHAPTER II

LUCY OF PASÉAN

'He comes from Padua, where he has been studying,' was the formula with which I was announced wherever I went, and which gained me the tacit admiration of my equals in age and condition, the compliments of the elders and the caresses of the old women. The curé of Saint Samuel, named Josello, presented me to the patriarch of Venice, who bestowed the tonsure on me, and four months later, by special graces, the four minor orders. My grandmother's joy knew no bounds.

M. de Malipiero, a retired senator.

Although the Abbé Grimani was my chief protector, I saw him but rarely, and I attached myself most particularly to a M. de Malipiero, a retired senator, who, in spite of his seventy years, led a merry life in his palace. Every evening a selection of all the best society in the town assembled there. He was rich, handsome, and a bachelor, but crippled by gout, his head, lungs, and stomach alone were free from this cruel malady. He made but one meal a day, and as he had no teeth and ate very slowly, he always ate alone, not wishing to hasten out of regard for his guests, or compel them to wait for him. The first time the curé presented me to him, we had a lively argument on the subject of his solitary dinners. I told him he ought to invite people with extra large appetites, which would keep them busy till he had finished.

'Where can I find them?' said he.

'It is a delicate matter,' I replied, 'but your excellency ought to try several people, and ask again those whom you find suitable, without telling them the reason, for of course

no one would care to have it known that your excellency does him the honour to invite him to your table on account of his appetite being twice as big as any one's else.'

The senator, struck by the force of my argument, bid the curé take me to dine with him next day, and having proved that my practice was still better than my precept, I became his constant guest.

Thérèse Imer.

This old man adored a girl called Thérèse Imer, a queer, pretty, coquettish creature. She knew Malipiero loved her and mocked him. Her mother brought her to see him every day after dinner. She used to refuse him a kiss, whereupon his gallantry turned to rage, and he had much ado to prevent himself throwing dishes at her head. She actually refused to marry him!

One day the Senator surprised me by telling me that he wished me to preach, or rather to pronounce a special panegyric, which was spoken once every year, on a certain feast-day. In his quality as President of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, it was his duty to select a preacher, and he had chosen me.

'They will not dare to refuse you,' he said, 'and this is a fine chance for you.'

I had never thought of preaching, and at first I thought he was joking, but he soon persuaded me that I was destined to be one of the finest orators of the century!

On the appointed day I read my panegyric in the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, before a most select audience. I was generously applauded, and every one declared I was a born preacher, certainly no boy of fifteen had ever spoken so well before. In the alms bag, in which it was customary to deposit offerings for the preacher, the sacristan found more than fifty sequins, and several *billets doux*, which latter scandalised him greatly. This rich harvest, coming when I was sorely in need of money, made me think seriously of taking up preaching as a profession, and I spoke of this to the curé, asking him to help me. The curé, who appreciated

my maiden effort, commissioned me to write a sermon for the feast of Saint Joseph, but it was ordained that I should only preach once in my life. My ambition was nipped in the bud.

I was puffed up with the pride of my first success, and I imagined that it was unnecessary to learn my sermon by heart. I had all the ideas in my head, and it seemed impossible for me to forget the order in which they were to be presented; even if I forgot a phrase, I was sure I could easily substitute another of equal value. I never lacked words even when talking in a numerous company, so I imagined it would be impossible for me to remain mute before a congregation of people, who, after all, would be obliged to listen to whatever I said.

His first sermon.

I was to preach at four o'clock in the afternoon of the nineteenth of March, but unfortunately I had not the strength of mind to refuse an invitation to dine with the Count of Mont-Réal, who lodged in our house. I was still at table with him and his five friends when the clerk came running to tell me that they were waiting for me in the sacristry. With my stomach full, and my head also, I ran off to church, and ascended the pulpit. I got through the exordium very well, then paused for breath. I had hardly started again, when I began to stumble, lost the thread of my discourse, wandered, caught myself up, repeated myself, went back to the beginning, used a wrong word, and so on. What disconcerted me was a confused murmur, which began to rise audibly from the congregation, who saw only too plainly what was the matter with me. Several persons left the church; I heard suppressed laughter; I lost my head altogether, and I cannot say whether I really fainted or whether I only pretended to, anyhow I let myself fall on the floor of the pulpit, striking my head heavily against the wall. I wished then that the blow had killed me.

Two clerks carried me to the sacristry. As soon as I came to myself I caught up my cloak and hat and ran home, and

locked myself into my own room. There I speedily exchanged cassock and bands for breeches and short coat, such as an abbé wears in the country, and putting some things in a bag, I started for Padua, with the intention of passing my third examination.

When I returned to Venice some months later, my disgraceful performance was forgotten. The unfortunate affair had faded from people's minds, but there was no longer any question of my becoming a preacher.

In the autumn I received an invitation from the Countess of Mont-Réal to pass some time at a country place of hers called Paséan, where I was to meet a numerous and brilliant company, including her daughter, a Venetian lady, who had wit and beauty, but only one eye.

A charming room on the ground floor was allotted to me; it looked into the garden. The morning after my arrival, when I opened my eyes, they rested with delight on a beautiful girl who brought me my coffee. She seemed to be about seventeen, but in reality was three years younger. Her skin was as white as alabaster, and her hair and eyes as black as ebony; she wore nothing but a chemise and a short petticoat, showing a well-turned leg and the prettiest little foot imaginable.

'Was your bed comfortable?' she asked.

'Yes; and I am sure it was you who made it. Who are you?'

Lucy.

'I am Lucy. My father is the *concierge* here. I have no brothers nor sisters, and I am fourteen years old. I am glad you have not brought a servant with you, as I shall wait on you, and I hope you will be pleased with me.'

She helped me to put on my dressing-gown, and while I took my coffee she sat on the bed and chattered to me. By and by her father and mother came in; they scolded her gently for being so forward, and begged me to excuse her. When she left the room, they broke into praises of her goodness and gentleness. 'She is,' they said, 'our only child, and the

hope of our old age. She loves and obeys us, and fears God. She is as healthy as a fish, and has only one fault; she is very young.'

While they were still talking of her, she returned, as gay as a linnet, neatly dressed, with her hair arranged and her shoes and stockings on.

Every morning and evening she came to wait on me, and I was soon convinced from what she said that she was justly the idol of her parents, and that the freedom of her manner came from her innocence and the purity of her soul. Her naïveté, her vivacity, her curiosity, the modest blush which covered her face when the amusing things that she said, the full meaning of which she was far from understanding, made me laugh, all showed me that she was an angel of candour, but an angel who would most likely fall a victim to the first libertine who should attack her.

I felt myself strong enough to avoid anything which could afterwards give me cause for reproach; indeed, the thought of such villainy made me shudder. My *amour-propre* was sufficient guarantee for the honour of Lucy and of her worthy parents, who so confidingly trusted her to me. It seemed to me that I should have been contemptible in my own eyes if I had betrayed this confidence. I determined to struggle against all warmer feelings, and let her mere presence be my reward. I remained at Paséan all September, and the eleven last nights of my sojourn there I passed tranquilly and quietly in Lucy's society. As soon as her mother was asleep she would come to me, and talk to me, in all honour.

When I left I promised to return in the spring. Our parting was sad and tender; indeed, her perturbed and excited state of mind, due to my departure, was perhaps the cause of her misfortune, for which, twenty years later in Holland, I had reason to bitterly reproach myself.

When I returned to Paséan, after Easter, everything was changed; the guests were strangers to me, and the supper the first night seemed interminable. I was given my old room,

and I hastened to it, eagerly expecting to see Lucy. As she did not appear, I consoled myself by saying, 'She will surely come in the morning.' But in the morning my coffee was brought by a stout, ugly old servant, who, when I asked for news of the family, answered in a *patois* I did not understand.

By and by the *concierge* himself appeared. I asked after his wife and his daughter, but at this last word his eyes filled with tears.

'What,' cried I, 'is she dead?'

'Would to God she were!'

'Why do you speak so? What has happened to her?'

Her elopement.

'She has eloped with Count Daniel's courier, and we do not even know where she is.'

His wife came in at that moment and joined her lamentations to his, and seeing that I sincerely shared in their grief, they told me it was but eight days since she had left them.

'I know the courier, l'Aigle,' said I; 'he is a scoundrel. Did he ask your permission to marry her?'

'Not he, for he knew we should never grant it.'

'But I cannot understand Lucy's caring for him!'

'He must have bewitched her. She first met him about a month after your departure.'

'Does no one know where they are?'

'No one; and God knows what the villain will do with her.'

Feeling every bit as sad as these honest folk could feel, I went out into the woods and spent a long morning in reflections, which all, good and bad alike, began with 'if.' 'If' I had arrived a week earlier, Lucy would have confided in me; 'if' I had not trifled with her she would have been less susceptible; 'if' she had never known me—! I was wretched, for I felt that I had been the agent of her misfortune. Had I known in what direction to look for her, I would have set off at once, but I had no clue to her whereabouts.

Before Lucy's fate was made known to me I was proud to think that I had had such control over myself, but now I was

ashamed and repentant. I saw in my mind's-eye the unhappy girl falling into misery, perhaps shame, hating my memory as the primary cause of her trouble. This incident it was which led me to adopt a new system, which I diligently pursued in after-life. I have never, since Paséan, had occasion to reproach myself with leaving victories behind me for others to reap, and, in some instances, I may have carried this new system too far. My readers will judge.

I joined the rest of the party. They flattered me, and made so much of me, that I felt cheerful again, and kept the whole table in a roar. I had to put my grief quite aside, or leave the place. I stayed.

CHAPTER III

CLERICAL ASPIRATIONS

On my return to Venice I found my grandmother very ill. I loved her, and I did not leave her for a single moment until she had breathed her last. It was not possible for her to leave me anything; she had given me all that she could during her lifetime. A month after her death my mother wrote saying that as there was no probability of her returning to Venice, she had decided to give up her house there. She had told the Abbé Grimani so, and I must conform to his will in everything. He was bidden to sell the furniture, and put me to some good school. I went at once to Grimani to assure him of my submission to his orders.

The rent of the house was paid up to the end of the year; but knowing that henceforward I should be homeless, and that the furniture would be sold, I did as I liked. I began by selling the linen, the hangings, and the china. I went on to the mirrors and beds. I knew I should get into trouble for this, but I also knew that these things were inherited from my father, and that my mother had no right to them. As far as my brothers and sisters were concerned, there was plenty of time for us to make arrangements. Four months later my mother wrote to me again, this time from Warsaw.

'I have, my dear son,' she wrote, 'made the acquaintance of a learned minor friar, a Calabrian, whose great qualities remind me of you each time he honours me with a visit. I told him about a year ago that I had a son destined for holy orders, but that I had not the necessary means to

devote him to the Church. He said that if I would ask the queen to appoint him to a certain bishopric, my son should become as his own. I must ask the queen, he said, to recommend him to her daughter, the Queen of Naples. The queen has deigned to listen to me, and to write to her daughter, and this most worthy ecclesiastic has now been raised to the see of Martorano;[1] and faithful to his promise, he will take you with him to his diocese. He must pass through Venice to go to Calabria. He has written you the enclosed letter, to which reply at once. By his help you may arrive at the highest dignities of the Church. Think what my joy will be if in twenty or thirty years' time I see you a bishop! The Abbé Grimani will take care of you until the bishop fetches you.'

He leaves Venice for Martorano.

The bishop's letter was in Latin, and was practically a repetition of my mother's.

These letters completely turned my head. Adieu, Venice! I saw before me a most brilliant perspective of years. I burned to start at once on my career. I felt no regret at the thought of leaving my country. 'The time for vanities is past,' said I, 'a stable and dignified future lies ahead of me.' The Abbé Grimani complimented me on my future grandeur, and assured me he would find me a good boarding-house, into which I could go at the beginning of the year, and wait until the coming of the bishop.

One fine morning, a man, about forty, appeared at my house with a black wig, a scarlet cloak, and a sunburnt face. He gave me a note from M. Grimani bidding me hand over to bearer all the furniture in the house, according to his inventory, a duplicate copy of which was in my possession. I showed him what was left of the furniture, and when anything was missing I told him, in an indifferent manner, that I knew where it was. But the blockhead insisted on knowing what I had done with the things. His tone displeased me,

[1] Martorano is situated in the wilds of Calabria, and was the seat of the Suffragan Bishop of Cosenza.

and I told him I owed him no explanation. As he continued to bluster I advised him to get out as quickly as he could, or I would show him I was still master in my own house.

His furniture is sold for debt.

I went to M. Grimani, and told him all that had happened, but the man had been there before me, and I got a severe reprimand, and was asked what had become of the missing furniture. I had sold it, I said, so as not to run into debt. M. Grimani told me I was a scamp, that it was not mine to sell, that he should know how to deal with me, and ordered me out of the house. I ran off in a boiling rage, and bargained with a Jew to buy all that was left in the house, but when I got to my door I found the sheriff was there before me. Seals had been put on everything, and I was not even allowed to go into my own room. I went to a lawyer and laid the case before him.

'It is sharp practice,' said he, 'and I think you can make them pay dearly for it; the seals will be taken off to-morrow, and in the meantime you must sleep at a friend's house.'

As a matter of fact the seals were taken off the next morning. Two days after M. Grimani ordered me to wait on him immediately. When I presented myself he asked me brusquely what I intended to do.

'Put myself under the protection of the law,' I said, 'and defend myself against a man who has used violence, and forced me to spend the night in a disreputable house.'

'A disreputable house?'

'Certainly, there was none other open to me, and I was turned out of my own.'

'You are back again now. Go and tell your lawyer to stop all proceedings; the sheriff, Razzetta, was only acting by my orders. You were going to sell the rest of the furniture, we were obliged to prevent you. There is a room ready for you in a house which belongs to me, near Saint John Chrysostom; the first floor is occupied by La Tintoretta, the dancer. Send your baggage there, and come and dine with me every day.'

My lawyer advised me to do as M. Grimani said; it was an honour for me to be admitted to his table, and I was curious to see my new lodgings in La Tintoretta's house, for she was a great deal talked about on account of the Prince of Waldeck, who spent large sums of money on her.

He takes a lodging in the house of La Tintoretta.

The bishop was expected during the summer, so I had only six months to wait before starting on the road to the Pontificate. Everything looked rose-coloured, my castles in the air were very magnificent structures.

La Tintoretta was a mediocre dancer, neither pretty nor ugly, but very intelligent. When I went to pay her my respects she received me like a princess, took off her glove and gave me her hand to kiss. The prince arrived while I was there, and was very gracious indeed. He was most kind to me all the time I remained in the house, and gave me a gold snuff-box as a reward for a very bad sonnet I made in honour of his Grizellini—this was her family name; Tintoretta was only a nickname bestowed on her because her father was a dyer.

Towards the end of the carnival my mother wrote to the Abbé Grimani, saying it would be a disgrace if the bishop found me lodging in the same house with a dancer, and that he must get me some more decent dwelling at once. He consulted with the curé Josello, and these two good gentlemen decided that a seminary was the very thing for me. It was an absurd idea, for at the age of seventeen a boy such as myself is out of place in a seminary; but as I was always eager for new sensations, I consented gladly. I was not destined to remain there long.

He enters a seminary.

The students all slept in an immense dormitory divided into cells. A lay-brother, called the prefect, slept at the end of the dormitory, and it was his business to keep order, and above all to see that we did not enter one another's cells. This was a capital offence, and in consequence nothing delighted the *mauvais sujets* so much as to pay one another

nocturnal visits. Returning in haste one night I was surprised to find another boy, not only in my cell, but in my bed. I kicked him out promptly, but the unfortunate wretch fell over a pail and made a terrible clatter. The prefect appeared, our names were taken, and there was a great to-do. It transpired the next day that the unlucky boy had been cruising about in the dormitory, when he heard, or thought he heard, the prefect. Laying his hands on my bed he found it empty, and jumped to the conclusion that he was safe in his own cell. But his explanations and mine were of no avail; we were haled before the rector, and then, with our hands tied behind our backs, four domestics took us into the large hall, where we were told to kneel in front of the crucifix; and each received seven or eight blows from a stick.

He is dismissed.

Four days after, the curé Josello came with orders to take me back to Venice. He told me that the Abbé Grimani had given orders to his servant not to admit me if I presented myself at his palace; and he left me at the Jesuits' College without a sou in my pocket, and nothing but the clothes I stood up in. The next day as I was coming out of the library of Saint Mark a soldier accosted me, and said there was some one in a gondola who wished to speak to me. I stepped into the gondola, the curtain was drawn back, and I saw my evil genius the Sheriff Razzetta! The soldier sat down in the prow with a companion. I recognised the gondola as that belonging to Signor Grimani. No one spoke; for half an hour we maintained profound silence, then the gondola stopped at the small door of the Fort of Saint André at the mouth of the Adriatic, the very spot where the *Bucentaur* is brought to a standstill when the Doge goes in state to espouse the sea on the Feast of the Ascension.

The sentinel at the fort called a corporal, who took me to the officer in command, giving him at the same time a letter. I was led to the guard-room, where shortly after the adjutant appeared, and giving me three francs and a half told me he

had orders to pay me that sum weekly: it was the exact amount received by a soldier of the lowest grade. I was too indignant to be angry. In the evening I sent for something to eat, then lying down on a camp bed I passed the night in the midst of the guard, without closing my eyes. They did nothing but sing, eat garlic, smoke bad tobacco, and drink wine as thick and as black as ink.

Next day the commandant summoned me, and said that in making me pass the night in the guard-room he had only obeyed the orders of the Minister of War. 'But now,' he said, 'I am simply told to keep you under arrest in the fortress, therefore I can give you a good room and a bed. Go wherever you like within bounds, but remember if you escape, it will be the ruin of me. I am sorry to be only able to give you ten sous a day, but if you have friends in Venice write to them for money, and I will see that your letters reach their destination.'

He is imprisoned in the Fort of St. André.

I was then taken to a fine room on the first story, the windows of which commanded a superb view. I found a bed, and my trunk which had not been opened. A soldier came and told me politely that he would wait upon me, and that I was to pay him whenever I could; every one knew I had but ten sous a day. I sent him to bring me some soup, and after having eaten it went to bed and slept for nine hours. When I awoke I found an invitation to sup with the commandant, and I began to think that things were not so bad after all.

When the hot weather came I was obliged to write to Signor Grimani for summer clothes, telling him where he would find them, provided Razzetta had not sold them. Eight days after, when I was with the commandant, this infamous creature walked in accompanied by an individual whom he presented as Petrillo, a celebrated favourite of the Empress of Russia. Taking a packet from the hands of a gondolier, he gave it to me, saying, 'Here are your rags, which I bring you.'

I answered, 'The day will come when I shall give *you* your *rigano*.'[1]

Hereupon Petrillo struck in, saying he was sorry not to have seen me in Venice, as I could have shown him the way to all the low haunts in the city.

'We should doubtless have met your wife in one of them,' I replied.

I was beside myself with passion, and after they had left I considered my revenge.

The fort was entirely surrounded by water, and no sentinel could see me from the windows. The thing was to find a boatman who, for the sake of money, would risk the galleys. I chose one among those who brought provisions to the fort every morning, and offered him a sequin if he would help me to put a certain plan of mine into execution, at the same time assuring him I had no intention of escaping. He asked me to give him twenty-four hours to think over my proposition. During this delay he made inquiries about me, and ascertained that I was not in prison for any important misdemeanour, so he said I could count on him. The next night he was under my window, in a boat with a mast sufficiently long for me to slide down it. Wrapped in a boatman's cloak I went to Razzetta's house. I was told he was out. I sat down on a stone by the bridge, and just before midnight I saw him coming along the street. This was all I wanted to know; I went back to my boat, and at five o'clock next morning the whole garrison saw me walking on the ramparts.

He escapes.

Two or three days after this, when playing with the adjutant's son, I slipped and cried out that I had sprained my ankle: the surgeon examined it, and told me to keep quiet. So there I lay on my bed with my foot in a bandage, and every one came to see me. I had my servant to sleep in my room, and I made him dead drunk. At half-past ten I was in Venice, where I bought a thick stick, and then sat on

[1] Convict's dress.

a doorstep of a house by the Place Saint Paul, close to a very convenient little canal.

At a quarter to twelve I saw my man coming. Keeping in the shadow of the wall, I crept up behind him, and dealt him a violent blow on the head, another on the arm, and a third which knocked him into the canal; in falling he called out my name, a man came running up with a lantern, but I struck him on the hand and forced him to drop it; then taking to my heels I ran back to my boat, and in a quarter of an hour was in my room, and in bed. I awakened the soldier, and told him to fetch the doctor. I was dying of colic.

The next morning the commandant told me as a piece of good news that Razzetta had been attacked in the night, and tumbled into the canal; his nose was broken, three teeth were knocked out, and his arm severely bruised.

Three days after a police commissary came to the fort and accused me of being the aggressor, but my *alibi* was easily proved. The chaplain, the doctor, the soldier, and several others swore that at midnight I was in my bed with a sprained foot, and tormented with such terrible colic that drugs had to be administered to me.

A few days later M. Grimani sent to inform me of the bishop's arrival. He was a fine handsome monk, about thirty-four years old, but it was impossible, he said, for him to take me with him. I must meet him at Rome; he questioned me for over three hours, and I saw plainly that I did not please him, though he pleased me.

He starts for Rome.

A few days after this interview I embarked, with forty-two sequins in my purse, and plenty of courage in my heart. I was to go into quarantine at Ancona, and then a friend of the bishop's would give me his address in Rome, and money for my journey. At Chiozza, where we made a stoppage of two or three days, I had the misfortune to meet a one-eyed Jacobin monk whom I had known in Venice, and who introduced to me some friends of his as dishonest as himself.

We played at faro, and I lost every sol I possessed. I pawned the contents of my trunk to a money-lender for thirty sequins, on condition that if in three days I did not redeem them, they were to become his property; like the young fool that I was, I went about clamouring for revenge, flinging good money after bad. At last I lost the last of the thirty sequins, and should certainly have starved on the boat, had it not been for a young Franciscan friar, who persuaded me to go ashore with him at Orsara, and dine at the house of a pious lady of his acquaintance.

With Brother Stephano to Ancona.

Just before we started next morning he came aboard with an immense sack full of things which had been given him: bread, wine, cheese, sausage, jam, and chocolate, all the capacious pockets of his frock were crammed with provisions.

'Have you money too?' I asked.

'God forbid! To begin with, it is contrary to our blessed rule to possess money, and when I go begging, if I accepted coin, I should only get a sol here and there, whereas people give me food to ten times that value. Take my word for it, Saint Francis was no fool!'

We arrived at Ancona. At the old lazaretto we were obliged to go into quarantine for twenty-eight days. I was absolutely destitute, and had no idea how I was going to pay for my board and lodging during this month, but I had plenty of courage and audacity. I hired a room for myself and Brother Stephano, and got a bed, table, and chairs from a Jew dealer, promising to pay him for the use of the furniture at the expiration of the quarantine.

The monk would not share the bed with me; he would accept nothing but some straw in a corner, but the amusing part of it was that he counted on living at my expense, little thinking that I was relying on *him* to keep me from dying of hunger. He had provisions enough for eight days, but when these were exhausted what should we do?

After supper, I laid my unhappy situation before him, in language as pathetic as I could command. Judge my

surprise, when the thickheaded fellow beamed with joy over my misfortunes!

'I will take care of you till we get to Rome,' he said. 'Do you know how to write?' On my answering in the affirmative, he brightened up, and assured me all would be well. The next day we spent several hours writing letters to the charitable people of Ancona. I had to put down all the lies he dictated, and sign them, for he said if he signed people would see at once that he had not written the letters himself. 'And in this corrupt age,' he said, 'learning is the only thing people value.' He made me interlard my phrases with Latin quotations, and when I resisted threatened not to give me anything to eat.

Brother Stephano's dealings with the people of Ancona.

I thought he would be treated like a fool, and that no one would respond to his appeals. I was mistaken: provisions came in abundantly, with wine enough for six persons. So throughout the quarantine we lived like fighting-cocks. When at last we were set at liberty I presented my letter to the bishop's friend at the convent of minor friars, and received from him some money and an address in Rome. The Franciscan had attached himself to me, and we agreed to journey together. He was a big, vigorous, red-headed peasant about thirty years old, who had taken the vows for the sake of leading a lazy life. He told me he only meant to walk three miles a day, and to be two months going to Rome, which can easily be accomplished in eight days.

'I wish to arrive there fresh,' he said; 'there is no hurry. If you like to come with me you will see that Saint Francis will take care of us both.'

I said I was in too great a hurry to go at his pace, so he offered to do double distance if I would carry his cloak. I little knew what I was undertaking. It would have been a heavy load for a mule, there were twelve big pockets, without counting the one in the back which he called 'il batticulo,' and which held twice as much as the others.

On the way he told me his history, a very commonplace

one, full of lies and absurdities. He was a runaway, and so did not dare to present himself at the convents we passed. On the second morning we came within sight of a house where he intended to beg; he took the cloak from me, and entering the house blessed the inhabitants, who came up and kissed his hand. The mistress asked him if he would say Mass for them. On the way to the oratory I whispered to him, 'Have you forgotten that we have breakfasted?'

'Mind your own business,' he answered curtly.

I did not dare to reply, but while assisting at the Mass I was astonished to see that he did not know what he was about; it was evident he was no priest. After the service he installed himself in the confessional, where, having listened to the whole household in succession, he took it into his head to refuse absolution to our hostess's daughter, a pretty child of twelve. The refusal was made public, he scolded and threatened her with hell-fire. She issued from the oratory covered with confusion and weeping bitterly. I could not help telling Stephano in a loud voice that he was mad, and I went after the girl to console her, but she hid herself and refused to join us at table. In the presence of the assembled company I called Stephano an impostor, and the torturer of innocence, asking why he had refused her absolution. He shut my lips by replying calmly that he could not betray the secret of the confessional. I would not eat with him, and determined to part company, but on leaving I was obliged to accept a paolo for my share of the false Mass he had said, as it was my unenviable function to carry the purse.

When we were on the highroad again I told him we must separate, as if I stayed with him I should certainly find myself at the galleys. I told him he was an ignorant scoundrel, and he responded by saying I was a vagabond and a beggar. I boxed his ears, and he struck me with his stick, but I disarmed him and rolled him into the ditch, where I left him, and walked off towards Macerata. I soon tired; it was the first time in my life I had walked more than a mile. Children should be forced

to walk. I travelled alone for two days. When I was about three miles from Seraval I discovered I had lost my purse, and had only a little copper money left in my pocket; to add to my trouble I sprained my foot jumping over a hedge. In sore distress and pain I sat down by the roadside, hoping that help would come to me.

Incidents of the journey to Martorano.

By and by a peasant appeared with a donkey, and after a long palaver he permitted me to mount, and so I reached Seraval. I sent for a doctor, who told me I must not attempt to walk for three or four days. There was a good inn at Seraval, and I was well treated, but I dreaded the moment when I should be well enough to leave, for how could I pay my bill? On the morning of the fourth day I decided to ask the surgeon to sell my coat; the prospect was not a pleasing one, as the rainy season had set in, but I owed my host fifteen paoli, and four to the surgeon. Just as I was beginning to negotiate this painful bargain in walked Brother Stephano, laughing like a maniac, and asked me if I had got over the blow from his staff?

In view of such a strange coincidence as this, can one help being superstitious? This fatal monk was my guardian angel—but what an angel! His re-appearance seemed more of a curse than a blessing, yet I never doubted for a moment but that he would get me out of my difficulties.

'*Qui va piano va sano*,' said he; 'I have been five days covering the distance you did in one, but I am well and nothing has happened to me; while you have suffered pain and privation. Now, if your foot is all right, we will go on together. Let us forget everything and make haste to Rome.'

'I cannot leave here. I owe twenty paoli, and I have lost my purse.'

'I will get the money for you with the help of Saint Francis.'

He went out and returned in an hour with forty paoli borrowed from the commissioner of police, for which I gave him a bill payable when I reached Rome.

For two days we got along very well. At the village of Soma, the mistress of the inn gave us a good dinner and some excellent Cyprus wine, which she told us the couriers from Venice brought her in exchange for truffles, which they sold dear on their return. Imagine my indignation when two miles from Soma the infamous monk showed me a little sack of truffles which he had stolen from our hostess in return for her hospitality. The truffles were worth at least two sequins. I tore the sack out of his hands, telling him I would send it back. As he would not listen to this we again came to blows, and having knocked him down and taken away his stick, I left him. At the next village I wrote a letter of apology to the fair hostess, with whom I had left a portion of my heart, and sent back the truffles.

I arrived in the oldest capital in the world with seven paoli in my pocket. Thus sadly equipped, I cared nothing for the beauties of Rome, but I went straight towards Monti-Magnanopoli, where I was to find my bishop. I was told he had gone away ten days before my arrival, leaving instructions and money for me to follow him to Naples.

A coach left the next day. Not caring to do any sight-seeing I engaged a seat in it, and stayed in bed until the time for my departure. I arrived at Naples on the 6th of September, only to learn that my bishop had proceeded to Martorano. He had left no instructions for me, no one knew anything about me. I was alone in the immense city, with no acquaintances, and very little money. No matter, my destiny called me to Martorano, and to Martorano I would go; it was only two hundred miles! The coaches would not take me as I had no luggage, unless I paid in advance, so I determined to set off on foot, begging my food and lodging like Brother Stephano. My first halt was at Portici, where I came after walking an hour and a half. My legs and my head were tired; I determined to spend a quarter of my capital on a good dinner and a good bed. Then I would consider!

Naples, Sept. 6th.

CHAPTER IV

THE BISHOP OF MARTORANO

The next morning, having told my host I would be back to dinner, I set out to visit the royal palace. As I was standing at the entrance a pleasant-faced man in Eastern dress came up to me and said that, if I wanted to see the palace, he would show me over it, as he knew it well, and that by going with him I should save a guide's fee. In the course of conversation I told him I was a Venetian, and he said in that case he was my vassal, as he came from Zante.

'I have some excellent Levantine muscat I could sell you cheap,' he said.

'Perhaps I might buy some,' I answered as loftily as though my pockets were full of gold, 'but I am a connoisseur.'

'So much the better. I have some wines of Samos and Cephalonia also. Come and dine with me, and taste them. I have a quantity of minerals, vitriol, cinnabar, antimony, and a hundred quintals of mercury.'

'I might buy some mercury,' said I thoughtfully.

It is only natural that a young fellow unused to poverty should try to appear richer than he is by talking of his means; but while thus talking it had suddenly occurred to me that the amalgamation of mercury with lead and bismuth produces an increase of one-quarter in bulk. I wondered if the Greek merchant knew this secret.

His experiments in chemistry.

He took me to his inn, and in his private room I saw four bottles of mercury, each weighing about ten pounds. I was ready with my scheme. I bought a bottle of mercury, and

took it away. The Greek had business to transact, and went out, after saying we would meet at dinner. I ran at once to a druggist and bought two pounds and a half of lead, and as much bismuth. We dined gaily, and while drinking his excellent muscat, he asked me why I had bought the mercury.

'You shall see,' I replied.

I showed him his mercury divided into two bottles. I begged a chamois-skin, and having filtered it, filled the original bottle, while he stood open-mouthed at sight of what amounted to a quarter of a bottle of fine mercury remaining over and above the original amount. I called in the servant, and sent him to sell the surplus mercury to the druggist, and he returned with fifteen carlins. The Greek could not get over his surprise.

He bargains with the Greek merchant.

We supped together, and he said laughingly that I ought to stay over the next day to make forty-five carlins out of the remaining mercury. I replied in an offhand way that I had no need of money, and had only increased the bulk of the mercury to surprise and amuse him.

'You must be very rich.'

'No, for I am working with a view to increase gold in the same way, and it entails very costly experiments.' I saw I had piqued his curiosity and cupidity. He came to my room at break of day. I received him cordially, and invited him to take his coffee with me.

'Tell me,' said he, 'will you sell your secret?'

'I will consider it; and when we meet at Naples——'

'Why not here, to-day?'

'I am expected at Salerno, and besides, the secret is a costly one, and I do not know you.'

'That is no reason—I can pay ready money. How much do you want?'

'Two thousand ounces.'[1]

'I will give them you, on condition that you teach me

[1] An ounce is worth about thirteen francs French money.

to multiply the bulk of the thirty pounds of mercury I have here.'

After some discussion he drew up a written agreement, in which it was stipulated he should pay me two thousand ounces on learning from me the ingredients and the manner by which he could increase mercury one-quarter without deterioration, and that it should be equal in quality to that which I had sold in his presence at Portici.

He gave me a bill of exchange for the sum agreed upon, drawn at eight days on a well-known banker, and I told him the ingredients were lead and bismuth; the first has a natural affinity for mercury, and the second renders the mass fluid enough to pass through a chamois skin. The Greek went off to try the experiment, and I dined alone. In the evening he came back, saying, in a melancholy tone: 'The experiment is made, but the mercury is not perfect.'

'It is as perfect as that I sold you at Portici, which is what you demanded in the agreement.'

'But in the agreement it also says "*without deterioration.*"'

'Do you know the secret or not? Should I have told it you except on those terms? We will go to law about it, and if you win you can congratulate yourself on having got my secret for nothing. In the meantime here are the fifty ounces you gave me on account——'

I laid them on the table in a dignified manner, though I was dying with fear lest he should take me at my word, but he refused to touch them. That night we supped at separate tables; we were at open war, but I felt sure that we should become friends again.

The next morning he came in just as I was leaving. I once more offered him his money back, but he told me to keep it, and that he would give me fifty more ounces if I would return him his bill of exchange. After arguing for two hours I gave in, and we dined together and parted the best of friends. He gave me an order on his warehouse in Naples for a barrel of

muscat, and a superb case containing twelve silver-mounted razors.

I stopped two days at Salerno to set myself up with linen and other necessaries. I had a hundred sequins, I was in good health, my natural gaiety had returned; I was glad to be able to appear before the bishop in proper style. I left Salerno with two priests who were going to Cosenza, and we did the hundred and forty-two miles in twenty-two hours.

The Bishop, Bernard de Bernardis.

The day after my arrival in the capital of Calabria I took a little carriage, and drove out to Martorano. I was glad to find myself in glorious Greece, and was prepared to be enthusiastic over Pythagoras, who abode there twenty-four centuries ago. I found my bishop, Bernard de Bernardis, writing at a rickety table. I knelt down according to custom, but he raised me and gave me his benediction. He was sincerely grieved when I told him of my misfortunes, and delighted when I added that I was well, and indebted to no one. The *personnel* of the episcopal palace consisted of one man-servant who waited, and the most canonical of housekeepers. The house was large, but ill built and ill kept. The dinner was execrable; it was a fast day, and the oil was rancid. The bishop was a man of great intelligence; he seemed mortified at the poorness of his establishment, and was probably painfully conscious of the doubtful benefit he had conferred on me in taking me into his household. He told me his only cause for satisfaction was his escape from the clutches of the monks, whose persecutions had kept him in purgatory for fifteen years.

The next day he officiated at Pontifical High Mass, at which were assembled all the clergy and the notabilities of the town. I have never seen such a troop of brutes, such hideous women, such stupid and vulgar men. On returning to the palace I told the bishop that I had no desire to die here, in his melancholy see, a martyr to *ennui*. 'Give me,' I added, 'your blessing and my *congé*, and let me go; or rather come with me, and I promise you we will make our fortunes elsewhere.'

He tells the bishop that it will not do.

This proposition amused him so that he laughed at it at intervals throughout the day. Had he accepted it he would not have died two years later in the prime of his age. He owned that he had made a mistake in sending for me; as he had no money (his revenue was about two thousand francs a year), and not aware that I had any, he gave me a letter to a friend at Naples, who was to pay me sixty ducats. I accepted this with gratitude, and taking from my trunk the case of razors the Greek had given me, I begged him to accept them as a souvenir.

Thus I left Martorano three days after my arrival. I had five travelling companions, whom, from their appearance, I judged to be corsairs, or professional thieves, so I took good care not to let them know my purse was well lined. I also always slept fully dressed, which is a precaution every young man should take when travelling in that very unsatisfactory country.

He comes to Naples, September 16, 1743.

I arrived at Naples on the 16th September 1743, and at once delivered the letter of introduction the bishop had given me. Gennaro Polo, to whom the letter was addressed, not only paid the money, but kept me with him as companion to his son. After some weeks' sojourn with this charming family I travelled with them to Rome. They paid all my expenses, and I arrived in the Eternal City well dressed, with a tolerably well-filled pocket, some fine jewels, a certain amount of experience, and good letters of introduction, perfectly free, and at an age when a bold man can count on fortune if he has a personal appearance calculated to dispose others to regard him with favour. I possessed a something which is better than looks, a certain *je ne sais quoi* which gains attention and civility. I knew that Rome is the only city in the world where a man who starts with nothing may arrive at everything.

I had a letter for Father Georgi, a learned monk, esteemed by all Rome, even by the Pope himself, perhaps on account of his dislike for the Jesuits. I had also a letter for Cardinal Acquaviva, who was then all-powerful. His Eminence received me kindly, and asked if I had paid my homage to the Holy

He travels to Rome with the family of Gennaro Polo.

Father: on my replying that I had not yet had an opportunity of doing so, he promised to obtain an audience for me. In a few days I was notified that I might present myself to the Pope. I went to Monte-Cavallo, and was taken straight to the room where his Holiness was. He was alone, I prostrated myself and kissed the cross on his slipper. The Holy Father asked me who I was, and when I told him my name, he said he had heard of me. He congratulated me on being protected by such an important cardinal as Acquaviva, and questioned me as to my adventures; he laughed heartily when I told him about the poor good Bishop of Martorano. I felt perfectly at ease with him, and told him many things which amused him so much that he was pleased to say he should always be glad to see me. I asked his permission to read all the forbidden books, and he accorded it to me, promising that he would send it me in writing, which he forgot to do.

He prostrates himself before the Holy Father.

Benedict the Fourteenth[1] was amiable, and loved a joke. I saw him a second time at the Villa Médicis. He called me to him, and while walking about, spoke to me of many things of no importance. I asked him to dispense me from abstinence, which he did, at the same time giving me a special benediction. Having had the good luck to write some verses that pleased the Cardinal S. C., I became a frequent visitor at his palace, and he gave me a superb snuffbox in gold enamel, and several other costly presents. My friends, seeing that I had gained such protectors, predicted the highest fortunes for me. In a short time my position in Rome became truly brilliant, but I was not destined to enjoy it long. One morning, it was Christmas Day, I remember, a friend of mine, a young doctor, came into my room, and flinging himself on the couch told me he had come to bid me farewell, but that, before parting from me for ever, he wished me to give him one last piece of

[1] Benedict XIV. was of so mild and conciliatory a disposition that his bitterest enemies were forced to admire and respect him. Voltaire condescended to dedicate to him his tragedy of *Mahomet*. Horace Walpole erected a monument to his memory in England.

advice. He drew a letter from his pocket and told me to read it. It was from his mistress, a young girl of good family, whose father was sternly opposed to their union. In it the unfortunate girl told him that it had now grown impossible for her to conceal their intercourse longer, and that rather than brave her father's wrath she was determined to fly from Rome, out into the cold world, alone and on foot.

'If you are an honourable man,' said I, 'you will not abandon her; you must marry her in spite of her father and yours; Providence will take care of you.' I talked and reasoned with him for a long time, and by and by he grew calmer. He left me saying he would never desert his sweetheart. One evening in the beginning of January, as I was preparing for bed, the door of my room was flung open, and a young abbé, breathless and flushed, rushed in. In spite of the disguise I immediately recognised Barbara Dalacqua, the doctor's sweetheart. She threw herself at my feet and begged me to have pity on her. What heart so hard as to remain untouched by the prayers and tears of a pretty and unfortunate woman!

Barbara Dalacqua.

'Where is your lover the doctor?'

'The police have taken him. I was on my way to join him, dressed as you see, when I saw them thrusting him into a carriage. I felt that my turn would come next, and that I was surely lost unless I could find some safe hiding-place. I obeyed my first impulse and came to you.'

'My poor girl,' I said, 'it is now midnight; when morning breaks what do you propose to do?'

'I will leave the house,' she sobbed. 'In these clothes no one will recognise me; I will leave Rome, and I will walk straight before me until I fall dead of fatigue.'

I made her lie down on my bed, and early in the morning I went out, intending to go to her father and beseech him to forgive her; but I saw that I was followed, and I turned into the café, and, as calmly as I could, ordered some chocolate. As I was staying in Cardinal Acquaviva's house, I foresaw the trouble and disgrace which would come on me if the

police should institute a search. On returning to my room I induced the poor prisoner to swallow a biscuit and a little wine, and then advised her to write to the cardinal and intreat him to grant her an interview. She wrote, in French, the following words :—

'I am an honest girl, Monseigneur, although masquerading in the disguise of an abbé. I implore your Eminence to let me tell you my name in person. I hope that in the greatness of your soul you will come to my assistance, and save my honour.'

'Tell him all, keep back nothing,' said I. 'I am sure he will devise some means of helping you.'

As soon as the letter was despatched, I left her to go to the barber's. I was only absent an hour, but when I returned to my room she had disappeared. I dined with the cardinal, but though I maintained a discreet silence I gathered from the remarks made at table, that his Eminence had taken poor Barbara under his protection. For two days I was without news of her, then I learnt that Acquaviva had placed her, at his expense, in a convent, where she was to remain until she could leave it to become my friend's wife. Unfortunately for me, the affair did not end here, the actors in the drama were too well known for it to escape attention. In a few days it became the talk of Rome, and there were not wanting malicious tongues to insinuate that I had motives of my own in coming to Barbara's aid. I took small notice of this gossip, but what troubled me was that the cardinal became less cordial to me.

Cardinal Acquaviva.

At the beginning of Lent he sent for me, and said in a very grave voice : 'My dear friend, the Dalacqua affair is becoming exceedingly tiresome. People are saying that you and I have profited by her folly and her lover's lack of experience. In spite of my contempt for scandal, I cannot brave it too openly, and I feel myself obliged to ask you to leave Rome. I will find you an honourable pretext, and will continue to show you all

possible marks of my interest and esteem. You are young, and should travel. Think what country you would most like to visit. I have friends all over the world, and will give you letters which will insure your employment wherever you may decide to go. Get ready to leave Rome in a week. Think matters over seriously, come and see me to-morrow, and tell me what you determine to do.'

I left him, troubled and sore at heart. I could think of no course to pursue, and when I saw him next day, at the Villa Negroni, had made no definite plan.

He was walking in the gardens with one of his secretaries, whom he dismissed on seeing me.

He is inspired to ask for letters for Constantinople.

I told him in the strongest terms the grief I felt at leaving him. He listened kindly, but repeated his question as to what part of Europe I wanted to go to. At last, in temper and despair, I answered: 'Constantinople.'

'Constantinople!' he exclaimed.

'Yes, Monseigneur,' I repeated, wiping my eyes.

After a little silence he said with a smile: 'I must thank you for not saying Ispahan, it might have been embarrassing; I will give you a full passport, and I think you can safely tell people I am sending you to Constantinople; no one will believe you.'

When I returned to the hotel I said to myself: 'Either I am mad, or in the power of some occult genius who controls my destiny; I do not know what I shall do at Constantinople—but to Constantinople I mean to go.'

Two days after the Cardinal gave me a passport to Venice and a sealed letter addressed to Osman Bonneval,[1] Pasha of

[1] Claude Alexandre, Comte de Bonneval, 1675-1747. He was a spirited, original and most indiscreet man, as the catastrophe of his life showed. He served in Italy under Catinat, and gained and lost the friendship of Prince Eugène through his outspokenness. He chose to champion the honour of a daughter of France, and challenged her slanderer, though the Prince de Ligne says that it was only a pretext and a vent for his ill-humour. The result was a sentence of five years' imprisonment, which he evaded by flight to Turkey, where he embraced the Mussulman religion.

Caramania, at Constantinople. He also gave me a parcel containing seven hundred sequins. I already possessed three hundred, and I took my place in a berline with a lady and her daughter, who were going on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto. The girl was ugly, and I had a very tiresome journey.

CHAPTER V

THE FALSE BELLINO

I got safely to Ancona, and went to the best inn. When I told the host I wanted meat for supper, he replied it was Lent, and that in Lent all Christians fasted.

'The Holy Father has given me permission to eat meat.'

'Show it me.'

'He gave it me verbally.'

'I am not obliged to believe you.'

'You are an impudent fellow.'

'I am master in my own house, and if you are not satisfied I beg of you to go elsewhere.'

He sups with the purveyor to the Spanish Army.

This reply put me beside myself with rage. I swore, I cursed, I yelled, when suddenly a grave-looking personage entered the room and began to harangue me. After trying to convince me that I was in the wrong from beginning to end, he added, 'I will now go and appease the host, and I am sure he will give you an excellent supper.' He returned soon saying that everything was arranged. He told me his name, Sancio Pico, a Castilian, and purveyor to the Spanish army. I told him I was secretary to Cardinal Acquaviva, and we supped together.

'If you would like to hear some excellent music,' said he after supper, 'come into the next room, the principal actress in Ancona is lodging there.'

Pricking up my ears at the word actress, I followed him. A woman of a certain age was seated at a table with two young girls and two boys; one, the taller, was about seventeen

years old and wonderfully handsome. He doubtless played the leading lady, as was the custom in Rome. The younger son was handsome too, but more manly-looking. The girls, aged eleven and twelve, were both pretty; one was studying music and one dancing.

This family came from Bologna. They lived by their wits, and what was lacking them in wealth they made up in gaiety and good humour.

Bellino, as the elder boy was called, sat down to the harpsichord and sang like an angel. The Castilian closed his eyes with very enjoyment, but I kept mine open and watched those of Bellino flashing fire as he sang.

A theatrical family.

The next afternoon I went to pay my respects to the mother, and to ask the family to sup with me. She grew confidential, and told me that they were in a difficult position.

'We have spent all our money,' she said, 'and will have to return to Bologna on foot and begging our bread.'

I drew out of my purse a gold piece, and laid it on the table.

'I will give you another, madame,' I said, 'in return for a little piece of confidence. Tell me, is not Bellino a girl in disguise?'

'No, indeed—though I admit he has the look of one.'

'The look and the voice, madame, I know what I am talking about.'

'You are mistaken nevertheless.'

On the stairs I met Cecile, the youngest child. Catching her by the arm, I said. 'If you want to earn six sequins, tell me the truth: is not Bellino your sister and not your brother?'

'I cannot tell. But Bellino must be my brother, otherwise he would not be allowed to act here.'

Don Sancio invited us all to supper with him the following night, and gave us a magnificent repast. The table was covered with silver plate and the servants were in full livery. We had white truffles, shell-fish of many kinds, the best fish

from the Adriatic, still champagne, peralta, xeres, and pedro ximénès. After supper Bellino sang in a manner calculated to completely overthrow what little reason the wine of the magnificent Spaniard had left us. Expression, manner, gesture, physiognomy, voice, but above all my own instinct, made me feel I could not be mistaken as to the sex of the singer, besides, on this occasion, either from taste or caprice, Bellino chose to dress as a woman, and a more charming and beautiful woman I have never seen.

He falls in love with the false Bellino.

Reader, you have guessed what is coming, but you shall hear from Bellino's own lips the story, which he, or rather she, told me, when, after many days of torturing doubt and anxiety, she not only confided her sex to me, but made another, and far sweeter avowal, in return for my passionate protestations of love.

'My name,' she said, 'is Teresa. My father was a poor employé at the Institute, in Bologna. He had as a lodger in his house the celebrated musician Salimberi, who was young and handsome, but maimed. He became attached to me. I was only twelve years old and was flattered by his attention. He proposed to teach me music, and as I had a fine voice he took trouble with me; in a year I could accompany him on the harpsichord. Affection ripened into love, we adored each other. No doubt a man, such as you are, Casanova, feels himself infinitely superior to such a poor creature as Salimberi, but he was exceptionally gifted. His beauty, his wit, his talents, and the eminent qualities of his heart rendered him in my eyes preferable to any one else. He was modest and discreet, besides being rich and generous. I doubt if many women could have resisted him. Yet I never heard him boast of his triumphs. Before he knew me he had adopted a boy about my age, and had placed him with a family at Rimini, where he was being educated for the musical profession. The boy's name was Bellino.

Her story.

'The father of this boy fell ill, and when he saw that death was approaching, and as he had made no provision for his

other numerous children, he determined to cultivate this boy's voice so that he could support his brothers and sisters. The boy was called Bellino, the woman I live with now was his mother. About a year ago Salimberi told me, weeping, that he must leave me and go to Rome. The prospect of parting was the more terrible as my father had died and I was an orphan without resources. I implored Salimberi not to desert me, and moved by my sorrow he determined to take me to Rimini, and put me with the master who was bringing up his young protégé. Imagine his grief when on arriving at Rimini he heard Bellino was dead! Reflecting on what the loss of this boy would mean to his mother, the idea occurred to Salimberi to take me to Bologna in his place, the mother, being poor, would keep the secret. "I will give her," he said, "the means to complete your instruction, and in four years I will take you to Dresden" (he was in the service of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland), "but you must not come as a girl. There we can live together without any one being the wiser. Bellino's mother will be the only one in the secret, for the other children, not having seen their brother since they were infants, will never guess. But if you love me you must renounce your sex for ever, and let no one know what you really are."

'He arranged matters with Bellino's mother. When I went to her house she embraced me and called me her dear son. The time had now come for Salimberi to leave me; people laugh at presentiments, but I tell you, when he bade me farewell I felt the shiver of death run through me. I fainted. Alas! my presentiment was but too true—he died a year ago in the Tyrol. My adopted mother advised me to continue my boyish *rôle*, hoping that in Rome I should get a good engagement. I consented. Her son Petronius is now dancing at Ancona as a girl, so we are verily the world turned upside-down. It rests with you to restore me to my feminine condition and to take from me the name of Bellino, which I detest and have no need for now that my protector is

dead. It is a source of endless embarrassment to me. I have only as yet sung at two theatres, where, fortunately for me, the censors were old priests, who contented themselves with summary inquiries, but another time I may not get off so easily. The tenderness you have inspired me with is genuine, that which I felt for Salimberi was the result of my extreme youth and my gratitude. You have made a woman of me.'

He offers marriage to Teresa Lanti.

'Give up,' said I, 'the engagement which you have at Rimini. We will stop two days in Bologna, and then you shall come to Venice with me, dressed as a girl and under another name. I defy the manager of the opera here to discover you.'

'Your will shall be mine. I give myself to you without reserve.'

The story she told me, her talent, her candour, her delicacy, her misfortunes, all increased my love for her. I decided to give our union the sanction of law and religion, and to make her my wife, for according to the theories I then upheld, I should by so doing increase our mutual tenderness and esteem, and gain the respect of society.

Teresa's talents would supply us with the means of existence until I could put my own to some account; and although I had no idea what pursuit I should follow, I felt confident of succeeding in any I might choose. But in the meantime she would have too great an advantage over me. Our mutual love might weaken, and certainly my *amour-propre* would suffer if we depended on her talent alone. In the long-run it might change the nature of our feeling for each other. My wife might come to consider herself the protector instead of the protected, in which case I felt that my love for her would change to contempt. I determined to sound her before taking the important step.

'My beloved Teresa,' I said, 'I must speak to you quite openly. You must understand the position we are in. I know you, but you do not know me. In the first place, you

think I am rich. I am not; as soon as my purse is empty I shall be at an end of my resources. You think, perhaps, that I am well born, but my position is no better, if not worse, than your own. I have no lucrative talent, no employment, no certainty of having anything to live on a few months hence. I have no relations, no friends, no claim on any one, and no solid prospects for the future. I have youth, health, courage, intelligence, and some small literary pretensions. I am afraid of nothing, and I am inclined to be extravagant. There's your man, beautiful Teresa. Now choose!'

Teresa starts with him for Bologna.

'First of all, my friend,' she replied, 'let me tell you that is no news to me. I made a tolerably accurate estimate of you when I first met you. But do not let the future trouble you. Love me and be true to me. Let us go to Venice where I can earn enough for both. Later on we will see what you can do.'

'But I must go to Constantinople.'

'We will go together, but let me go as your wife.'

'It shall be so. The day after to-morrow at latest, my beloved, I will pledge you my faith at the steps of the altar. I desire that you should be bound to me, that we should be bound one to another by the most indissoluble bonds.'

Alas, for the good resolutions of youth! We started for Bologna the next day, and stopped at Pesaro for breakfast. Just as we were stepping into the carriage an officer with two fusiliers presented himself and demanded our names and our passports. Teresa had hers, but I sought in vain for mine.

The officer ordered the postillion to wait while he made his report. Half an hour after he returned saying that Teresa might continue her journey, but that I must remain, he had orders to take me before the commandant.

'What have you done with your passport?' asked this personage.

'I have lost it.'

'One can't lose a passport!'

'One can, for I have lost mine.'

'You cannot go on without one.'

'I have come from Rome. I am going to Constantinople with despatches from Cardinal Acquaviva: here they are, sealed with his arms.'

He is arrested at Pesaro.

'All that I can do is to put you under arrest until a fresh passport comes to you from Rome. Only careless people lose their passports, and this will teach the cardinal not to give them commissions.'

I was taken back to the inn, where I wrote to the cardinal, begging him to send me a fresh passport at once. I sent the letter off by express. I kissed Teresa and told her to go on and wait for me at Rimini. I made her take a hundred sequins. My personal baggage was removed from the carriage, and I was led to the guard-house at Sainte Marie, outside the town. At such times the most determined optimism is at fault, though stoicism may wear an unmoved front in the face of reverses. The sight of Teresa's tears grieved me most, though she tried hard to restrain them. She would not have left me if I had not persuaded her that it was impossible for her to remain at Pesaro, and that in ten days at farthest I should rejoin her. But fate willed it otherwise.

The night that I spent on the straw in the guard-room at Pesaro taught me a lesson of prudence. The odds are a hundred to one that a young man who has lost his purse or his passport once will never again lose the one or the other. Both these misfortunes had now befallen me, they never happened again.

The officer who happened to be on guard that night was a sulky Castilian who did not even deign to answer when spoken to; he was relieved in the morning by a Frenchman of a totally different character. I must say here that the French have always had an attraction for me, the Spaniards never. The French are so polite, so obliging, one feels drawn towards them at once, while the Spaniards have an unbecoming pride which makes them repellent to strangers; yet I am bound in justice to add that I have more than once been

taken in by a Frenchman, but never by a Spaniard: it is not always safe to trust one's first impressions.

The French officer, having listened to the story of my adventures, procured me a bed, a table and chairs; he also placed a soldier at my disposal, and the nine or ten succeeding days of my captivity I passed in tolerable comfort. I became acquainted with the whole corps, and I could walk about freely so long as I remained within sight of the sentinel; then the most singular accident of my life happened to me. I was walking about outside the guard-room one fine morning, not more than a hundred paces or so from the sentinel, when an officer rode up. He dismounted, and throwing his bridle on the horse's neck, left it standing by me. I began to pat and admire the beast, then, without the slightest thought of consequences, I put my foot in the stirrup and vaulted on to its back. I had never been astride a horse before. I do not know if I touched it with my cane or my heels, but all of a sudden it started off at a round gallop, one foot was out of the stirrup, and I was clinging on for dear life. The sentinel shouted to me to stop; I would have obeyed him willingly had I been able, but the fatal beast only went faster and faster. They fired after me, and I heard the balls whistle past my ears; on and on he dashed till we reached the outposts of the Austrian army, then some one stopped my horse, and, thank God, I was able to alight!

He mounts a horse for the first time, and is carried into the Austrian lines.

An officer of hussars came up and asked me where I was going so quick. In speech as prompt as my thought I replied that I could only explain my conduct to Prince Lobkowitz, who was in command of the army, and whose headquarters were at Rimini, where my runaway horse had brought me.

His Royal Highness received me in his tent, and I told him quite simply what had happened. He laughed, but I could see he did not believe me. He called up one of his aides-de-camp and ordered him to conduct me outside the gates of Césena.

'Once there, reverend sir, you can go where you like,' said he, 'but take care not to show yourself here again without a passport.'

I asked him to give me back the horse, but he said it did not belong to me.

On our way to the city gate we entered a café to take some chocolate. I told the officer my name and how I came to be at Rimini; he told me I could go to Bologna, get a passport there which would take me back to Pesaro, where I could get my trunk and pay the officer whose horse it was.

I had money and jewels on me, but I wanted my trunk. Teresa was at Rimini, and I was forbidden to set foot in that town.

It was raining. I was in silk stockings and a fine laced coat. I stopped to shelter in the porch of a church, and asked a peasant who was sheltering there also if he could get me a carriage, and he went off in search of one. Before he returned a string of mules came by on their way to Rimini; as they passed I mechanically laid my hand on the neck of one, and keeping step with the animal, I re-entered the town without any one paying the slightest attention to me. I presented myself at Teresa's door in a strange plight: a night-cap was pulled over my hair, my hat on the top of that, my gold-mounted stick hidden under my coat, which I had turned inside out. In spite of her joy at seeing me she was terrified at the risk I was running, and made me promise to leave for Bologna as soon as possible.

He decides to abandon the cassock in favour of the uniform.

I spent the day with my sweetheart. Having bribed the muleteer to let me pass as one of his men, I left with him at dusk, and arrived safely at Bologna, where I was obliged to wait until my passport came from Rome. I had to have some new linen and clothing made, and this led me to think seriously of the future. The calling of ecclesiastic had become so distasteful to me, that I decided to fling my cassock to the winds, and assume in its stead a military uniform. Such a decision was only natural at my age, and especially as

I had been living between two armies, where the military habit alone imposed respect. La Mort, a tailor, took my measure, and in two days I was transformed into a disciple of Mars. I furnished myself with a long sword, a black cockade, and a false pigtail. I remember now how agreeably myself impressed me as I stood before a looking-glass. My uniform was white with a blue vest, and a gold and silver shoulder knot. I was pleased with my own appearance, and I strutted about the town, read the gazette at the café, and replied in soldierly monosyllables to any one who dared address me.

Four days after my arrival at Bologna I received a long letter from Teresa. She told me that the Duke of Castropignano had offered her a thousand ounces a year, and all her expenses paid, if she would sing at his theatre at San Carlo. She had demanded a delay of eight days to consider, and wrote to ask what I wished her to do.

He has doubts with regard to Teresa.

For the first time in my life I had to ponder deeply before taking a resolution. Two powerful motives held the scales equal, love and pride. How could I part from my sweetheart? How could I return with her to Naples, where I was so well known, in the character of a coward living on his wife or his mistress? What would all my noble friends think of me? If I were to feel myself despised, even my love for Teresa would not have consoled me. I hit on an expedient which would at least give me time. I told her to accept the duke's offer, go to Naples, and wait for me there; I would join her in the month of July on my return from Constantinople. I advised her to hire a respectable waiting-maid, and to conduct herself so that on my return I could marry her without having to blush for her. I foresaw that her fortune would depend more on her beauty than on her talent, and I was sufficiently well acquainted with my own character to know that I was not good at playing the easy-going lover or complaisant husband. Three days later she wrote to me, saying she had signed the agreement, and engaged a maid

whom she could introduce as her mother, and that she was prepared to wait for me until I told her I no longer cared for her. Four days after the receipt of this letter, which was the last but one I received from her, I left for Venice.

I heard from the French officer at Pesaro that my passport had arrived from Rome, and that he would send it me with my baggage, if I would pay for the horse I had taken, or rather which had taken me; this point settled, I was at liberty to go where I would.

As soon as I reached Venice I went to the Bourse to take my passage to Constantinople, but there was no vessel leaving for that port for at least two months. So I took a cabin in a Venetian vessel sailing for Corfu in the course of a fortnight—*The Lady of the Rosary*, commanded by Captain Zane. Having thus prepared to fulfil my destiny, which, according to my superstitious imaginings, called me to Constantinople, I set out for the Square of Saint Mark, to see and to be seen, no longer an abbé, but a soldier. The first person I called on was the Abbé Grimani; he was at table with several guests, among them a Spanish officer, but that did not upset me at all. Grimani expressed some surprise at seeing me, and especially at my martial attire. I told him I was carrying despatches to Constantinople from Cardinal Acquaviva, and that I had come from the Spanish army. I had just made this statement when a voice exclaimed, 'That is a lie!'

'My position,' said I, 'does not permit me to accept an affront in silence.' Then bowing to the company I withdrew.

He is involved and successfully evades an affair of honour.

I knew that as I wore a uniform the assumption of excessive touchiness well became me; but I thought that now surely I should have a duel on my hands. The Abbé Grimani, however, persuaded the Spaniard to tender me an apology, so there the matter ended. The incident, however, served to show me what an invidious position mine was, and I made up my mind to enter the service of the State. For

a hundred sequins, I bought a commission from a young lieutenant whose health would not permit him to remain in the army.

On the fifth of May I embarked for Constantinople, well set up in clothes, jewels, and ready money. Our ship carried twenty-four cannon and two hundred soldiers. We stopped a night at Orsera, when I could not but compare my actual circumstances with those of my former visit to that town. What a difference in state and fortune! I was sure that, in my imposing costume, no one would recognise the sickly little abbé, who, but for Brother Stephano, would have become—God knows what!

CHAPTER VI

CONSTANTINOPLE AND CORFU

I AM of opinion that a stupid servant is worse than a wicked one, or at any rate more harassing; one can be on one's guard against a knave, but not against a fool. One can punish the former, but not the latter. This chapter and the two following it were finished; they contained in detail what I shall now have to write more generally, for the foolish girl who waits on me took them to light the fire. She said, by way of excuse that the paper had been used, it was covered with scrawls and erasures, and therefore she had used it in preference to the nice, clean paper which was beside it. I was very angry, which was wrong, for the poor girl meant no harm. Anger deprives a man of judgment, anger and reflection are not akin. Fortunately this passion is of very short duration with me. After having wasted some time telling her she was a fool and an idiot, she confuted all my arguments by silence. I had to make the best of it, and to begin over again. Being in a very bad temper, what I write now will not be equal to what I wrote in a pleasant frame of mind, but the reader must put up with it.

He arrives in Constantinople.

After passing a month at Corfu, favourable winds brought us in eight or ten days to the Dardanelles; from there a Turkish boat carried us on to Constantinople. We arrived at Pera in mid-July, and for a wonder there was no talk of plague.

The first thing I was told was never to go out without informing my host of my destination, and without being accompanied by a janissary. These instructions I obeyed to

the letter. In those days the Russians had not crushed Turkish impertinence. I am told that now foreigners can go and come in perfect security.

The Pasha of Caramania.

The day after my arrival I presented my letter to Osman, the pasha of Caramania. This was the name borne by the Count de Bonneval since his taking the turban. I was shown in to an apartment furnished in French fashion. A stout, elderly man, dressed in French clothes, came towards me laughing, and asked what he could do for the protégé of a cardinal of the Romish Church, now that he could no longer call that Church his mother.

I told him that in a moment of despair I had asked the cardinal for letters for Constantinople, and now superstitiously considered myself obliged to deliver them.

'Then you have really no need of me?'

'True, your excellency, but I am delighted to have the honour of meeting a man all Europe has talked of, still talks of, and will talk of for many years to come.'

The cardinal had announced me as a man of letters, so the count asked if I would like to see his library. He took me into a room full of cupboards with latticed doors, hung with curtains. When he unlocked one of these doors, I saw, instead of rows of folio volumes, many bottles of wine of the finest vintage.

'This,' said the pasha, 'is my library and my harem. I am old, dissipation would only shorten my life, while wine prolongs it, or at any rate makes it more agreeable.'

Bonneval was handsome, but was too stout. An old sabre-cut in the belly obliged him to wear a silver plate over the seat of the wound. He said that he was no stricter a Mussulman than he had been a Christian. 'I had to say God was God, and Mahomet was His prophet. Who knows whether I thought so? I wear the turban as I would wear an uniform. When I left Venice I was as poor as a rat, and if the Jews had offered me the command of fifty thousand men, I would have laid siege to Jerusalem.'

He invited me to dine with him next day. There were English and other guests. We had an excellent repast, *à la Française*, for his cook and his *maître d'hôtel* were two worthy French renegades. The person who most attracted me was a fine-looking man about sixty, who wore on his face an expression of wisdom and gentleness. Monsieur de Bonneval told me he was a rich and distinguished philosopher, renowned for integrity of conduct, purity of morals, and devotion to religion. He advised me to cultivate his acquaintance, should I have a chance of doing so. Later in the evening he presented me to this personage, whom he addressed as Josouff Ali, and who asked me many questions about my past and future life, and above all, why I had abandoned the peaceful condition of an ecclesiastic to take up the unsettled calling of a soldier.

He invited me to his palace, where I passed two hours admiring his flowers. His gardener was a Neapolitan sailor, who had been for thirty years a slave in Josouff's service.

Josouff, the noble Turk.

In five or six weeks I became exceedingly intimate with the noble Turk, and we discussed many points of religion and morals together. He asked me one day if I was married, and on my answering no, and adding that I fancied I should never feel called upon to contract this tie, he led the conversation to the subject of chastity, which, according to him, was far from being a virtue; on the contrary, he maintained that it must be most offensive to God, as it violates the first precept He gave to man.

Zelmi, his daughter.

'I have,' he said, 'two sons and a daughter; the sons have already received their share of my fortune, the rest will go to my daughter, who is now fifteen. Her name is Zelmi, she has beautiful black eyes, like her mother's, black hair, and a skin like alabaster. She is tall and well made, speaks Greek and Italian, sings and accompanies herself on the harp. There is no man in the world who can boast of having seen her face. This girl is a treasure, and I offer her to you, but you must first live for a year at Andrianople with one of my relations,

where you will learn our language and religion and our manners. As soon as you can declare yourself a Mussulman, my daughter shall be yours. I will give you a house, and slaves, and money in abundance. Think over my offer, fix no date for your answer, you shall reply when the voice of fate speaks to you.'

I passed four days without seeing Josouff, and when we met on the fifth day we talked gaily on various matters, without mentioning matrimony. It was only fifteen days later that we alluded to it.

'Although this matter occupies my mind morning and night, I can make no decision,' I said. 'I have abandoned myself to God, and I am sure, as I have full confidence in Him, that I shall do what is right. When I have decided, it is to you, and to you alone, that I will tell the news. If I decide as you desire, you will from that moment exercise over me the authority of a father.'

Some days later I was walking in Josouff's garden, when the rain drove me to seek shelter in the house. I went into a hall where we sometimes dined. A slave was seated by the window bending over a tambour frame, and by her stood a girl, who on my approach hastily pulled a thick veil over her face.

I excused myself, and was going away, when she begged me to remain, adding that Josouff had ordered her to entertain me during his absence. I thought it must be Zelmi, and that her father had purposely given me this opportunity of speaking with her. The beautiful veiled lady said: 'Dost thou know who I am?'

'No; nor can I guess.'

'I am the wife of thy friend. I was born at Scio, where I lived until he married me, five years ago; I am now eighteen.'

I was much surprised that a Mussulman should be so open-minded as to allow me to converse with his wife, but the fact of her being a married woman set me more at my ease.

I determined to push the adventure further; I wanted to see her face. A magnificent statue stood before me, but I could not see its soul; a thick gauze hid it from my eyes. A beautiful arm and a white hand, in which there was neither knot nor vein, rested on the back of a seat, and my active fancy imagined the rest to be in harmony. The graceful folds of her muslin robe displayed the contour of her figure in all its perfection, and only hid the living satin of the surface. I longed to gaze in her eyes and read her mind therein. The Oriental costume is like a fine glaze spread over a porcelain vase, to prevent one from touching the flowers and figures painted on it; it hardly, if at all, interferes with the pleasure of the eye.

Josouff's wife wore a skirt which did not hide the symmetry of her limbs, the roundness of her hips, the slender grace of her waist, which was encircled by a belt richly embroidered in silver and precious stones. She had a breast on which Apelles might have modelled that of his Venus.

Beside myself with admiration, I stretched out my arm with an almost involuntary movement, and my audacious hand would have lifted the veil, had she not prevented me by raising herself lightly on the point of her pretty feet: she then reproached me in a voice as imposing as her posture.

'Dost thou merit the friendship of Josouff,' she asked, 'and seekest to violate his hospitality by insulting his wife?'

'Madam, you must pardon me. In my country the meanest of men may look on the face of a queen.'

'Yes; but not tear off her veil when she is covered. Josouff shall avenge me.'

This threat frightened me. I flung myself at her feet, and after much persuasion succeeded in calming her.

I took her hand, which she allowed, and she was listening complacently to my compliments, when her husband entered. He embraced me, and thanked his wife for having kept me company, then giving her his arm, led her back to her apartments.

I related this adventure to M. de Bonneval, who smiled when I told him of the risk I had run in trying to raise her veil.

Advice from the pasha.

'This Greek,' said he, 'was only laughing at you. You ran no danger; believe me, she is simply vexed at having had to deal with such a novice. The most reserved Turkish woman is only modest so far as her face goes, as long as she has her veil on she blushes at nothing. I am sure that this one keeps her face covered even when alone with her husband.'

Josouff did not give me any more opportunities of being alone with his wife, and perhaps he was right. He came into a bazaar one day when I was turning over different stuffs, and praised the taste I showed in my selections. I did not buy anything, however, as I found the prices too high; he, on the contrary, declared them very reasonable, and purchased a quantity of things, which were delivered at my house the next day. It was a delicate attention on his part, and had I refused them I should have deeply offended him. He wrote to me at the same time telling me I should know how to dispose of the merchandise at Corfu. There were damask stuffs, embroidered in gold and silver, purses, pocket-books, sashes, scarves, handkerchiefs, and pipes —the whole to a value of four or five hundred piastres.

On the evening of my departure, the good man wept bitterly, and my tears were no less sincere. He said that in refusing his offer I had gained his esteem, since it proved my disinterestedness. On board the ship I found an immense case, containing more presents from him—coffee, tobacco, and spices, and a superb pipe stem in jasmine wood covered with gold filigree, which I sold for a hundred sequins. I sold the other things for a small fortune. M. de Bonneval also gave me some rare wines. I sold some, and I offered the rest to different people at Corfu. In this way I made several useful acquaintances.

The only foreigner I saw much of in Constantinople was

Lord Keith,[1] the celebrated Scottish marshal in the service of the King of Prussia. Six years later, in Paris, his friendship was of great use to me. We left in the beginning of September, and arrived at Corfu in fifteen days. I was well received by the Governor of the Galliasses, to whom I had an introduction. He asked me if I would care to accept the post of adjutant. This offer was a great honour, and I gladly accepted it. Without further ceremony he had me shown to the room I was to occupy.

He meets Marshal Keith.

I got a French soldier as servant, and as he dressed hair well, and was besides a good talker, I was well satisfied with him, for while he was arranging my beautiful hair I could exercise myself in speaking French. This soldier was a regular scamp, a drunkard, and a libertine. He was a peasant from Picardy, and could hardly write his own name, but he was amusing, and knew a quantity of anecdotes and songs.

I should like to give my readers some idea of life and society at Corfu in those days.

First and foremost came his eminence the *proveditor*,[2] who exercised sovereign authority, and lived magnificently. In my time the *proveditor* was M. Dolfin, a man of over seventy, severe, obstinate, and ignorant. He did not care for women, but he liked them to pay court to him. He received

[1] George Keith, son of William, Lord Keith and Altree, and Lady Mary Drummond, daughter of Lord Perth, was born in 1685, and died in 1778. He fought with distinction under Marlborough. He was, however, a devoted adherent of the Stuarts. After the proclamation at Edinburgh, Keith was attainted, deprived of his title, imprisoned, and condemned to death. He escaped to France, and after working hard for the lost cause, passed into the service of the King of Prussia. Frederick the Great held him in the highest esteem, not only as a soldier but as a counsellor and friend. He sent him as ambassador to Spain, and afterwards made him governor of Neufchâtel. It was here he became the patron and protector of J. J. Rousseau, who devoted several pages of his *Confessions* to a description of the noble old Scotsman. Through the influence of Frederick, Keith regained his estates in Scotland, but he preferred to live in Berlin, where the king had built him a house near Potsdam.

[2] The office of *proveditor* was peculiar to the Venetian Government; he was a sort of overseer attached to the general of an army.

every evening, and kept an open supper-table for twenty-four people.

There were three chief officers commanding the light troops especially destined for the galleys, and three others belonging to the troops of the line used on the heavy war-ships. Each galley, of which there were ten, had a governor, and each vessel of the line a commandant, including three chiefs or admirals. All these officers were Venetian noblemen. There were ten young noblemen studying for the navy, and about ten more in the Civil Service. Any one of them who had a pretty wife was sure to be run after.

About the middle of November, my soldier servant fell ill of inflammation of the lungs, and was taken to the hospital. He grew rapidly worse, and received the last sacraments. The priest who administered them brought to my captain a small packet which had been confided to him by the dying man. It contained a copper seal engraved with a ducal coat of arms, an extract from a baptismal register, and a sheet of paper covered with writing in the French language. As the captain only spoke Italian, he asked me to translate it.

I read the following deposition :—

His servant, the pretender to a dukedom.

'I wish this sheet of paper to be given to my captain when I am dead; until then my confessor is to make no use of it. I beg my captain to have my body placed in a vault so that it can be exhumed if the duke, my father, desire it. I beg him to send to the French ambassador at Venice the extract from the register concerning my birth, and the seal with my coat of arms, that all may be sent to my father, as my hereditary rights will now pass to the prince, my brother.

'In support of which I now place here my signature.

'François VI., Charle-Philippe-Louis Foucaud,
'Prince de la Rochefoucauld.'

In the baptismal extract this name was repeated, with that

of his father, François, the fifth duke. The name of his mother was given as Gabrielle du Plessis.[1]

This queer document made me laugh, but seeing that my captain thought my hilarity misplaced, I left him, without explaining the reason of my mirth, though I was sure that this nonsense would soon become the standing joke of Corfu. I had known the Abbé de Liancourt in Rome. He was a great-grandson of Charles, Duc de Liancourt, whose sister, Gabrielle du Plessis, had married François, the fifth duke, but this marriage dated from the beginning of the last century. I had copied some documents for the Abbé de Liancourt, and was therefore familiar with the family history; the attempted imposition of my servant, La Valeur, seemed the more ridiculous, because the man being, as I supposed, dead, it could be of no advantage to him. I was still smiling at all this, when I received a summons from the *proveditor*.

'It seems,' began the old general, 'that your servant was a prince?'

'Monseigneur,' I replied, 'I never thought so while he was alive, and I have no reason to think so now he is dead.'

But the general would not listen to me. He maintained that no man on his deathbed would play such a joke; and besides, there was the seal with the ducal arms to support the claim.

When I suggested that I knew something of the families of Liancourt, du Plessis, and de la Rochefoucauld, he rudely told me I knew nothing at all: so I determined to hold my tongue.

The people around the general began to speak of the deceased with respect. One said he was handsome, another that he looked aristocratic, another that he was always

[1] Casanova probably means Jeanne Charlotte du Plessis Liancourt, heiress of the Ducs de Liancourt and Rocheguyon. She married Francis VII., Duc de la Rochefoucauld, and endowed that family with her enormous wealth and estates.

amiable, obliging, not haughty with his comrades, and that he sang like an angel. Some one having asked my opinion of him, I replied that he was certainly gay, for he was generally drunk; that he was dirty and quarrelsome, but a good hairdresser.

As we were discussing him that evening in rushed the captain. La Valeur, he said, was still breathing. The general, looking at me in a significant manner, said he would be glad if he recovered. The next day I heard he was better. The doctor said he was out of danger. They spoke of him at table, but I did not open my mouth. The next day after that the general gave orders for him to be taken to a better apartment, where he was to have a servant to wait on him. The credulous general actually paid him a visit, the other officers followed suit, and the newly-found prince became the rage. In eight days he was well and began to go out. He dined and supped at the general's table, where he regularly fell asleep because of his intemperance, but every one believed in him, for two reasons: one was that he calmly awaited news from Venice, and the other that he declared that the priest had violated the secret of the confessional in giving up the papers before his death, therefore he solicited his punishment; the unhappy priest was already in prison.

I met La Valeur one day on the esplanade, and he stopped and reproached me with not having been to see him. I laughed and told him the best thing he could do was to get away before the truth leaked out. To this he replied with the grossest insults.

The imposition would have been discovered from the beginning if any one had had a *Royal Almanack*, which contains the genealogy of all princely families, but no one possessed the book, not even the French Consul, who was a perfect fool and as ignorant as the rest.

In speaking of La Valeur to Madame Sagredo, I asked, 'Does he talk much of his family?'

'Of his mother—yes. He loved her tenderly. She was a du Plessis.'

'If she were still alive she would be about a hundred and fifty years old.'

'What nonsense!'

'Yes, madame, she was married in the time of Marie de Médicis.'

'But she is named in his baptismal register—and then his seal——'

'Does he know his own coat of arms by sight?'

Just at that moment he was announced, and Madame Sagredo said: 'Prince, here is M. Casanova says you do not know your own coat of arms.'

At these words he came to me, called me coward, and struck me a blow on the side of my head which made me giddy. I took up my hat and stick and walked slowly to the door. As I went downstairs I heard a gentleman saying in a loud voice that the madman ought to be flung out of the window.

He beats his servant, and is ordered under arrest.

I posted myself on the esplanade, waiting for him to leave the house: as soon as I saw him I rushed at him and dealt him several violent strokes with a cane. He stepped back against the wall; a gentleman would have drawn his sword to defend himself, but the poltroon never thought of such a thing, and I beat him soundly and left him lying on the ground in a pool of blood.

I went into a café near by, and took a glass of lemonade without sugar. A crowd of young officers came round me, all saying I should have done well to have killed him. In about half an hour the general's adjutant appeared and said his excellency had given orders for me to be put under arrest at once. I was to go on board *La Bastarde*. This was the nickname for a certain galley, on which the discipline was very severe; any one under arrest on board her was obliged to wear ankle chains like a convict.

'Very good, sir,' said I, 'I shall make no resistance.' The adjutant went out and I followed him. But at the end of the street I slipped down a lane leading to the sea, and

He flies from Corfu.

I walked along till I found an empty boat beached with two oars lying in it. I jumped in and rowed with all my might after a six-oared *caych* which was going against the wind. As soon as I overtook it I asked the *carabouchiri* to put me aboard a big fishing-smack which was standing out to sea. I made a bargain with the skipper of the smack. He ran up three sails, and in two hours we were fifteen miles from Corfu; about midnight, the wind having gone down, they landed me without my even asking where. I did not want to arouse suspicion. I knew I was far from Corfu, that was enough. It was moonlight, and I could distinguish a church, with a house near by, a long barn open at each end, a wide plain, and some mountains. I entered the barn, and finding some straw, lay down, and slept pretty well. I awoke at daybreak. I was shivering with cold, for it was the first of December, and in spite of the mild climate the nights were fresh, and I had only a thin uniform on.

I heard the bell ringing and went towards the church. The *papa* or priest, who had a long beard, seemed surprised at my apparition. He asked me in Greek if I was *Romeo*, Greek. On my replying that I was *Fragico*, Italian, he turned his back on me, went into his house, and locked the door. Not knowing what step to take next, I began to walk back towards the sea, when I saw a man, a woman, and a boy about two years old, coming in my direction. I spoke to the man in Greek, and he replied to me in Italian, saying he had come from Cephalonia, and was going with his wife and child to Venice, but that he wished to hear Mass first, at the church of the Virgin of Casopo.

'Do you know the priest?' I asked.

'No.'

'Have you any good merchandise on your boat?'

'Yes; if you are thinking of buying anything, come and have breakfast with me, and I will show you what I have.'

I followed him on board his boat, where he gave me an

excellent breakfast. His cargo consisted of cotton, linen, raisins, oil, and some capital wine. Besides these things he had a stock of nightcaps, stockings, umbrellas, and ship-biscuit, of which I was then passionately fond. I possessed thirty sound teeth in those days, than which it would be difficult to find any finer or whiter. I have but two left now. I bought a little of everything without bargaining, including a good gun, with powder and shot. Covered with a warm cloak, my gun on my shoulder, and my purchases in a big sack, I returned to land, determined to lodge at the *papa's* house, whether he liked it or not. I was of a desperate calmness. I had three or four hundred sequins in my pocket, but I was sure to be discovered sooner or later, and as I had outlawed myself, I should be treated as an outlaw. I could only abandon myself to chance, and for the moment the essential was to find board and lodging. I knocked at the door of the priest's house. He showed himself at a window, but shut it again without listening to me. I kicked, I knocked, I cursed, I swore, but all to no avail. At last, furious, I pointed my gun at a poor sheep, who was grazing twenty paces from me with several others, and tumbled it over. The shepherd came running up; the *papa* rushed out, crying, 'Thief, thief!' and began to ring the tocsin. In a few minutes a crowd of peasants armed with guns, scythes, and staves came hurrying down the mountains. I retired into the barn and sat down on the sack. Eight or ten peasants came towards me, their guns levelled. I stopped them by throwing them a handful of copper money, which I had collected on the boat. The good creatures looked at each other in astonishment. They did not know what to make of a well-dressed young man who flung his money about so liberally. The *papa*, the beadle, and the shepherd tried to excite the populace against me, but I sat quietly on my sack. Presently one of them drew a little nearer and asked why I had killed the sheep.

He lands at Casopo, and quarrels with the *papa*.

'To eat, when I have paid for it.'

'But what if his holiness should ask you to pay a sequin for it?'

'Here it is.'

The *papa* took the sequin and went off grumbling, and there, so far as the sheep was concerned, the matter ended.

He lodges in Casopo, and defends his house.

I asked the peasant who acted as spokesman if he could get me a lodging; he said he could get me a whole house if I liked, and that he himself was a capital cook and would be glad to serve me. He called up two big fellows, who laid hold, one of my bag, the other of my sheep.

'I wish I had twenty-four fine rascals like that in my service,' said I, as we walked along; 'and you as my lieutenant; I would pay you well.'

'I have been a soldier myself,' said my man, 'and served in the defence of Corfu. I will get a military guard together for you this very day if you wish.' After walking for twenty minutes or so we reached the house, which was a comfortable one, containing three rooms and a stable. My lieutenant went off to procure what I needed; among other things, a woman to make me some shirts. I acquired in the course of that day a bed, furniture, *batterie de cuisine*, a good dinner, twenty-four stout young peasants, well armed, and a superannuated sempstress, with three or four pretty apprentices. After supper I found myself in the best possible humour, and surrounded by some thirty people who treated me like a king. They did not understand why I had come to their little island. The only thing that troubled me was, that none of the girls spoke Italian, and I knew very little Greek.

The next morning when my lieutenant turned out the guard, I could not help laughing. They were like a flock of sheep; all fine men, well set up and alert; but without a uniform and discipline. Nevertheless their chief taught them to present arms and obey orders. I placed three sentinels, one in front of the house, one at the side, and one overlooking the beach: the last was to warn us if he saw any large boat appear. I led a pleasant life, my table was

covered with succulent dishes, excellent mutton and snipe such as I have never tasted except at Saint Petersburg. I drank Scopolo wine, and the best muscat in the Archipelago. I never went out without my lieutenant and two of my body-guard, for certain young men in the neighbourhood were furious with me for having taken their sweethearts into my establishment.

One day my lieutenant told me that the following Sunday the *papa* was going to pronounce the *cataramonachia* against me, and that if I did not prevent him I should fall ill of a slow fever, which would carry me off in six months.

The *cataramonachia*, it appears, is a curse uttered by the priest while holding aloft the Blessed Sacrament. I was not afraid of the curse, but I was afraid of poison, the effects of which are far more to be dreaded.

The next day I went to church, and said to the priest in a resolute voice: 'The moment I suffer from the slightest symptom of fever I shall blow out your brains; now you know what to do—lay a curse on me which will kill me instantly, for if you try a lingering one I will surely do as I say.'

An officer from Corfu lands and carries him back under arrest.

Early on Monday morning the *papa* came to see me. I had a slight headache, but he hastened to assure me that it was only the effect of a heaviness in the air peculiar to the island of Casopo. I had no fever, needless to say; and quietly pursued my usual routine, when one fine morning the sentinel gave a cry of alarm; an armed sloop had appeared in the bay, and an officer had landed. I called my troop to arms, ordered my lieutenant to receive the officer, who was accompanied only by a guide. Then buckling on my sword I awaited his coming.

It was the Adjutant Minolto, who had executed the order for my arrest.

'You are alone,' said I; 'do you come as a friend?'

'I am obliged to come as a friend, I have not the necessary force to come as an enemy. But the state in which I find you is like a fantastic dream!'

'Sit down, and dine with me.'

'With all my heart; after that we will leave together.'

'You will leave alone. I shall only leave here on the understanding that I am not to be arrested, and that I am to have full satisfaction from that maniac, whom the general ought to send to the galleys.'

'Be wise and come with me quietly. I am not able to take you to-day, but when I have returned and made my report I shall come back in such force that you will have to surrender.'

'But if I surrender I shall be treated more harshly than if I had in the first instance obeyed the general's unjust order.'

'I do not think so—but come with me and you will soon know your fate.'

Towards the end of dinner we heard a great noise outside, and my lieutenant came in to say that the peasants were ready to defend me against the armed force which they heard had come to carry me off to Corfu. I sent word to reassure the brave fellows, and to give them a barrel of wine, after which they went off, having first discharged their guns in the air as a sign of devotion.

'All this is very funny,' said the adjutant, 'but it will become tragic if you do not follow me; my duty compels me to report exactly all your proceedings.'

'I will follow you if you will promise to set me at liberty on disembarking at Corfu.'

'I have orders to consign you to M. Foscari in the *bastarde*.'

'You will not execute those orders. Not this time. With five hundred peasants I am not afraid of three thousand men.'

'One will be sufficient. All these men who seem so devoted to you cannot protect you against the one who will be bribed to blow out your brains for a few pieces of gold. I will even go further and say of all these Greeks there is not one who would not assassinate you for twenty sequins. Be-

lieve me, the best thing you can do is to return with me; at Corfu you will triumph, you will be applauded and fêted. You will yourself tell of your mad freak, and you will be laughed at and admired at one and the same time. Every one esteems you, the general himself must esteem you, for he cannot help remembering what you told him.'

'What has become of that wretched La Valeur?'

'Four days ago a frigate arrived; the despatches it brought contained, no doubt, the necessary information, for the false duke has disappeared; no one knows where he is, and no one dare ask, the general's mistake was too gross a one.'

'But after I thrashed him, was he received in the clubs?'

'How can you ask such a question? Do you not remember that he wore his sword, and never attempted to draw it. No one would speak to him. You punished him terribly. His arm was broken, and his jaw fractured, yet in spite of his deplorable state he has been removed, of course by orders of the governor. All Corfu is wondering at your flight; it was only yesterday that we learnt you were here, through a letter the *papa* wrote to the *protopapa*, complaining of an Italian officer who had taken possession of an island where he ruled by armed force, after debauching the girls, and threatening to blow out the reverend gentleman's brains if he laid the *cataramonachia* on him. This letter was read in the assembly, and the general nearly died of laughter, but nevertheless he told me to seize you, with twelve grenadiers if necessary.'

'I will go with you at midnight.'

'Why not now?'

'Because I will not expose myself to a night on the *bastarde*, I wish to arrive in Corfu in broad daylight.'

'But what shall we do here for eight mortal hours?'

'We will go and visit my nymphs, who are far prettier than any in Corfu, after which we will have supper.'

I ordered my lieutenant to prepare a splendid supper. I made him heir to all my provisions; and to my janissaries I presented a week's pay. They wished to accompany me, fully

armed, to the boat, and the deference they showed me amused my captor so that he laughed all night. We arrived at Corfu about eight in the morning, and I was consigned to the *bastarde*, where the commandant, M. Foscari, received me very ill. Had he possessed the slightest nobility of soul he would not have been in such a hurry to put me in chains. Without a word he sent me down below to receive these decorations; one chain was riveted round my right ankle, and they were just unbuckling my left shoe, when the adjutant arrived with the general's orders to return me my sword and set me at liberty.

The general orders him to be set at liberty.

CHAPTER VII

WILD LIFE IN VENICE

A run of ill luck.

It was written that I should return to Venice as I left it, a mere ensign. The *proveditor* broke his word to me, and the bastard son of a Venetian nobleman was promoted over my head. From that moment military life became hateful to me, and I determined to abandon it. This chagrin was only an instance of the inconstancy of fortune; everything went against me, I never played but I lost, not at the tables only, but everywhere my luck seemed to have deserted me. When I first returned from Casopo I was the most fêted man in Corfu, rich, lucky at cards, beloved by every one, and the favourite of the most beautiful woman in the city. I led the fashion. Then I began to lose health, money, credit, and consideration. My good humour and intelligence, the very faculty of expressing myself seemed to leave me, to melt with my fortune. I chattered, but my words had no effect, for I was known to be down on my luck! The ascendency I had over Madame F—— went with the rest, the good lady became completely indifferent to me.

So I left the place almost penniless, after having sold or pawned everything I possessed of value. Twice I had gone to Corfu rich, and twice I had left it poor, and I contracted debts which I have never paid, more from carelessness than want of will. When I was rich and happy every one made much of me, when I was poor and lean no one showed me consideration. With a full purse and an air of confidence I was thought witty and amusing; with an empty

purse, and told in a different voice, my stories were stupid and insipid. Had I suddenly grown rich again, I should once more have been considered the eighth wonder of the world. O men! O fortune! I was avoided, as though the ill luck which pursued me had been infectious.

We left Corfu with part of the fleet at the end of September. There were five galleys, two galliasses and several small boats. Two months later the galliasses were suppressed by the Venetian government. These vessels dated from ancient times, they were a costly and useless combination of frigate and galley. There were benches, and on these benches sat five hundred slaves, who rowed the vessel when there was no wind to sail her; there were many debates in the Senate before sense prevailed, and these ancient carcasses abandoned. The principal reason alleged for preserving them was that we should respect and retain whatever is old. This reason, ridiculous though it be, is in great force in all republics, where they tremble at the word novelty, in small things or in great. One institution which I fear the Venetian government will never reform is that of those very galleys; firstly, because this kind of vessel can navigate in all weathers, in the narrow seas which are often becalmed; and secondly, because if there were no galleys, what would they do with their convicts?

He visits his guardian Grimani in Venice.

When I got to Venice my first visit was to my guardian, M. Grimani. He received me kindly, but told me that he had my brother François in safe keeping at the fort of Saint Andrew, where he had formerly imprisoned me.

'He is working hard,' he said, 'copying the battle-pieces of Simonetti, which he sells, so he manages to earn his living and study to become a good painter at one and the same time.'

On leaving M. Grimani I went to the fort, where I found my brother, brush in hand. He seemed neither happy nor unhappy, and was in excellent health. When I asked him for what crime he was shut up, he answered: 'Ask the

major, perhaps he can tell you; for my part I have not the least idea.'

The major came in just then, and after saluting him I asked by what right he kept my brother in confinement.

'I have no explanation to give you,' he answered curtly.

The next day I went to the war office, and laid a complaint before the minister, at the same time notifying him of my desire to resign my commission.

Shortly after, my brother was set at liberty, and the acceptance of my resignation was notified to me. I pocketed a hundred sequins for my commission, laid aside my uniform, and became once more my own master.

He becomes a fiddler at the Theatre of Saint Samuel.

I had to think seriously of some means of earning my living. I decided to become a professional gambler; but Dame Fortune did not favour me, and in eight days I found myself without a sol. What could I do? I had no desire to starve, but no one was willing to employ me. It was then that my humble musical talent stood me in good stead. Dr. Gozzi had taught me how to scrape a tune on a fiddle, and M. Grimani got me a place in his theatre of Saint Samuel, where I was paid a crown a day. On this I could manage till something better turned up.

I did not show my nose in any of the houses where I had once been so welcome. I judged that I had fallen too low to be received by the *beau-monde*. I knew I was considered a scapegrace, but I did not care. People despised me, but I knew that I had done nothing despicable. The position humiliated me, but so long as I did not expose myself to slights, I did not feel myself degraded. I had not given up all hopes of better fortune. I was still young, and the volatile goddess smiles on youth. I earned enough by my violin to keep me without asking help from any one. Happy is the man who can manage to keep himself. I tried to stifle my better nature, and threw myself heart and soul into the pursuits and habits of my low companions. After the play I would go with them to some *cabaret*, where we

would remain till we were drunk, and then depart to finish the night in still lower resorts. We would amuse ourselves with inventing and executing the wildest acts of bravado in different quarters of the town. One of our favourite pleasures was to unchain the private gondolas moored to the quays, and let them drift down the canal with the current, gloating at the thought of the curses and maledictions of the gondoliers in the morning. Sometimes we would knock up an honest midwife, imploring her to go at once to such and such a lady, who, not having the slightest need of her assistance, would be sure on her arrival to treat her as a mad woman. We played the same trick on the doctor, whom we would send half dressed to some great lord, supposed to be dying, but in reality perfectly well. The priests had their turn, and many a time have we sent them to administer extreme unction to some good husband snoring peacefully at his wife's side. We destroyed bell-ropes and knockers, and slipped in at open doors to awaken sleepers with hideous cries. One very dark night we plotted to overthrow the great marble table in the middle of the Square of Saint Angelo, but that scheme was frustrated. Sometimes we would get into a belfry and alarm a whole parish by ringing the tocsin; sometimes we would cut the bell-ropes so that in the morning it was impossible to summon the devout to Mass. The whole town rang with complaints of our exploits, and it is very likely that had we been discovered, we should have been sent to row for some time in the galley belonging to the Council of Ten.

There were seven or eight of us, for as I was very friendly with my brother François, I occasionally allowed him to join in our nocturnal rambles. However, bodily fear at last put a term to these abominations, which in those days I called 'follies of youth.'

In each of the seventy-two parishes of the city of Venice there is a large *cabaret* called 'the magazine': it is open all night, and wine is cheaper there than elsewhere; food can also be had, but it must be sent for to a certain shop

which alone has the privilege of supplying the magazine. It is, as a general rule, detestable, but as it is very cheap, poor people put up with it, and these establishments are supposed to be very convenient for the lower orders. No one belonging to the better classes, not even well-to-do artisans, go to them. One night, during the carnival of 1745, when we were roving about, all masked, and seeking some new diversion, we entered the magazine of the parish of the Holy Cross. In a small side room we discovered three men peacefully seated drinking with a young and pretty woman. Our chief, a young noble of the Balbi family, said, 'It would be a great joke to get rid of these men, and take the woman under our protection.' He hastily sketched out a plan. With Balbi at our head, and keeping our masks on, we pushed into the back room, when he, addressing the astonished company, said—

An escapade.

'Under pain of death, and by order of the Council of Ten, I command you to follow us instantly, without making the slightest noise. As for you, my good woman, you need fear nothing. You will be taken care of, and eventually conducted in safety to your home.'

Two of our company took hold of the woman, while the rest of us seized the poor trembling men, who had no thought of resistance. We conducted them on board a boat, and after a quarter of an hour's rowing, deposited them on the island of San Giorgio, and set them at liberty, and getting back into the boat made for a certain spot where we had agreed to meet the rest of the gang. We found them surrounding the crying woman. 'Cheer up, my pretty one,' said Balbi, 'we won't hurt you. We are just going to get something to drink, and then we will take you home. You will see your husband to-morrow morning.' Consoled by this promise she followed us to the inn known as The Two Swords, where we ordered a good supper to be served in a private room. We took off our masks, and the appearance of eight young and handsome faces seemed to tranquillise our captive somewhat. Further encouraged by the wine and good

cheer, and our gallant conversation, she was soon at her ease, and the rest of the night passed in gaiety. She submitted as meekly as a lamb to our mad caprices, and when at last we conducted her to her own door, thanked us with perfect sincerity.

Its consequences.

But next day there was a fine commotion in the city. The husband laid a complaint before the Council of Ten. He and his friends had not been able to leave the island before morning. Returning home he had found his wife in bed; she told him of all that had happened, but the only thing she complained of was the anxiety she had felt on his account.

The trick we had played, and the wife's innocent complaisance, were so comical that the whole town laughed; but though she refused to lay any complaint, the tribunal offered a reward of five hundred ducats to any one who should make known the authors of the outrage. There was no traitor among us, though we were all poor, but fear had a salutary effect upon us, and we became much quieter.

He befriends the dying senator.

In the month of April, the eldest son of the Cornaros married one of the daughters of the house of Saint Pol, and I was bidden to the wedding in my quality of musician. The third day of the feast, as I was going home about an hour before dawn, I saw a senator in his red robes going down the stairs in front of me; as he stepped into his gondola, he dropped a letter from his pocket; I hurried after him to return it. Having thanked me, he asked me where I lived, telling me to get into his gondola and he would take me home. We had hardly been seated a moment when he asked me to shake his left arm, for he felt a strange numbness in it. I worked it up and down vigorously, but he said, in an indistinct voice, that the numbness was spreading up his left side, and that he believed he was dying. I pulled back the curtain, and saw by the lamp-light that his mouth was drawn all awry. I knew that it was apoplexy. I called to the gondoliers to stop, while I ran for a doctor. I found one in a few minutes and hurried him away with me in his

dressing-gown. He bled the senator, while I tore up my shirt for bandages. This done, the gondoliers rowed in haste to their master's palace at San Marino, where we aroused the servants, and I carried him almost lifeless to bed.

Voting myself into the place of command, I sent for another doctor, and took my place at the bedside. By and by two noblemen, friends of the sick man, came in. They were in despair. They questioned me, and I told them what I could. They did not know who I was, and they did not dare to ask. For my part I thought it best to maintain a discreet silence. The sick man gave no sign of life. We remained with him throughout the day. A quiet little dinner was served to us, which we partook of in the sickroom.

In the evening the elder of the friends told me if I had business elsewhere I must not neglect it—they would pass the night with the invalid.

'And I, gentlemen,' said I, 'will pass the night in this armchair, for if I leave this poor man he will die, whereas so long as I remain he will live.'

This sententious reply struck them dumb with surprise; they exchanged glances. We sat down to supper, and in the course of conversation I learnt that the patient was M. de Bragadin, celebrated in Venice for his eloquence, his talents as a statesman, and the gallant adventures of his youth. He was handsome, learned, lively, kind-hearted, and about fifty years old. One of his friends belonged to the family of Dandolo;[1] the other was a Barbaro.[2] They were all three devotedly attached to each other, and lived in the closest intimacy.

[1] The Dandolo family, which is one of the oldest and most distinguished in the annals of the Venetian Republic, claimed to be of Roman origin. It furnished many renowned soldiers and citizens, among others the celebrated Doge who flourished in the first half of the fourteenth century.

[2] The person alluded to here was probably a member of the patrician family of the Barbaro or di Barberino which played an important part in Venetian history. Francesco di Barbaro defended Brescia when that city was besieged in the fifteenth century.

About midnight our patient became worse, the fever increased, and he seemed hardly able to breathe. I called up his two friends, and told them that I was certain he would die unless we removed a huge mercury plaster with which the doctor had covered his chest: without waiting for their sanction I tore it off and sponged him with warm water. In less than five minutes he began to breathe peacefully, and by and by fell into a quiet sleep. When the doctor came in the morning, M. de Bragadin was well enough to tell him himself what had happened, adding, 'Providence has sent me a physician who knows more of medicine than you do.'

'In that case I will retire, and leave you in his charge,' replied the doctor, and bowing coldly to me, he departed.

I saw that I had bewitched the three worthy friends, and I began to give myself airs, lay down the law, and quote authors whom I had never read.

He finds in De Bragadin his benefactor and victim.

M. de Bragadin had a weakness for abstract science, and one day he told me he was sure I possessed a superhuman knowledge, I was too learned for a young man. I did not want to shock his vanity by contradicting him, and then and there, in the presence of his friends made a most extravagant statement. I told him an old hermit had taught me how to make certain numerical calculations, by means of which I could obtain an answer to any question if I wrote it down according to a system he had also imparted to me, the words of the question must be represented by numbers, and pyramidal numbers, the answers were given in the same form.

'The answers are sometimes very obscure,' I said, 'yet if I had not consulted my oracle the other night, I should not now have the pleasure of knowing your excellencies. When I asked if I should meet any one at the ball whose encounter would be disagreeable to me, I was told, "You must leave the ball one hour before dawn." I obeyed, and your excellency knows the rest.'

'It is the clavicula of Solomon which you possess,' said M. de Bragadin, 'which the vulgar call the *cabbala*. It is a

veritable treasure. You can, if you like, make your fortune with it.'

He shows the *cabbala* to Senators De Bragadin, Dandolo, and Barbaro.

'I got it,' I said, 'from a hermit on Mount Carpegna, when I was under arrest in the Spanish army.'

I saw I had produced a good effect on my listeners; the difficulty was not to destroy it. M. Dandolo said he would write a question the meaning of which could only be understood by himself. He handed me a slip of paper couched in such obscure language I could make neither head nor tail of it; but it was too late to draw back. I could but trust to effrontery to carry me through. I put down four lines in ordinary figures, and handed them to him with an indifferent air. He read them, re-read them, and then pronounced the reply to have been inspired by more than mortal intelligence. I was saved.

It was now the turn of the others. They questioned me on all sorts of subjects. My answers, perfectly incomprehensible to myself as they were, enchanted them. They found in each the solution they chose to find, and they asked me in how short a time I could teach them the rules of my sublime science.

'In a few hours,' I said, 'and I shall be very glad to do so. Although the hermit assured me that if I communicated the secret to any one, I should die suddenly within three days —this may, however, have been merely a threat.'

On hearing this, M. de Bragadin looked very grave, and said I must believe what the hermit had told me, and obey him implicitly, and from this time forth there was no further question of their learning the secret.

In this way I became the hierophant of the three friends, who, in spite of their education and literary ability, were perfectly infatuated about the occult sciences, and believed in the possibility of all sorts of things contrary to moral and physical laws. These noblemen were not only good Christians, they were devout and scrupulous in the exercise of their religion. They were none of them married, and they had for ever renounced the society of women, whose implacable foes they now were.

They maintained that it was the necessary condition of communication and intimate intercourse with spirits.

It was not very commendable of me to deceive them in this way, but I was only twenty, and had been earning my bread in the orchestra of a theatre, and it was none of my business to point out to them the folly of their illusions. I did but add one to the number when I constituted myself their apostle. I procured for them a great deal of innocent pleasure, and for myself some pleasure which was not so innocent, but, as I said before, I was twenty years old and had a fine constitution. What man, given these advantages, does not seek by every possible means to get all the good he can out of life?

No one in Venice could understand how men of their character could associate with a man of mine. They were all heavenly, I was all earthly; they were severe and strict in their lives, I was entirely given up to pleasure. No one guessed the secret, and I daily strengthened the hold I had on them. By the beginning of summer M. de Bragadin was well enough to appear at the Senate. The day before he resumed his seat there he sent for me.

De Bragadin's noble speech of gratitude.

'Whatever you may be,' he said, 'I owe you my life. Your former protectors who tried to make you a priest, a doctor, a lawyer, or a soldier, only succeeded in making a fiddler of you; they were fools who did not understand you. Your guardian angel has brought you to me; I understand and appreciate you. I shall treat you as my son to the day of my death. Your place will be always laid at my table, your room is ready for you in my palace. You will have a servant to wait entirely on you, a private gondola, and ten sequins a month for pocket money; it is what my father gave me when I was your age. You need have no thought for the future; you have nothing to do but to amuse yourself, and whatever may happen be sure I shall always be your father and friend.'

Such, my dear reader, is the history of my metamorphosis; from the rank of a poor violinist, I was suddenly raised to that of the rich and powerful.

CHAPTER VIII

CRISTINA

I now began to live an independent life, recognising no law save inclination. I was rich, endowed by nature with an agreeable and somewhat imposing exterior; I was an inveterate gambler, a great talker, a sworn worshipper of beauty, and I cared only for such society as amused me, so it is not to be wondered at if I made many enemies. I respected the law, but at the same time, I considered myself above all vulgar prejudices. I fancied that on these terms I should be allowed to live in perfect freedom under an aristocratic government, such as that of Venice. But it was not to be. The Venetian republic, for reasons of self-preservation, must herself bow before imperative state considerations. I only touch on this subject, so as to somewhat justify my policy as a citizen, whose tendency that year inevitably led to a state prison.

My conduct was not calculated to please the three worthy gentlemen whose oracle I had become, but they were too fond of me to remonstrate severely with me.

About this time I became attached to the most celebrated courtesan in Venice. Her name was Ancilla. She afterwards married the dancer Campioni, and went with him to London. We played cards every night at her house, and the stakes were often extravagantly high. The young Count Medini, whom I met there, was as reckless a gamester as myself, but more favoured by fortune, and he won large sums from me. I bore my bad luck as cheerfully as I

could, never doubting him, until one evening he cheated me in so flagrant a manner that, easy dupe though I had been up to that moment, my eyes were opened. I drew a pistol from my pocket, and, turning the barrel against his breast, I threatened to kill him if he did not instantly give me back what he had stolen from me. We had a stormy scene, during which Ancilla fainted. Medini finally returned my money, but challenged me to leave the house and cross swords with him.

A duel, and temporary refuge in Padua.

I accepted, and laying my pistols on the table followed him to a convenient place outside the city, where we fought by the light of the moon. I had the good luck to run him through the shoulder, so that he could not hold his sword, and was obliged to ask for quarter. After this episode I went home and slept the sleep of the just; but when next morning, I gave an account of the affair to my adopted father, he advised me to leave Venice immediately and take refuge at Padua. Count Medini was my enemy for the rest of my life; the reader will hear of him again.

After a few months spent at Padua, I returned to Venice, where I should have been perfectly happy if I could have abstained from punting at basset. My infatuation for this game often led me into trouble. I had not the prudence to leave off when I was losing, or the strength of mind to leave off when I had won moderately, consequently I was always in need of money.

Once, when I was very hard pressed, I tried to borrow two hundred sequins from my old friend, Madame Manzoni. She was not able to procure the money for me, but she persuaded a woman friend to intrust a very fine diamond to me, worth treble the amount I required. I was to take it to Treviso and pawn it, for there were no pawnbrokers in Venice; the Jews always found means to prevent the Republic from opening one of these useful establishments, so as to keep the trade of money-lending in their own hands.

As I was passing along the quay of Saint Job, I noticed a

richly-dressed village-girl seated in a gondola. I stopped to look more closely at her, and the man in the prow called out and asked me if I wanted to go to Mestre; for if so, he would take me for half price. But I replied that I would give him twice what he asked if he would promise not to embark any more passengers. Having concluded this bargain, I jumped in, and seated myself beside the pretty little peasant, who was chatting and laughing with a pleasant-faced old priest.

The village-girl in the gondola on the Quay of Saint Job.

'The gondoliers,' said the latter, by way of opening the conversation, 'are in luck; they are taking us to Mestre for thirty sols apiece, with the right to carry other passengers if they can find any, and they are sure to. You see they have already one.'

'When I am in a gondola, reverend father,' said I, 'there is no room for any one else'; here I ostentatiously drew out my purse and gave some extra money to the boatman, who then gave me the title of 'Excellency.' The good priest naïvely thought I had a right to this distinction, and continued to address me as 'Excellency,' until I explained to him I was no nobleman, only a lawyer's clerk.

'Ah!' exclaimed the young girl, 'I am glad to hear that.'

'And may I ask why, signorina?'

'Because I am too shy to speak to a gentleman. I like to be with people who do not think themselves any better than I am. My father, the brother of my uncle,' pointing to the priest, 'was a farmer. I am his only child, and his heiress. I think there is not much difference between a lawyer's clerk and the daughter of a rich farmer. I need not feel shy with you, and now that we know all about each other we shall get on better, shall we not, uncle?'

'Yes, my dear Cristina, though you must own that the gentleman was very friendly before he knew who or what we were.'

'Perhaps I should not have been so friendly, my reverend father, if I had not been attracted by the beauty of your charming niece.'

At these words they both burst out laughing, and as I could not see that I had said anything very comical, I concluded that they must be stupid as well as rustic.

'Why do you laugh, my pretty one?' I asked. 'Is it to show me your beautiful teeth? I must own that I have never seen finer ones even in Venice.'

'Oh, it was not for that, sir, though in Venice every one complimented me on them. In our village all the girls have as white teeth as I have. I was laughing at something I would rather die than tell you.'

In the gondola with Cristina.

'I will tell you,' said her uncle: 'when she saw you coming along the quay, she said, "There's a handsome fellow! I wish he was in the boat with us," and when you got in she was delighted.'

'Do not look so cross,' said I, 'and thump your uncle on the shoulder. I am glad my appearance pleases you. I do not conceal from you that I find you charming.'

'You say so now, but I know you Venetians, you all tell me I am charming, but when it comes to the point not one of you will declare himself.'

'What sort of a declaration do you want?'

'The only one that I care for, the one which is followed by a good business-like marriage in church, in the presence of witnesses.'

'This girl,' interposed the uncle, 'such as you see her, is a good match for any man. She has a dowry of three thousand crowns. She declares she will only marry a Venetian, so I took her to Venice to find a husband. We stayed there for a fortnight with some friends of ours, but though she went to several houses where there were likely young men, it was no use; those she liked did not seem to care for her, and those who cared for her were not to her taste.'

'But do you think,' said I, 'that a marriage is made like an omelette? Fifteen days in Venice is not enough; you must stay there at least six months. For instance, I think your niece is as pretty as a flower, and I shall be thankful if

the wife God means for me is like her; nevertheless, if you were to give me fifty thousand crowns down to marry her this moment I would not do it. A sensible man wants to know the character of a woman before he marries her, for it is neither money nor beauty which makes for happiness.'

'What do you mean by character?' asked Cristina. 'A good handwriting?'

'No, my angel, and your question makes me laugh. I mean qualities of the heart and mind. I must marry some day, and have been looking for a wife these last three years. I know many girls as pretty as you, and with good dowries, but after I have studied them a short time, I see they will not do for me.'

'What ailed them?'

'Well one, whom I should certainly have married, for I was very fond of her, was excessively vain, though it took me two months to find it out. She would have ruined me in fine clothes; just fancy, she spent a sequin a month on the hairdresser, and as much again in pomades and essences.'

'She was a fool; I spend ten sols a year in wax, which I mix with goat's grease, and it makes an excellent pomade.'

'Another, I discovered, could never have children; that would be terrible, for if I marry I want to have a family.'

'As for that, 'tis as God wills; but I have always been healthy, have I not, uncle?'

'Another was too pious; she went to confession every three days, and stayed at least an hour.'

'She must have been a great sinner, or a great fool. I go to confession every month, and say everything in two minutes —don't I, uncle?—and what's more, if you did not question me I should not know what to say.'

'Another thought herself wiser than I, though every minute she said something silly. Another was melancholy, and I want a lively wife.'

'Think of that, uncle! and my mother is always telling me I am too lively!'

'Another was afraid to be left alone with me, and when I kissed her ran and told her mother.'

'She was a goose. I have never had a sweetheart, but I know if I had one there are certain things I should never tell, even my mother.'

'Then there is another thing, I want my wife to have black eyes, and every girl now knows how to dye hers; but they won't catch me. I have learnt the secret.'

'Are mine black?'

'They look black, but they are not so really. Still, you are very charming.'

'How funny! You think you know everything, and you say my eyes are made up. Such as they are, sir, they are as God made them. Don't you believe me?'

'No, they are too handsome to be natural.'

'Well, I declare!'

'Forgive me; I see I have been too outspoken.'

A long silence followed this dispute. The priest smiled to himself from time to time, but the girl had great difficulty in hiding her vexation.

She was quite adorable; her head was dressed in the fashion of a rich peasant, with at least a hundred sequins' worth of gold pins and arrows holding up her ebony hair. She wore long massive ear-rings, and a gold chain twisted twenty times round her slim white throat.

He offers Cristina and her uncle a seat in his carriage.

When the gondola entered the long canal of Marghera I asked the priest if he had a carriage to take him to Treviso, which was the coaching station for their village, and if not would he accept two places in the chaise I intended to hire, but his niece interrupted him and declared she would not travel with me. I saw I had offended her, and hastened to make my peace by saying that I could tell if her eyes were really black by washing them with rose water, or if she shed tears I should know at once.

'Cry then, my child,' said her uncle, 'and the gentleman will do justice to you and your eyes.'

At this she began to laugh, and laughed so heartily that tears actually rolled down her cheeks, and so we were all good friends again.

He hears Mass with Cristina.

I ordered breakfast and a post-chaise, but first of all the good priest said he must say Mass.

'Yes,' I said, 'you shall say a prayer for me, and we will come and hear it!'

On the way to church I offered my arm to his niece.

'What would your mistress say,' she asked, 'if she saw us walking like this?'

'I have no mistress, and I shall never have one again, for I shall never find such a pretty girl as you—no, not in Venice!'

'That is a pity, for your sake: we shall never go back to Venice; even if we did we could not stay six months, which is the time you say it takes you to make acquaintance with a girl.'

'I would gladly pay your expenses there.'

'Tell that to my uncle then; perhaps he will think over it, for I could not go alone.'

'And in six months *you* would know *me*?'

'I know you already.'

'And do you think you would love me?'

'Yes, very much, if you were my husband.'

I stared at this girl in astonishment; she looked like a princess disguised as a peasant. Her thick silk gown was braided with gold, and must have cost twice as much as any fashionable dress. It was buttoned high up to the neck, but as the town fashion of capes had not got as far as the country I could see how beautifully made she was. She wore bracelets to match the necklace, and her richly trimmed petticoat, which only reached to her ankles, showed the neatest foot in the world.

After breakfast we drove to Treviso, and there I had no difficulty in persuading the priest to accept dinner and supper, after which it was arranged he was to take the chaise and go on to his village by moonlight.

The priest undertakes to pawn a brilliant for him.

During dinner it occurred to me that perhaps he would take my brilliant to the pawnbroker for me, and this he readily agreed to do. He went off leaving me alone with Cristina, but returned in an hour to say that the diamond could not be pledged for two days, as there was a fête in the town and the shops were closed, but that he had seen the cashier at the pawnbroker's who had promised to give him twice the amount I asked.

'You would do me a service, father,' said I, 'if you would come back here the day after to-morrow, and pawn the diamond for me, as you have been about it once; it might look strange if I were to go. I would gladly pay your expenses.'

He promised to do so, and I secretly hoped, though I did not dare to suggest it, that his niece would come with him; but when we were seated round the fire after dinner I grew bolder.

'Reverend father,' I said, 'if you would take your niece back to Venice I would find you some lodgings in the house of a most respectable woman, and I would defray the cost of your living there. I wish to become better acquainted with the signorina before I ask for her hand in marriage.'

During this speech I was watching Cristina out of the tail of my eye, and I saw her smile with pleasure.

'If you will only consent,' I said, 'in eight days everything can be arranged, and during that time I will write to you, dear Cristina, and I hope you will answer my letters.'

'My uncle will answer for me; I can't write.'

'My dear child! how can you hope to become the wife of a Venetian if you cannot write?'

'Is it necessary for a woman? I know how to read.'

'That is not enough; and you must learn before coming to Venice, or you will be laughed at.'

'But none of the girls at home can write, and I cannot possibly learn in eight days.'

'I undertake to teach you in fifteen,' said her uncle, 'if you will try with all your might to learn.'

'It is a great undertaking, but I promise you to study day and night. I will begin to-morrow.'

After supper I suggested to the priest that he should remain all night at the inn, and leave very early in the morning. As he saw his niece was terribly tired, and would be glad of the rest, he acquiesced. I called up the landlady and ordered her to light a fire in another room, and prepare a bed for me; but here the holy father interposed and said it was not necessary; there were two large beds in the room where we were. I could have one, and the other would do for himself and his niece.

'We shall not undress,' said he, 'but you may, as you do not leave with us in the morning. You can remain in bed as long as you please.'

'Oh,' said Cristina, 'I must undress, or I shall not sleep; but I shall not keep you waiting, I shall be ready in a quarter of an hour.'

I said nothing, but I could hardly hide my surprise at the charming Cristina's complaisance. My carnal mind was shocked; yet not only did the priest see no harm in it, but he never for one moment imagined that any one else could. I was not so hardened then, but as I have advanced in age and experience I have seen like customs current in many countries among good simple people, without detriment to their excellent morality. Still I must repeat, these customs obtained among good simple people only, and I do not pretend to be of their number.

'Do you know,' said he, 'what my niece wants to persuade me to do? To go home by myself to-morrow, and leave her here until the day after, when I shall come back for the diamond. She says that you are like a brother to her, only I fear she will be in your way.'

This unexpected proposition had such an effect on me, my nose began to bleed violently, and bled for a quarter of an hour, so that the good priest was scared out of his wits.

I was very discreet after the priest left us. I told Cristina

little naughty stories, carefully modifying them so as not to startle her, but I was amused to see that when she did not understand, she pretended she did, so as not to appear too naïve.

We went to our beds about midnight; I did not awake until broad daylight, the priest had slipped away so quietly I had not heard him.

I called out 'good morning' to Cristina, who awoke, and, leaning on her elbow, smiled.

'I did not hear my uncle go,' she said.

'My dear child, you look as pretty as an angel; I am dying to give you a kiss.'

'Come and give me one!' Then, after a pause, she said softly, 'What will my uncle say?'

'He will know nothing about it until he has given us the nuptial blessing in his parish church.'

'But we cannot be married in Lent?'

'I will get a dispensation.'

'How long will it be before we can be married?'

He promises to marry Cristina.

'About a month.' This seemed to reassure her, and she was soon smiling again.

But although the bond into which we had entered was not altogether displeasing to me, I could have wished for just a little more time. The little hint of remorse that had leaped up in my soul, full of love and good intentions as that soul was, went twisting and twining about there like a serpent, and saddened me. But yet I felt sure that this sweet woman would never repent having met me.

After breakfast we went to Mass, and the morning passed by very rapidly. In the evening I took her to the play, and to the Casino, after having provided her with a domino and mask. She had never seen a gaming-table before. I gave her ten sequins, telling her how to stake them. In less than an hour she had won over a hundred, then I made her come away. She could hardly believe that all that money belonged to her. 'What will my uncle say?' she kept repeating.

When he returned next morning she showed him her

treasure, and he was profuse in his exclamations of delight and surprise. He thanked God, for what he called a miracle, and concluded that we were destined for one another.

The time had come for us to separate. I promised to visit them at the beginning of Lent, but only on condition that they would not mention my name to any of their friends. When I had seen them off, I turned my steps towards Venice, very much in love, and determined not to break faith with my dear Cristina.

He decides not to do so.

But alas! the very next day I decided she must be happy without me. I had intended to marry her when I loved her more than I loved myself, but as soon as I was away from her side I found that self-love was stronger than the affection with which she had inspired me. Still I felt sentimental about her. I trembled at the idea of abandoning this naïve and innocent creature, and shuddered to think that her confidence in me might be repaid with lifelong opprobrium and scorn. I would find her a husband at once—one who should be in every way preferable to myself.

My three excellent friends had been somewhat anxious about me during my absence: they were all eager to consult me on divers matters. As soon as I was closeted with them, pen in hand, I put a question of my own to *Paralis*, as we called our oracle. The answer I received to my question ran in this wise: 'Confide in *Serenus*; tell him the whole story.' *Serenus* was the cabalistic name of M. de Bragadin. The worthy man was most obedient, and always did what *Paralis* told him.

'You must,' said *Paralis*, 'obtain a dispensation from the Holy Father in favour of a very good girl, so that she may publicly celebrate her marriage during Lent, and in her parish church. Here is her certificate of baptism.' I had brought it away with me, and now slipped it into M. de Bragadin's hand. 'The bridegroom is as yet unknown, but that does not matter, *Paralis* will point him out when the time comes.'

'Rely on me,' gravely replied my adopted father; 'I will write to-morrow to our ambassador at Rome. *Paralis* shall be obeyed, and I foresee that the husband is to be one of us four; we must dispose ourselves to fulfil his command.'

I could hardly help laughing when I saw that it was absolutely in my power to make Cristina a Venetian lady and wife of a nobleman and senator. But I resisted, and again consulted the oracle, as to who was to be the happy man. The reply came that M. Dandolo was to find him; that he must be young, handsome, sensible, and capable of serving the republic; that no engagements were to be made without consulting me. I added that the girl had a dowry of four thousand ducats, and that we had fifteen days to find the man.

I was now quite easy, for I was sure they would find a husband such as I desired for Cristina. I set about keeping the carnival with a light heart, and won over a thousand sequins at faro, with which I paid my debts, and the cost of the dispensation, which arrived ten days later from Rome.

He finds Cristina a husband.

It was all in form; nothing was wanting but a mere detail —the bridegroom. I wrote to the uncle to meet me at Treviso, and was not surprised to see him arrive accompanied by his niece. I gave him the Papal dispensation, and as I was sure of nothing, did not mention the proposed change of bridegroom. On this occasion we occupied separate rooms, and as I now looked on Cristina as belonging to some other man, I contented myself with discreetly embracing her in the presence of her uncle. He left us alone together for some time, as he had business to attend to, and I endured all the temptations of Saint Anthony, but I resisted them manfully. A week later M. Dandolo told me the husband was found, and that he was sure I would approve of his choice. As a matter of fact, when I met the young man I found him worthy of the senator's eulogiums. His name was Charles ——; he was very handsome, about twenty-two years of age, and a godson of Count Algarotti's, the friend and relative of M. Dandolo's.

I had now reached the most delicate and difficult part of the undertaking. I wrote to the priest, telling him that on a certain day I would pay him and his niece a visit, and would bring a friend with me. At the appointed time Charles and I set out. On the way I explained to him that I had met the young person and her uncle about a month before, and that I should have proposed to her myself, but that I did not consider my situation justified me in doing so. In this way I prepared his mind for the coming event. We arrived at the presbytery about two hours before midday. Cristina came smiling to meet us.

The introduction of Charles.

'I want to show you my handwriting,' she said, 'and after that we will go and see my mother.'

Charles asked her why she had waited till she was nineteen to learn to write. 'What is that to you?' she said tartly; 'and I am not nineteen, only seventeen.'

Then we two followed her to her own home. We found the doctor with her mother, who was bedridden, and, oddly enough, he knew Charles. They went out together, leaving me with the mother and daughter, and I spoke of Charles, praising his good conduct, morality, and intelligence, vaunting the happiness of the woman whom he should choose as his wife. They agreed with me that his face was a guarantee of all I alleged.

As there was no time to lose, I told Cristina that she must be on her guard at table, as it was possible that he might be the husband Heaven had destined for her.

'If it should be so,' I added, 'you will be very happy with him, happier than you would have been with me, and as the doctor knows him, he can tell you more about him than I have time to tell you now.'

It gave me much pain to make this declaration; but imagine my surprise! The young girl was calm, and in no wise disconcerted. The sight of her tranquillity checked the tears I was prepared to shed. After a pause she asked me if I was quite sure that that handsome young fellow really cared

to marry her. This question reassured me. I saw I had been as much mistaken in her as she had been in me.

We dined rather late, and I carefully refrained from talking, so as to give Charles a fair chance. I noticed with pleasure that Cristina replied to him with ease and interest. When they parted Charles said to her, 'You are worthy of a prince.'

'I shall consider myself lucky,' she replied, 'if you think me worthy of you.'

On our return journey Charles spoke of nothing but his good luck; he was over head and ears in love.

'I shall go,' said he, 'to Count Algarotti to-morrow, and you can write to her uncle to bring us over the documents to sign.'

Two days after, I went back to the village. This time I read the future bride a little lecture, at once paternal and sentimental, with regard to her conduct in her new state of life. I told her how to behave towards her husband, his aunt, and her sister-in-law, so as to win their affection and friendship. The end of my discourse was somewhat pathetic and a little humiliating for myself, for in recommending her to be faithful to Charles I had to ask her to forgive my own betrayal of her.

'When you asked me to marry you, did you not intend to do so?' she said.

'Yes, certainly.'

'You have not deceived me, then, and I ought to be grateful to you for being strong enough to decide that as there might have been difficulties about our union, it was better to find me another husband. Now, you may kiss me if you like.'

'No, I dare not!'

'Very well, my friend, really I don't care about it!'

This naïve reasoning made me smile, and an hour or two later we all three left for Venice, Cristina wearing her grandest toilette; the marriage-contract was signed, and the

wedding-day fixed. The marriage feast was spread at the uncle's house; Count Algarotti sent his servants and cook from Venice, so that everything might be done as was fitting. Cristina, though dressed as a peasant, looked beautiful as a star; her uncle and husband had tried in vain to induce her to wear the costume of a Venetian lady.

'When I am your wife,' she told Charles, 'I will dress as you wish, but till then I will wear what I have always worn. I do not want the girls with whom I have been brought up to laugh at me, or think I am giving myself airs.'

The wedding of Cristina.

We went to the church about eleven, and were surprised to find it so crowded we could with difficulty get places. The whole village and many of the Trevisan nobility were there, to see the peasant girl whose wedding was celebrated in mid-Lent; every one was loud in the praise of both bride and bridegroom, and certainly they made a handsome couple.

At the banquet which followed the ceremony Cristina proved an admirable hostess; she glanced from time to time at her husband to see if what she said and did met with his approbation, and needless to say, these glances were always met with a reassuring smile.

The next morning I was talking with Count Algarotti and some of his friends when Charles came in, looking happy and radiant. He replied with much wit, and *à propos* to the jokes with which he was greeted, and I must own I felt considerably relieved when he came up to me and embraced me heartily; he begged me to henceforth consider him as a brother, and to treat his house as my own; but, though I knew the invitation was sincere, I avoided accepting it. About a year after their marriage a son was born to them; they had two other children, and lived in happiness and comfort for many years.

CHAPTER IX

HENRIETTE

A disquisition on surnames.

AMONG my most intimate friends at this period was a young man who was studying mathematics under the celebrated Professor Succi. His name was Tognolo, but he had changed this ill-sounding appellation for that of de Fabris: it was he who afterwards became Count de Fabris, lieutenant-general to Joseph the Second.

His talents would doubtless have availed him little, had he preserved his original name. I think that people who are afflicted with an ugly name, or one capable of an indecent or ridiculous interpretation, should change it if they aspire to honours, military or civil. Voltaire, in spite of his genius, would never have gone down to posterity as Arouet; would any one have admitted any claim to greatness in an author publicly proclaimed '*à rouer*'? Would d'Alembert have attained celebrity if he had been content to be known as M. *Le Rond*? What glory would Metastasio have acquired under his own name, *Trapasso*? What impression would Melanchthon have made as Schwarzerdt? And M. de Beauharnais would certainly have caused some to laugh, and others to blush, if he had maintained his original title. Finally, would the *Bourbeux* have figured as brilliantly on the throne of France as the *Bourbons*?

I used to go with my friend de Fabris to stay at a country house near Zero, where everything was arranged for the amusement of body and mind. We gambled, we made love, but above all, we played practical jokes of the most terrible

description on one another. A man must never lose his temper, but take everything as a jest, or be dubbed a fool and a disagreeable fellow. It was a series of practical jokes: apple-pie beds, turnip-lanthorns, ghosts, and other things still harder to bear. I had to run the gauntlet with the others, but one day they played a trick on me which was really too bad, and its regrettable consequences put an end to this mania for horse-play. We used to walk every day to a farm, about half a mile distant from the chateau, and as a short-cut we generally passed over a deep muddy ditch crossed by a single plank. I always chose this way for the sake of watching the simulated terror of the women, and the pleasure of handing them across. One day when I was standing in the middle of the plank, encouraging them to follow me, the plank broke, and I was flung into the stinking mud, up to my chin. In spite of my mortification I had to laugh with the others. I was helped out by the farmer, and a pitiable object I must have presented: my beautiful new suit embroidered with spangles, my lace, my silk stockings, all were spoilt. The next day I had to go to town to get new things, and returned in twenty-four hours; but de Fabris told me that the author of the trick had not come forward.

A sequin given adroitly here and there put me in possession of the secret. My tormentor was a Greek merchant, named Demetrio, a man of about forty-five, a good amiable fellow, who owed me a grudge for cutting him out in the affections of a pretty waiting-maid. I meditated revenge, and a funeral which occurred just then in the village prompted me.

A practical joke.

Armed with my hunting-knife, I went alone to the cemetery at midnight; I disinterred the corpse, cut off one of its arms, rearranged the grave, and went off to my room with the severed arm.

Next night I retired early, and hid myself under Demetrio's bed. Presently he came in, undressed, put out his light, and disposed himself to slumber.

By and by I began to pull at the bedclothes; gently he

recovered them, saying laughingly: 'Whoever you are, go away, and leave me to sleep, I do not believe in ghosts. You will get no fun out of me.'

I waited five or six minutes, and then began again, but this time, when he attempted to pull the coverings into place, I tugged them in the opposite direction.

He sat up and tried to seize hold of the hand which was pulling the blanket; as he grabbed for it I substituted the dead hand for mine. Thinking he had caught the man or woman who was teasing him, he drew it towards him. I held tight for a minute or two, then suddenly let go, and the Greek fell back on his pillow, grasping the ice-cold hand; he did not say a word.

The farce was played, I walked softly to the door, regained my own room, and got into bed.

Its results.

Next morning I was awakened by the sound of people running up and down the corridor. On going to my door, I met the mistress of the house, who told me that I had gone a bit too far this time.

'What is the matter?'

'M. Demetrio is dying.'

'I am sorry, but I did not kill him.'

She left me without answering, and I dressed myself hurriedly, feeling somewhat scared. I went to the Greek's room; the whole household was assembled there, and they greeted me with violent reproaches. I feigned innocence, but no one believed me; the priest, who had been fetched in haste, told me I had committed a crime.

'There is no one else here,' said he, 'capable of such an abomination. No one else would have dared to do it. I must warn you that action will be taken against you at once.'

The same day the arm was re-inhumed, and I was formally denounced to the Episcopal court at Treviso for having violated a tomb.

I was so bored by their reproaches that I went back to

Venice, and after being there a short time I learnt that the unfortunate Greek had recovered sufficiently to be able to open and shut his eyes, but that he had entirely lost the use of his limbs, and could only speak in a spasmodic and semi-idiotic manner. In this sad condition he passed the rest of his life. His unhappy fate pained me deeply, but I had not meant to injure him, and the trick he played on me might easily have cost me my life, so I consoled myself. There was no proof against me, they only surmised that it was I who had opened the grave. But I was not at the end of my troubles.

He goes to Milan and on to Cesena.

Just at this time a woman lodged a complaint against me for assaulting her daughter, and though I was blameless, it was difficult for me to prove my innocence. It was one of those cases which are got up to cause expense and annoyance to the victim; the harpy's evident intention was to blackmail me, and her accusations were difficult to refute. These, coming on the top of the charge for profanation of the dead, made matters very serious. M. de Bragadin, whose advice was always worth listening to, counselled me to lose no time in leaving Venice; at the same time he assured me that in a year at most I should be able to return, for by then the scandal would be forgotten.

I left at nightfall, and next day I slept at Verona; two days afterwards I arrived at Milan. I was alone, but well supplied with everything; no letters of introduction, but plenty of handsome jewellery, a well-filled purse, good health, and the burden of twenty-three years.

I passed some time agreeably at Milan, where I met several old acquaintances; I was lucky at cards, and had many adventures, one of which led me to Cesena, whence I intended going on to Naples.

While staying at Cesena, I was awakened one morning by a terrific noise outside my room.

I opened my door and looked out, and saw a posse of policemen standing round an open door, through which I

could discern a bed, with a man sitting up in it, vociferating loudly in Latin.

I asked the host what was the matter.

'This gentleman,' he answered, 'has a girl with him, and the bishop's archers have come to know if it is his wife. It is simple enough, if she is his wife he has only to produce his marriage certificate; if not, he must make up his mind to go to prison with her. But I would settle the whole thing for three sequins; I need only speak to the chief, and he would withdraw his men. If you know Latin, go in and explain matters to him.'

'Who forced the door of the room?'

'It was not forced, I opened it; it was my duty to do so.'

The Hungarian captain and his companion.

I determined to interfere. I went in in my night-cap and explained to the man why these people were annoying him; he answered me, laughing the while, that it was impossible for any one to know if the person who was with him was a man or a woman, as his companion wore, like himself, an officer's uniform. Saying this, he drew out a passport and presented it to me; it was signed by Cardinal Albani, and made out in the name of an officer, captain in the Empress of Austria's Hungarian regiment; he said he came from Rome, and was going on to Parma with despatches.

'Captain,' said I in Latin, 'I beg you to let me settle this affair for you; I will go to the bishop and tell him how vilely his people have behaved to you.'

I was furious at the way in which an infamous and mercenary police had dared to treat an honourable stranger, and I must also own that I was burning with curiosity to see the fair cause of all the disturbance.

As I could get no satisfaction from the bishop, I presented myself to General Spada, who was in command of the town. The worthy soldier, who preferred that priests should busy themselves with the affairs of heaven and not of this world, was indignant, and promised me that in a few hours justice

should be done. In the meanwhile he sent his adjutant back to the hotel with me, with orders to dismiss the police immediately.

Through the open door of the room I conversed with the captain, and asked him if I might breakfast with him.

'Ask my friend,' he said.

'Charming person, whom I have not the honour of knowing,' I said in French, 'may I make a third at your table?'

The sweetest, freshest, smiling face, with untidy locks under a man's cap, showed itself and replied gaily that I should be welcome. I went away to order breakfast. An hour later I followed the waiter into the room, and we breakfasted.

The mysterious companion was an exceedingly pretty French woman, whose natural charms were hardly obscured by the elegant blue uniform she wore. Her protector was over sixty, whereas I was only twenty-three, and I could not help thinking they were a rather ill-assorted couple, the more so that she spoke neither German, Hungarian, nor Latin, and he did not know a word of French.

He offers to take Henriette and the captain in his carriage to Parma.

Determined to push the adventure further, I asked the captain if he meant to post to Parma. On his replying in the affirmative I begged him to accept two places in my travelling carriage.

'I should be delighted,' he said, 'but you must first ask Henriette.'

'Will you, madame, do me the honour of travelling with me to Parma?'

'With the greatest pleasure, for at least we shall be able to converse, and I have been deprived of that pleasure for some time.'

My carriage, so far, existed only in my imagination, but after supper I went out to see what I could do. I found a superb English carriage, which must have cost at least two hundred guineas, and before dinner next day I had concluded a bargain with its owner. The honest captain

insisted on paying me the price of a postchaise to Parma, and this settled we started on our journey.

The one drawback to my satisfaction was that the poor Hungarian could take no part in our conversation. Whenever the charming Frenchwoman said anything amusing I tried to translate it to him in Latin, but I saw that his face grew longer and longer. I concluded that I did not speak Latin as well as she spoke French. In every language the last thing one learns is humour. I could not laugh at the jokes in Terence, Plautius, and Martial until I was thirty.

She was the first Frenchwoman I had ever spoken to, and she spoke very gracefully, and like a lady, and yet I knew she must be an adventuress! I hoped so, for my ambition was now to steal her from the old gentleman—with all possible regard for his feelings, true; for I had a great respect for the fine old soldier that he was. She was certainly a very odd woman. She wore men's clothes, she had no luggage, no feminine fripperies, not even a chemise—she wore the captain's shirts. The whole situation was enigmatical enough, and that is what charmed me.

At Bologna we had a capital supper, and they lighted a large wood fire for us. When we were seated round it I plucked up courage to ask her how she had become the companion of the good fellow who seemed more suited to be her father than her lover.

'If you want to know,' she answered laughing, 'get him to tell you the story himself, but be sure that he leaves nothing out.'

The story of Henriette told by the captain.

When the captain was convinced that she did not mind his speaking freely, he spoke as follows:—

'I had six months' leave, and I went with a friend to pass them in Rome, thinking that every one in decent society there would speak Latin. I was disagreeably surprised, for even the ecclesiastics could only write it passably, and not speak it at all. I had been boring myself thus for a month, when Cardinal Albani gave me some despatches for Parma.

I made an excursion to Civita Vecchia before leaving for Parma, and as I was walking on the quay I saw an old officer and this young lady, dressed as you see her now, step out of a boat. Her appearance pleased me, but I should not have thought of her a second time if she and her companion had not taken rooms in my hotel. Our windows faced each other, and I could see them at supper, one on each side of the table, eating in perfect silence. By and by she got up and left the room; the officer remained reading a letter which appeared to interest him deeply. The next day I saw him go out, and the girl remained alone in the room. I sent my servant to her with a message, telling her that if she would grant me a *rendezvous*, I would give her ten sequins. She sent back word that she was leaving after breakfast for Rome, but that it would be easy for me to speak to her there, if I still wished it.

'I returned to Rome and thought no more of the fair adventuress, when, two days before leaving the city, my servant told me he had seen her again, and had found out where she was lodging, always with the same old officer. I told him to try and get speech of her, and tell her I was leaving Rome the next day. She replied that if I would let her know the hour of my departure, she would meet me outside the city, and would get into the carriage with me. I told her, through my servant, the day and hour I was leaving, and the gate through which I should pass. She was there to the moment, got into my carriage, and we have never left each other since. She gave me to understand that she wanted to go to Parma with me, that she had business there, and that she would never go back to Rome. You may imagine what difficulty we had in explaining ourselves. I could not even tell her that if she was followed and taken from me by violence, I could not protect her. I have not the slightest idea who or what she is. She says her name is Henriette; she may or may not be French; she is as gentle as a lamb, and seems to have had a good education; she is strong and

healthy; she is witty and courageous both, as she has testified. If she will tell you her story, and let you translate it to me in French, it will please me immensely, for I am sincerely her friend, and shall be very sorry when we part at Parma. Tell her, I beg you, that I shall make her a present of thirty sequins, and that if I were rich I would give her more.'

When I translated the captain's speech to Henriette she blushed, but frankly confirmed what he had said.

He is mystified by Henriette.

'Tell him,' she said, 'that the same principle which prevents me from lying prevents me from speaking the truth. As to the thirty sequins, please to assure him that I shall not accept one, that he will only distress me if he insists. When we get to Parma, I want him to bid me good-bye, and let me go where it seems best to me, without inquiring where that may be, and if he should meet me by chance, let him add to his kindness by not appearing to recognise me.'

The poor captain was somewhat mortified by this little speech, and asked me to tell her that before he could agree to her request he must be certain that she had all she wanted.

'You can say,' said she, 'that he need have no uneasiness on my account.'

After this conversation we remained silent for a time, and then I rose and wished them good night. Henriette blushed crimson.

'Who can this girl be,' I spoke aloud in my room, 'who combines the purest sentiments with all the appearances of the most cynical freedom? Has she a lover or a husband waiting for her at Parma? Does she belong to some honourable family there? Did she confide herself to the captain only to escape from the officer at Rome? She must know my reason for travelling with them, and if she tries to play the prude I will not be her dupe.'

The next day, the accommodating captain having by my desire given us an opportunity for *tête-à-tête*, I asked her if the order she had imposed on him applied to me equally.

'It was not a command,' she replied; 'I have no right to command. It is a request. I merely asked him to do me this service, and if you have any friendship for me you will do as I know he will do.'

He makes her a declaration.

'Madame,' I said, 'what you ask might be possible to a Frenchman, but not to an Italian. I could not live in the same town with you and not speak to you. It remains for you to say whether I shall go on with you or remain here. If you say I may travel with you I warn you I shall not be content till I have wrested from you an avowal of something warmer than friendship. Do not be afraid of hurting the feelings of your friend; he knows what I feel for you, and he will be thankful to leave you in such safe hands as mine. Why do you smile?'

'Fancy making any woman such a declaration as this, at the point of the sword as it were, instead of softly, tenderly, insinuatingly—— Ah! ah!' She laughed.

'Yes, I know I am neither tender, nor gallant, nor pathetic; I am passionate. Come, there is no time to lose!'

'Travel with us to Parma,' she said.

Henriette bids the captain farewell and goes with him to Parma.

I was kissing her hand when the captain came in. He congratulated us with a good grace. Later in the day we arrived at Reggio; he took me aside and told me he thought it better that he should go on to Parma alone, we could follow in a day or two. He left us to our mutual happiness. It was not until a week or so later that I ventured to ask Henriette what she would have done in Parma, without money and without friends. She owned that she would have been much embarrassed, but added that she knew I cared for her, and would see that she came to no harm. She added that I must not think ill of her, for all that had happened to her was the fault of her husband and her father-in-law, both of whom she declared to be monsters.

I passed at Parma as Farussi—it was my mother's maiden name—and Henriette wrote herself down as Anne d'Arci, Frenchwoman. We took rooms at d'Andremont's hotel, and

I engaged a young French servant to wait on us. Parma was then under the ferule of a new government. I felt as if I were no longer in Italy, there was an ultramontane air over everything. French and Spanish were spoken in the streets, while people whispered in Italian.

I entered a mercer's shop at haphazard, and addressed myself to the stout lady behind the counter.

'Madam,' I said, 'I want to make some purchases.'

'I will send some one to you who speaks French,' she answered.

'No need of that, I am an Italian.'

'God be praised! It is a rare thing to meet one in these days.'

'Why rare?'

'Do you not know that Don Philip is here, and that his wife, Madame de France, is on the way?'

'I congratulate you, it must be good for trade.'

'That is true, but everything is dear, and we cannot accustom ourselves to the new ways, which are a bad mixture of French liberty and Spanish tyranny. What do you wish to purchase?'

He buys clothes and hires servants.

'Let me first tell you I never bargain, but if you overcharge me I shall not come back. I want some fine linen to make twenty-four chemises, some dimity for petticoats and stays, some muslin and batiste for handkerchiefs, and many other things which I shall not find in your shop, but which I wish you kept, for, being a stranger, God knows into whose hands I shall fall.'

'If you trust me, you will fall into good hands.'

'Well then, tell me where to find sempstresses who will make up these materials, and where I can buy dresses, caps, and mantles; everything, in short, that a lady requires.'

'If she has money you will have no difficulty. Is she young?'

'She is four years younger than I am, and she is my wife.' I took the best of everything she had, paid for it, gave her

my address, and begged her to send me the dressmaker and milliner at once. On the way back to the hotel I bought some silk and thread stockings, and ordered a shoemaker to follow me.

What a delicious moment! I had told Henriette nothing about my intended purchases, and she surveyed them with an air of perfect satisfaction, but without excessive demonstration, though she proved her gratitude by the delicate manner in which she praised the beauty of the stuff I had bought. There was no increase of gaiety on her part, but an air of tenderness which was better than all.

The valet whom I hired came in with the dressmakers, and Henriette told him quietly to wait in the hall until he was called; a quarter of an hour after, he followed the shoemaker into the room, and stood about familiarly listening to our conversation; she asked him again what he wanted.

'I want to know which of you two I am to obey?' he answered.

'Neither of us,' I said, laughing. 'There is your day's wages, and begone!'

The dressmaker then proposed her own son as our valet. His name was Caudagna.

My father was a native of Parma, and one of his sisters married a Caudagna. 'It would be amusing,' I said to myself, 'if the dressmaker turns out to be my aunt, and my valet to be my first cousin! I will keep my own counsel.'

Just as we were sitting down to table, the good Hungarian captain came in, and Henriette, running up to him, called him her 'dear papa.' We dined delicately. I saw that Henriette was dainty, and that the captain was a *fin gourmet*; I was both. The captain was overjoyed at having placed his little adventuress so well.

In the evening, while we were supping *en tête-à-tête*, I thought I saw just a shade of sadness come over Henriette's pretty face: when I asked the reason, she replied in a voice which went straight to my heart—

Henriette fears for their mutual happiness.

'My friend, you are spending a great deal of money for me. I hope it is not with the intention of making me care more for you? I love you no better than I did yesterday, but I love you with all my heart; whatever you get for me beyond the strictly necessary only pleases me inasmuch as it proves you think of me, but if you are not very rich, think how bitterly I shall have to reproach myself by and by!'

'Ah, my angel!' I answered, 'let me for the moment believe that I am rich, and believe yourself that it is impossible for you to ruin me. Think of nothing, except that you will never leave me, promise me that.'

'I would that I could, but who can count on the future? Are you free? Are you dependent on any one?'

'I am free in every sense of the word.'

'I congratulate you, and I rejoice for you, but alas! I cannot say as much; I know that at any moment I may be discovered, and torn from your arms.'

'You frighten me! Do you think this misfortune will come to us here?'

'No, unless I am seen by some one who knows me.'

'Are you afraid of being overtaken by the officer whom you abandoned at Rome?'

'Not in the least, he is my father-in-law, and I am sure he has not taken any steps to find out where I am; he is only too thankful to be rid of me. I acted in the mad manner you know of because he was going to put me into a convent, which would not have been to my taste. As for the rest, dear friend, do not ask me to tell it you; my history is, and must remain, a mysterious one.'

'I will respect your desire for secrecy, my angel; only love me, and let me love you, without any fear of the future troubling our present happiness.'

We spent three months at Parma in perfect felicity. Henriette had an Italian master, and while she was having her lessons, I had a conversation with the dressmaker, which convinced me that she was indeed my blood relation. I

gossiped with her concerning politics. 'Do the Parmesans like their new Spanish ruler?'

'Everything is upside down,' she said. 'Listen: last night Harlequin at the play was making us all die of laughing. Well, but our new Duke Philip had to hide his merriment behind his hat, for they say that an infant of Spain must not laugh on pain of being dishonoured at Madrid. Why, for three months no one has known in Parma what o'clock it is! The sun has gone mad, and goes to bed every day at a different hour. That is the result of a government regulation! I wish we had our Farnese back again, who let us eat when we were hungry.'

I agreed with her that a new government did wrong to interfere with old established customs.

Henriette's master was an Italian, one Valentin de la Haye. He said he was an engineer and professor of mathematics. I shall have occasion to speak of him again in these memoirs.

'I could,' he said to me once, 'have taught madame heraldry, geography, history, and the globes, but I find that she knows all these perfectly; she is most highly educated.'

The fatal hunchback.

One day while I was looking over some books in the French library, I made the acquaintance of a little hunchbacked French gentleman, whose conversation I found exceedingly witty and amusing. I may here remark that it is rare to meet a stupid hunchback; my experience of them has been the same in every country in the world. This particular one, whose name was Dubois-Chateleraux, was, as I have said, no exception to the rule; he was an expert engraver, and director of the Mint to the Infant Duke of Parma. I passed an hour with him, and invited him to visit us at our hotel, and from that day forth he became a frequent guest at our table.

My happiness was too perfect to last long, but I was, in a manner, the instrument of my own undoing, for if I had not

introduced the fatal hunchback to Henriette, our lot might have been different.

I wanted to take Henriette to the opera, for music was her passion. Yet she was afraid to be seen by people, so I took an out of the way box on the second row; but pretty women are soon found out everywhere. She looked over the visitors' list, and said she knew no one in it. She wore no rouge, and we had no light in the box. Dubois came in, but I did not present him. All the same, he came to see us next day. She offered him coffee, and refrained from sugar, though she always took it, *à la Française*. This was to put Dubois on a wrong scent. She made as if she enjoyed the bitter cup, and I laughed. The hunchback was very curious, and earnestly begged Henriette to go to court. She said she was too delicate to stand the fatigue. Then he asked us to supper at his house by ourselves. But when we arrived there the room was full. Henriette bit her lip, but all went off well.

Henriette and I were less careful after this; she really only feared the nobility. One day, outside the gate of Colorno, we met the duke and his spouse coming in. Their carriage was followed by another containing Dubois and M. Dutillot, the French minister, and our horses fell down just as we passed them, and he came to the side of our carriage and asked if madame had been much frightened. She merely inclined her head and we passed on, but the evil was done.

Threatenings of danger.

Next day Dubois came from the French minister with a request to be presented to the lady.

'Does he know me?' she said.

'No, madame,' said the hunchback, 'he does not.'

'Then what would he think of me if I received him? I am not an adventuress, and I cannot have the honour.' Dubois was silent.

The Court was now at Colorno, and was about to give a superb fête; the gardens of the palace were to be splendidly

illuminated and opened to the public, so that every one might promenade in them. Dubois had talked so much of this fête that the desire seized us to be present with the rest of the world. He went with us, and we took rooms at the inn at Colorno for a week. Towards the evening of the first day, as we were strolling in the gardens, we met the royal party, followed by their suite.

Henriette is saluted by the Minister of France at Colorno.

Madame de France, according to the usage of the Court at Versailles, saluted Henriette without stopping as we passed. Henriette courtesied. My eyes fell on a handsome young cavalier who was walking by the side of Don Louis, and who looked fixedly at my companion. By and by we met this same cavalier a second time; he bowed to us, and going up to Dubois spoke to him in a low voice; they stepped to one side and remained talking together for at least a quarter of an hour. As we were leaving the gardens this gentleman came up again, and after politely begging my pardon, asked Henriette if he had not the honour of her acquaintance.

'I do not remember ever having had the pleasure of seeing you,' she answered coldly.

'Enough, madame, I entreat you to forgive me.'

Dubois told us the gentleman, whose name was d'Antoine,[1] was an intimate friend of the Infant Don Louis, and that thinking he knew Henriette, he had begged Dubois to present him. The hunchback replied that Henriette's name was d'Arci, and that if he knew her he had no need of an introduction. This answer seemed to disconcert him a little.

Henriette seemed uneasy, and I asked her if her failure to recognise d'Antoine was not a pretence.

[1] The D'Antoine family came originally from Florence and settled in Marseilles, 1530. For five generations they were *conseillers de la cour des comptes*. Some members of the family were councillors to the Parliament of Provence, and it was probably in this capacity that this particular member possessed such an influence over Henriette, admitting that she was a spy, as has been supposed. She was possibly a native of Provence, at any rate she married and lived there after her parting from Casanova at Geneva.

'By no means,' she answered; 'I know his name, which is that of an illustrious family in Provence, but I have never seen him before to-day.'

I could see she was anxious, and we gave up our rooms and returned to Parma the next day. In the afternoon my servant brought me a letter, saying that the courier who delivered it was waiting for an answer in the antechamber.

'That letter troubles me,' I said to Henriette. She took it and read it. It ran as follows, and was addressed to M. de Farussi:—

M. d'Antoine. 'Will you grant me a few moments' interview, either at your house or at my house, or wherever it may please you to appoint? I must speak to you on a subject which will interest you deeply.—I have the honour to remain, Yours, etc. etc., D'ANTOINE.'

I sent back word that I would be in the ducal gardens at a certain hour, and there I found M. d'Antoine awaiting me.

'I was obliged,' said he, 'to ask you to meet me, as I could think of no other safe way of transmitting this letter to Madame d'Arci; it is of the greatest importance, and I beg you to forgive me for handing it you sealed. If you are really her friend the contents of the letter will interest you both. May I count on your giving it to her?'

'Yes, sir,' I answered, 'on my honour.'

With a heart full of misgiving I repeated to Henriette what M. d'Antoine had said; at the same time I gave her the letter. She read it attentively, but with visible emotion.

'My friend,' she said, 'you must not be hurt if I do not show you this letter; the honour of two families is at stake. I shall have to receive this M. d'Antoine, who says he is a relation of mine.'

'This then,' cried I, 'is the beginning of the end! Why did I ever let that wretched Dubois into the house?'

'You must trust me!' said she. 'M. d'Antoine knows all my affairs; he is an honest man, he will do nothing except by my consent. Still, my dearest, circumstances may occur, we may be forced to consider a separation as a prudential measure, and you must strengthen me in my resolve, if necessary. But trust me to take care of the portion of happiness fate has given me in you—to do my best to make it last.'

Henriette speaks of their approaching separation.

I obeyed her, but from that moment a touch of sadness began to enter into the quality of our love, and melancholy is fatal to love. Often we sat opposite each other for hours without speaking, and could not conceal the sighs that would come.

I followed her instructions exactly, and when M. d'Antoine arrived next day, withdrew to my room on the pretence of letters to write; but my door remained open, and I could see them both reflected in the mirror over my chimney-piece. They were together for six hours, writing and talking, but as I could not hear what they said, I suffered tortures!

As soon as the terrible d'Antoine had gone my beloved Henriette came to me.

'My friend, can we leave here to-morrow?'

'Good heavens! yes, we can do whatever you say we must; but where shall I take you?'

'Where you will, but we shall have to return here in fifteen days. I have given my word to be here to receive the reply to a letter I have written. It is not that I wish to leave from fear of violence, but because I cannot endure the place now.'

Farewells.

On the morrow we left, and went to Milan, where we remained for a fortnight, seeing no one but a tailor and a dressmaker. I made Henriette a farewell gift, and one which she valued highly: it was a cloth pelisse lined with beautiful lynx fur. She never questioned me as to the state of my exchequer, and I did not let her know how near it was to depletion. We had lived so extravagantly, that when we

returned to Parma I had only three or four hundred sequins[1] left.

The day after we got back she had another long conference with d'Antoine, during which our separation was definitely arranged; then she came to me, and told me we must part. For a long time we wept in silence.

'When must I leave you, O too dearly beloved one?'

'You must leave me as soon as we get to Geneva, where you will take me at once. Can you find me a trustworthy waiting-maid to-morrow, with whom I can travel till I reach my destination.'

They stay at Geneva, and Henriette leaves him.

We left Parma that night, and in five days arrived at Geneva, where we stayed at the Hôtel des Balances. The following day Henriette gave me a letter for M. Tronchin, the Genevese banker, who, when he had read it, handed me a thousand louis d'or, at the same time telling me he would furnish Henriette with a carriage and two responsible men. Word came to us in the evening that carriage and servants would be ready next day.

It was a terrible moment; we were rigid with grief, overcome by the most profound sorrow.

I broke the silence by telling her I would take Tronchin's carriage, and she must have mine, which was far more commodious.

'I consent,' she said, 'it will be a consolation to me to have something which was once yours.'

Saying this she put into my pocket five rolls of a hundred louis each, nor would she let me utter one word of protest.

'When once necessity has forced us apart, my only friend,' said she, 'do not seek for news of me, and if by chance we should ever meet, pretend not to know me.'

She departed at break of day with her maid, a lackey, and a courier. I followed her with my eyes until I could

[1] About three hundred and twenty pounds English money. A sequin was worth twenty-two francs.

no longer see the carriage, then I flung myself on my bed and wept till sleep mercifully came to my worn-out body.

Next day the postillion returned, bringing me a letter which contained the one sad word 'Adieu.'

On a window pane in my room I found these words, traced with the point of a diamond— The writing on the pane.

'Thou wilt forget Henriette too.'

I received one more letter from her, while I was at Parma. It ran as follows :—

'I have been forced to leave you, my only friend, but do not add to your grief by thinking of mine. Let us not waste time deploring our fate, let us rather imagine we have had an agreeable dream, and surely never did dream so delicious last so long! We can boast that we were perfectly happy for three whole months; how many mortals can say as much? Let us not forget each other, though we must never meet again. I know it will please you to hear that I have put my affairs in order, and that for the rest of my life I shall be as happy as it is possible for me to be, away from you. I do not even know who you are, but there is no one in the world so familiar with your every thought as I am. I shall never have another lover in my life, but in this you must not imitate me. I hope that you will love again, and that your good genius will help you to find another Henriette. Adieu, adieu.'

I did see her again fifteen years after.

I should certainly have died of grief and inanition, for I could not touch food, had not Henriette's tutor, De la Haye, forced his way into my room. He was alarmed at my appearance, and with reason, and he succeeded in persuading me to take some broth. He spent the remainder of the evening with me, talking about the life to come, the vanity of this world, and the wickedness of shortening the life which God has allotted us. I listened without

replying, but I listened, and he was content with this small advantage.

From that moment he gained the most extraordinary ascendency over me; he never left me except for one hour in the morning, when he went to his devotions, and so strong was his influence that in a few weeks he had transformed me into almost as fervent a bigot as himself! I firmly believe that trouble and sickness had weakened my mind, and that I was incapable of reasoning. Be this as it may, in a few weeks I renounced all my former opinions, and firmly resolved to lead a totally different life.

He often spoke to me of a certain Baron Bavois of Lausanne, who was one of his converts, and to whom he was deeply attached.

This beloved proselyte, who was only twenty-five years old, had been abandoned by his family because of his change of religion: they were strict Calvinists. He had but seven sequins a month to live on, and without De la Haye's assistance would have been obliged to return to Lausanne. I was so touched by the virtue of this young martyr, who had given up everything to save his soul, that I wrote the most pathetic letters about my Tartufe and his pupil to my three good friends in Venice. I succeeded in communicating my enthusiasm to them, and M. de Bragadin bade me to return to Venice with De la Haye, who could live in his palace, saying at the same time that he would also undertake to find suitable employment for Bavois. This letter brought joy to the heart of De la Haye, and he then and there decided that he should go to Modena to meet his neophyte, and that I should return to Venice, where they would both join me as soon as possible.

My dear old friends received me with open arms. An apartment was arranged for De la Haye in the de Bragadin palace, and two nice rooms were taken for Bavois in the immediate neighbourhood; these preparations completed we waited impatiently the arrival of the two elect.

He leads an amended life for a time.

My friends were naturally vastly and agreeably surprised at the prodigious change which had taken place in me. Every day I went to Mass, often to other services. I was never seen at the Casinos, and only at such cafés as were frequented by pious and prudent personages. I paid all my debts without asking help from M. de Bragadin; in short, my whole mode of life was so edifying, they could only bless the mysterious ways of Providence.

At the beginning of May De la Haye arrived with the son of his soul, as he called him. The Baron Bavois was very different from what I had expected in character and appearance. He was of medium height, handsome, with beautiful teeth and long fair hair carefully dressed and highly scented. He spoke well and sensibly, and seemed to be of unalterable good humour. I took him to his rooms, where he embraced me, and thanked me for all my goodness to him. I asked him how he intended to pass his time at Venice until some occupation was found for him.

'I hope,' said he, 'that we shall amuse ourselves together, for I fancy we must have many tastes in common.'

It did not take me long to make his acquaintance, and find out what those said tastes were. In less than eight days I knew him thoroughly. He loved women, wine, and play: religion he had none, and as he was no hypocrite he made no secret of it.

'But how,' I asked him, 'being what you are, did you impose upon De la Haye?'

'God forbid that I should impose upon any one. De la Haye knows quite well what my opinions are, but he has fallen in love with my soul, and intends to save it *malgré moi*. He has certainly done me good, and I am grateful to him; for the rest he never worries me with doctrines or dissertations on my salvation, which I leave to God, who, like a kind, good Father, can manage that for me without his interference. We quite understand one another, and are very good friends.'

The Jesuit De la Haye.

The amusing part of it was, that while I was studying Bavois, he, unconsciously, was recalling me to my senses, and I was beginning to blush at having been the dupe of a Jesuit, who, in spite of his rôle of good Christian, was an out and out humbug. He cared but for his own ease, and having reached an age when dissipation had lost its charm, he fascinated my simple friends. He spoke to them but of God, angels, and eternal glory; they were convinced that he was the hermit who had taught me the cabbala, and were distressed because I forbade them through the oracle itself ever to speak of my science to De la Haye. In this I was well inspired, for in less than three weeks the wily fox had gained such an influence over them that he fancied he no longer needed my recommendations. He had frequent interviews with them from which I was excluded, and was presented to many families into which I was not admitted. He so far presumed on his importance as to actually reprimand me once for passing the night away from home. As soon as I was alone with him I told him that he must never permit himself such a liberty again, for I would punish him in a way he little expected. A few days after this the oracle warned my friends never to do anything which *Valentine* (the cabbalistic name of De la Haye) might suggest to them without first consulting me as to its expediency.

Bavois entered the service of the French ambassador, which put an end to our till then frequent intercourse. The patricians and their families are not allowed to have anything to do with the households of the ministers of other countries. At the beginning of the carnival of 1750, I won three thousand ducats in a lottery. Besides this I had been winning heavily all the winter, so I felt I could not choose a better moment for making my long-contemplated visit to France. My friend Baletti, the actor, had an engagement at the Italian theatre in Paris, where he was to dance, and play young lovers' parts. He left Venice before I did, but I was to join him at Reggio,

on the first of June. I was well equipped, with plenty of money, and my success in France only depended on my own conduct.

He becomes a member of the Order of Freemasons.

I arrived at Lyons without any striking adventures. There I made the acquaintance of M. de Rochebaron, and at his house I met a person who obtained for me the favour of admission into the Society of Freemasons. Some months later, in Paris, I became Companion, and then Master of the Order.

A young man of good family, who wishes to travel and know the world, especially what is called the 'great world,' and who would avoid ever being placed in a position of inferiority, should be initiated in Freemasonry, if only to know superficially what Freemasonry is. It is a benevolent institution, which in certain times and certain places has been made subversive to good order, and the pretext for criminal actions. But, good God! what system has not been abused and perverted? Every man of any importance, whose social existence is marked by merit, knowledge, or fortune, can be a mason, and many are. How can one suppose that such men meet to conspire and plot against the well-being of governments, especially as they are bound by oath not to discuss religion or politics? Yet sovereigns think they are justified in proscribing, and Popes in excommunicating, them!

Nothing pleased me so much in France as the fine roads, the cleanliness of the inns, the excellent beds, the good food, and the promptitude with which one was served. In my time no one in France knew how to overcharge; it was a paradise for foreigners. It is true that the most odious acts of despotism, such as *lettres de cachet*, were sometimes committed, but it was kingly despotism. France is now under the despotism of the people. Is she any happier, I wonder?

Silvia Baletti, the virtuous actress.

We left Lyons by diligence, and it took us eight days to get to Paris. Baletti, whose family lived there, had informed them of the probable time of our arrival. We dined at Fontainebleau, and when about two leagues from that city

we saw a berline coming towards us; it contained Baletti's mother, the celebrated Silvia.[1] She welcomed me warmly, and invited me to sup at her house that night; there I met her husband Mario. Mario and Silvia were the names Monsieur and Madame Baletti bore in their most celebrated rôles: it was the custom in France in those days to call Italian actors after their principal characters. 'Good morning, Mr. Harlequin; Good morning, Mr. Pantaloon'—that was the way to salute those who represented these personages.

Silvia was the idol of the French, and her talent ensured the success of the comedies which were written for her, particularly those of Marivaux. Without her these comedies would never have come down to posterity, and there has never been an actress capable of replacing her. No other actress united all the gifts which Silvia possessed, action, voice, wit, physiognomy, and knowledge of the human heart. Her life was blameless. She wished to have friends, not lovers. She was called *respectable*, a title which at that period would have rendered any other woman of her calling ridiculous.

[1] Gianetta Rosa Benozzi, better known as Silvia, was a popular actress, particularly esteemed by the Parisians. She was born at Toulouse about 1701; she married a second-rate actor, Baletti, by whom she had several children. She was distinguished among her contemporaries for her conjugal fidelity, and died universally regretted in 1758.

CHAPTER X

FIRST VISIT TO PARIS

LIKE all foreigners of my time I was anxious to see the Palais Royal. I visited it the first morning after my arrival. The rather fine garden of this famous place was surrounded with high houses, the paths were bordered with tall trees, people walked about by the fountains, or stopped at the stalls to buy scent, tooth-picks, playthings, or the latest pamphlet. Men and women were taking their breakfast on the pavement before the cafés; I seated myself at a small table and ordered chocolate, which was abominable, although served in a superb silver cup. I asked the waiter if the coffee was better?

The Palais Royal.

'Excellent,' he answered. 'I made it myself yesterday.'

I was not surprised after this to find it worse than the chocolate.

I asked if there was any news. He replied that the dauphiness had given birth to a son, whereupon an abbé seated at the next table to me said, 'Nonsense, it is a daughter.' A third person came up and said, 'I have just come from Versailles, and it is neither son nor daughter.' He then observed that I must be a foreigner. I was Italian, I said, and he began to talk about the court, the town, and the theatres, and wound up by offering to show me over Paris.

I thanked him, and getting up walked away. The abbé joined me, and told me the names of the well-known people we met. We left the Palais Royal by the big gate, and came upon a crowd of people round a shop which bore the sign of 'The Civet Cat.'

'What is going on here?' I asked.

'All these people are waiting to have their snuff-boxes filled up.'

'Is it the only tobacconist's in the city?'

'Certainly not, but since the Duchesse de Chartres made it the fashion, no one will buy snuff anywhere else. She stopped her carriage here two or three times last week; that was enough to make it the rage. The good people of Paris are like that, the gods whom they adore are novelty and fashion. But it was really a ruse on her part. She wanted to make the fortune of this young bride, who sells the tobacco, and in whom she is interested. The king was coming back from hunting the other day, and suddenly fancied a glass of ratafia. He stopped at a little *cabaret* near the Neuilly barrier, and having taken one glass, asked for a second and a third, declaring it was the best ratafia he had ever tasted. Now the most brilliant equipages succeed each other at the door of that poor *cabaret*; the owner has grown rich, and is building a splendid house in the place of the old one.'

'It seems to me,' said I, 'that this appreciation of the king's judgment is a proof of the nation's affection.'

'Foreigners might be tempted to think so, those among us who reflect know it is only glitter and gilt. When the king comes to Paris every one cries out *Vive le roi!* because some one, a police agent probably, gives the signal, but the king himself knows what such cries are worth. He is not at his ease in Paris, and is far happier at Versailles surrounded by his five-and-twenty thousand soldiers, who would protect him against the fury of those same people should they one day take it into their heads to cry out *Meure le roi!* The French have never loved their kings, except Saint Louis, Louis Douze, and the great and good Henri Quatre.'

Chatting in this way, we arrived at Silvia's door, where we separated. I found the amiable actress in the midst of friends. She presented me to every one in turn.

The name of Crébillon struck me.

He meets Crébillon.

'What, sir!' said I, 'I am indeed fortunate. For eight years you have charmed me, and I have longed to know you, will you deign to listen to me for a moment?' And I recited to him his beautiful tirade from *Zénobie et Radamiste*, which I had translated into Italian blank verse. He listened with evident delight, for he understood Italian as well as his own language, and when I had finished he recited the same scene in French. He was at this time eighty years old, a perfect Colossus, taller than I by three inches; he ate and drank well, talked amusingly, and was celebrated for his *bons mots*; yet he rarely went out, and received few people, as he was unhappy without his pipe, and the twenty odd cats who were his constant companions. Indeed he looked rather like a large cat himself, or a lion, which is much the same thing. He kept an old housekeeper, a cook, and a man-servant. His housekeeper managed everything for him, even his money, and gave him no account. He held the office of Royal Censor, and she read aloud the works submitted to him, stopping when she came to a passage which she thought merited his disapprobation; sometimes they disagreed on these passages, and then their disputes were most laughable. 'Come back next week, we have not had time to examine your manuscript,' I once heard her say to an author.

For a year I went to his house three times a week, and I learned from him all the French I know, but even he could not teach me to get rid of my Italian way of turning a phrase. I am quick enough to see this trick in others, but I cannot cure myself of it.

Crébillon had paid court to Louis Quinze for fifteen years, and he told me many a curious anecdote about him. He said the much talked of Siamese ambassadors were impostors subsidized by Madame de Maintenon; he also told me that he had never finished his tragedy of *Cromwell*, because the king had desired him not to employ his pen on such a scoundrel.

Catilina he considered the worst of his plays; he could only have made it good, he said, by showing Cæsar as a young man,

which would have been as ridiculous as to put Medea on the stage before she knew Jason. He praised Voltaire[1] highly, but accused him of plagiarism; he said he had stolen the entire scene of the Senate from him. Voltaire was, according to him, a born historian, but he falsified history by filling it with tales and anecdotes, so as to make it interesting. According to Crébillon, the man in the iron mask was a myth; he said that Louis Quatorze with his own lips had assured him of this.

Foreigners sometimes find Paris dull, for without letters and introductions one can go nowhere. I was fortunate in possessing good introductions, and in less than fifteen days I had the *entrée* to the most amusing society in the city.

Mademoiselle Le Fel and her children.

I was introduced to Mlle. Le Fel, the popular actress and member of the Royal Academy of Music. When I paid my respects to her at her house I found her playing with three charming children.

'I adore them,' she said.

'They deserve your affection,' said I, 'for they are very beautiful, though very much unlike each other.'

'No wonder,' she said calmly. 'The eldest is the son of the Duc d'Anneci, the second is the son of the Comte d'Egmont, and the third owes his being to M. de Maisonrouge, who has just married Mlle. de Romainville.'

'I beg your pardon,' said I; 'I thought that you were their mother.'

'So I am.'

I was vexed at having made such a stupid mistake. I was new to Paris and Parisian ways. But there was a great deal of this sort of thing in a certain class. Two great lords, Boufflers and Luxembourg, had changed wives in all good fellowship, and the little Boufflers were called Luxembourgs, and the little Luxembourgs bore the name of Boufflers. The descendants of these triplets are still so known in France.

[1] A deep and bitter rivalry existed between these two writers. Crébillon accused Voltaire of stealing his ideas; and as a matter of fact his tragedy *Les Enfants de Brutus* was written before Voltaire's *Brutus*.

People who knew the secret laughed, and the world went round the sun as usual.

I went to see *Les Fêtes Vénitiennes* at the opera. They had transposed the ducal palace and the clock tower, and this technical error made me laugh. But, being a Venetian, I laughed still more to see the Doge and twelve of the Council dance a *passecaille* in comic togas. Then came in a tall dancer, wearing a mask and an enormous black perruque which reached halfway down to his waist. My old friend who was with me murmured in tones of veneration, 'It is the inimitable Duprès.'[1] He advanced with measured steps to the middle of the stage, raised his arms, waved them about gracefully, moved his feet with lightness and precision, cut a few capers, pirouetted, and disappeared like a breath of wind. The whole performance lasted about a minute, and was greeted with a storm of applause. I asked my friend the reason of this enthusiasm.

'We applaud the grace of Duprès, and the divine harmony of his movements. He is over sixty, and those who saw him forty years ago say he is better now than then. What can you have more perfect than perfection? Duprès's dancing is perfect, he always does the same thing, and every day we think we see it for the first time.'

La Camargo.

Dupres was succeeded by the famous Camargo,[2] who was also, I was told, over sixty; yet they say Parisians are inconstant! She bounded on the stage like a fury, leaping from right to left, executing the most astounding movements. Of the two I preferred Duprès.

[1] Affectionately spoken of by his admirers as the great Duprès. He was one of the most celebrated dancers of the eighteenth century. He was very tall, handsome, and graceful. His most renowned pupil was Gaëtan Vestris.

[2] This is another of the many inaccuracies of Casanova, and is probably a piece of the spiteful gossip of the day. Marie Anne Cappi was born in Brussels in 1710, therefore at the time spoken of by Casanova she must have been under forty. Her father was a dancing and music master. Her grandfather had married into the noble Spanish family of Camargo, under which name she became renowned. She shone first at Brussels, then at Rouen, then at Paris. She left the stage in 1757, and died in 1777.

All the Italian actors then in Paris received me with kindness, and entertained me sumptuously. The richest of them was Pantaloon, who was known to be a usurer. He was the father of two charming daughters, Coraline and Camille. Coraline was the favourite of the Prince of Monaco, the son of the Duc de Valentinois; and Camille was in love with the Comte de Melfort,[1] the friend of the Duchesse de Chartres, since become Duchesse d'Orleans, by the death of her father-in-law.

Coraline was prettier than Camille, but not so lively. I paid my court to her at odd times, as became a man of no importance. Sometimes when I was there the prince would arrive. At first I used to withdraw discreetly when he appeared, but after a time I was asked to remain, and discovered that a prince is often much bored by a *tête-à-tête* with his mistress. We would sometimes sup together, and then his rôle was to listen, and mine to amuse.

The prince was always most amiable to me. One morning when I went in, he said: 'Ah! I am glad to see you, I promised the Duchesse de Rufé[2] to present you to her; come, we will go there at once.'

What, another duchess! I was in luck. We got into a *devil*, as the then fashionable carriage was called, and arrived at the duchess's house at eleven o'clock in the morning.

Reader, if I gave you a faithful picture of this terrible woman, you would be horrified. Imagine an old, old face, like a death's-head, plastered with rouge, set on a lean figure, all skin and bone, the result of the accumulation of sixty winters. The hideous hag bade me sit on the sofa beside her, and paid me the most outrageous compliments. The smell of musk nearly made me sick. The prince, pretending he had business elsewhere, left us alone, and then her attentions became so pressing, that, snatching up my hat, I incontinently fled, trembling lest the porter should refuse to open the door to me.

An exhibition was held at the Louvre in the month of

[1] Louis Hector Drummond of Melfort, generally supposed to be the lover of Madame de Chartres, was of English origin.

[2] Rufé is unknown as a title. There *was* a Duchesse de *Rufec*.

His brother the painter of battle-pieces.

August, and all the painters of the Royal Academy exposed their pictures; as I saw no battle-piece among them, I thought of sending for my brother. Parosselli, the only painter of battle-pieces France possessed, was dead, and I thought there was a chance for François.[1] He did not come, however, till the beginning of the following year.

I was wandering about the apartments at Fontainebleau one day, when I saw some ten or twelve women coming towards me. They walked so badly, leaning forward, as though at each step they must fall on their faces, that my curiosity was aroused. I asked who they were, and was told they were the queen's ladies-in-waiting, and that they walked in that manner because the heels of their shoes were six inches high. I followed them into a superb room, where several courtiers were assembled round an immense table, on which a place was laid for one person only. In a few minutes the Queen of France came in, very simply dressed, with no rouge on, her head covered with a great cap: she looked old and devout. She sat down to table, and two nuns presented to her a plate of fresh butter, for which she thanked them graciously. The courtiers ranged themselves in a semicircle ten steps away from the table, and I stood quietly among them. Her Majesty began to eat, keeping her eyes fixed on her plate; by and by, finding a dish to her taste, she asked for a second helping.

'M. de Löwendal!'[2] she said.

[1] The brother here alluded to is Francesco, better known as François Casanova, who obtained considerable renown as a painter. On his first visit to Paris he met with no recognition, but after studying with Dietrici in Dresden he returned to Paris to study under Parrocel, after which he was more successful. Madame Vanloo was exceedingly kind to him, and it was mainly owing to her that he obtained a footing. His pictures were of a certain merit, and sold quickly. The Prince de Condé purchased the principal ones, several of which eventually found their way into the Louvre. Catherine of Russia commissioned him to paint her representations of her victories over the Turks. He was very extravagant, and always in money difficulties. He died at Brühl in 1805 before finishing his last work, which was to represent the inauguration of the Hôtel des Invalides by Louis XIV.

[2] Ulric Frederick Woldemar, Comte de Löwendal, born at Hamburg, 1700. His grandfather was the natural son of Frederick III. of Denmark. He began

A superb-looking man advanced, and made a low bow.

'Madame?'

'I think that this is fricasseed chicken?'

'I also am of that opinion, madame.'

After this remark, made in all gravity, the marshal stepped backwards to his place, and the queen continued to eat in silence. Then she returned to her apartments. I thought that if that was a sample of her meals, I was thankful I was not her guest.

I was glad to have seen the famous victor of Berg-op-Zoom, but it pained me that a great man should be obliged to pronounce sentence on a fricasseed chicken, as if it had been a question of state.

He meets an old acquaintance at Fontainebleau.

One morning, when I was thus standing in the hedge of courtiers, I saw a Venetian acquaintance, Madame Querini. She was leaning on the arm of the Marquis of Saint Simon, first gentleman of the Prince of Condé's household.

'Madame Querini at Fontainebleau!' I said, surprised.

'You here, Casanova! One remembers Queen Elizabeth's saying, "The poor we have always with us!"'

Her insolence was repaid her in full. The king's remark about her, which she must have heard as he passed with Richelieu, was, 'We can do better than that here in the way of looks!'

Poor Juliette Querini! She very nearly got hold of Saint Simon, who admired her, but she deceived him with false references and he never forgave her.

About this time the dauphiness gave birth to the Duke of Burgundy, and the rejoicings which took place seem to me incredible, when I look back on them to-day and see what the

his career as a soldier at the age of thirteen, and distinguished himself in Sicily and in the service of the King of Poland. He then went to Russia, and fought against the Swedes in Finland. At the instigation of his friend, Maurice de Saxe, he accepted the grade of lieutenant-general in the French Army, was present at Fontenoy, and took the supposed impregnable town of Berg-op-Zoom. This valiant soldier, after gaining the admiration of the whole world by his brilliant feat of arms, died in 1755 of gangrene in the feet, from chilblains.

same nation has done with its king. The nation wishes to be free, and its ambition is a noble one, for man is not made to be a slave to the will of another man; but to what can this revolution tend, undertaken by such a frivolous, pleasure-seeking, excitable nation as the French? Time alone will show.

I had frequent occasion to see the king, sometimes on his way to or from Mass, sometimes in the corridors of one or other of his palaces. He had a fine head, and bore himself with dignity and grace. No painter has ever done justice to this magnificent head, or to its benevolent expression. The king's beauty and grace compelled admiration. When I first saw him I thought he was the very ideal of majesty, and I did not doubt but that Madame de Pompadour was really in love with him; perhaps I was mistaken. His haughtiness was unnatural, it had been instilled in him by education, and now he could not lay it aside. When an ambassador presented any one to him, he made not the slightest sign of recognition, and the person presented would withdraw feeling that it was probable the king had *seen him*, but that was all. He was exceedingly polite to women, even to his mistresses, in public, and would disgrace any one who was wanting in respect towards them. More strongly than any one else, he possessed that royal virtue, dissimulation. He could keep a secret faithfully, and was delighted when he thought he knew something that no one else knew. The Chevalier d'Eon [1] was an example of this, for the king alone knew, and always had known, that she was a woman: the whole quarrel which the pretended Chevalier

[1] For years this strange person excited the curiosity of the French and English Courts on account of the mystery of his sex. He had written several works on politics and finance which gained him the goodwill of the Prince de Conti, who sent him on a mission to Russia. He was then dressed as a woman, and became reader to the Empress Elizabeth. He returned to France in the character of a captain of dragoons, and served with distinction in several actions. He was then appointed secretary to the Duc de Nivernois, ambassador to London in 1762, but offended the powers of the Foreign Office, who accused him of being a spy, and insisted on his withdrawal. He was replaced by the Comte de Guerchy, his avowed enemy, and was arrested on suspicion of poisoning him. The king found him guilty, and exiled him, though he granted him a

had with the Foreign Office was a comedy, which the King encouraged for his own amusement. Louis Quinze was a good man, and would have been a good king, had he not been surrounded by flatterers; as it was, he grew to consider himself a kind of god, with the saddest results for himself and his people.

Paris acquaintances.

I met at the Duchesse de Fulvie's Mlle. Gaussin, who was generally called Lolotte.[1] She was the mistress of Lord Albemarle, the English ambassador, a noble, generous, and learned man. It was he who begged his mistress not to praise the beauty of the stars, as it was impossible for him to give her one. If Lord Albemarle had been ambassador at the time of the rupture between France and England, he would have arranged matters so that the unfortunate war which lost Canada to France would not have taken place.

As for his mistress, Lolotte, there was only one opinion about her, and that was favourable. The first houses in France were open to her. She was received on a footing of equality by the greatest ladies in the land. She had left her mother, at the age of thirteen, to live with Lord Albemarle; she had children by him, whom he recognised as his, and she died Countess d'Erouville.

I also made the acquaintance of a Venetian lady, widow of the English knight, Sir Thomas Winne. She had just returned from London, where she had been to assure the inheritage of her children, who would have lost their rights had they not declared themselves to be of the Anglican religion. She was

pension. On the accession of Louis XVI., d'Eon returned to France, and presented himself at Versailles in the uniform of an officer of dragoons. The queen, however, requested him to dress as a woman, and from that time he always signed himself '*la chevalière*.' In 1784 he went back to London. George III. granted him a pension, which seems to lend colour to the allegation that he served both countries impartially. Several portraits of him are extant, some representing him as a comely young woman in cap and furbelows, others as a martial youth in armour. It was only at his death the secret of his sex was discovered. He was a man.

[1] Walpole says that 'she sold him to the French Court.' Bauchamont says that 'she earned thereby a pension of 12,000 francs.'

returning to Venice with her eldest daughter, a lovely girl of twelve, who afterwards married Comte de Rosenburg, ambassador to Venice from the court of Maria Theresa. This lady still lives at Venice, and is renowned for her social virtues.

He meets d'Alembert in Paris.

I met d'Alembert at Madame de Graffigny's.[1] The great philosopher's social secret was never to appear more learned than the society in which he found himself, and of making those he talked with seem as witty as himself. He was the most modest man I ever knew. Old M. de Fontenelle, whom I also knew, passed for having been the lover of Madame de Tencin; scandal said that d'Alembert was the result of their intimacy, and that le Rond [2] was only his foster father. On the occasion of my second visit to Paris, I looked forward to visiting de Fontenelle, but he died fifteen days after my arrival, in the beginning of the year 1757. On my third visit I was counting on the pleasure of seeing d'Alembert, but he also died fifteen days after my arrival, in 1783. To-day I feel that I have seen Paris and France for the last time. The popular effervescence there has disgusted me, and I am too old to hope to see it calm down.

One morning I was told that the room next to mine had been taken by two young Italians, brother and sister, newly arrived in Paris, very handsome, but badly equipped, and apparently poor. I thought, being a fellow-countryman, I would see if I could be of any use to them, so I went to their door and knocked. A youth of about eighteen appeared in answer to my summons.

[1] Madame de Graffigny, authoress of *Lettres d'une Péruvienne.*

[2] As regards the parentage of d'Alembert, Casanova is curiously confused, and with his usual fervent imagination creates a father for him out of the place where he was found, and from which he took his surname (which he afterwards changed to d'Alembert), the steps of the Chapel of St. Jean le Rond near Notre Dame. He was a son of a commissioner of artillery named Destouches and the nun Tencin. It was his mother who abandoned him, for which he never forgave her, and always considered the good woman who picked him up as his real parent. She was the wife of a glazier, and Destouches, who was not so hard-hearted as Madame de Tencin, made his son a good allowance, which enabled him to be decently educated.

'I come,' said I, 'in the quality of neighbour and compatriot to offer you my services.'

There was a mattress on the floor, on which probably the youth slept, and at the end of the room a curtained alcove, in which I imagined his sister to be. A voice from behind the curtain replied to my repeated excuses, that if I would allow her to dress she would return my visit in my room. A quarter of an hour after a very beautiful girl appeared, and made her explanations in a naïve and dignified manner.

'I must find a cheaper lodging,' she said, 'for I have only six francs left.'

I asked her what letters of recommendation she had. She showed me seven or eight certificates of morality and indigence, and a passport.

'Do you know any one in Paris, any influential person?'

'No one. You are the first person I have spoken to in France.'

'Give me your papers, I will see what I can do. In the meantime do me the favour of borrowing these two louis.'

Mademoiselle Vesian.

Mlle. Vesian was a brunette, about sixteen years old; she had beautiful eyes, a beautiful figure, a fresh complexion, and withal an air of simplicity and dignity which inspired respect. I thought it my duty to give her some advice, telling her to be on her guard against persons who would assuredly try to insinuate themselves in her good graces. The following day, she and her brother dined with me, and after dinner I took her to the Italian theatre. As I was engaged to supper with Silvia, I was forced to leave them after the play, but we arranged to meet at my rooms at eleven o'clock. When I got home, I saw an elegant carriage waiting at the door. I asked who it belonged to. I was told it belonged to a young man of fashion who had supped with Mlle. Vesian.

'She has lost no time,' I thought, and retired, somewhat dispiritedly, to bed.

The next morning the brother came to me and told me that

he had been turned out of his sister's room, for the young lord who had supped with her on the night before was paying her a visit.

'Quite so!' I said.

'He is rich and handsome,' he said. 'He wants to take us to Versailles, and he has promised to find me employment.'

Later in the day I received a note from the sister, returning me the money I had lent her, and telling me that the Comte de Narbonne was interested in her, and would see that she and her brother were well provided for.

'A second Lucy of Paséan,' I said to myself. 'I need not have been so careful; and I foresee this count won't make her happy.'

I asked about Narbonne at the theatre where I went, and heard he was a libertine, heavily in debt. I tried to make his acquaintance, but failed, and in a week or so was beginning to forget her, when a message came to me asking me to go to her at once. I found her much cast down; she had evidently been weeping.

He becomes her friend and adviser.

'Oh, why did I not rely upon you!' she exclaimed. 'Had I only consulted you I should not now be in this plight! After you left me at the theatre that night, a handsome young man came and sat beside me; he asked me a few questions, and I told him what I told you. I said you had promised to try and help us; he answered that *he* had no need to *try*, he could help us at once. I believed him, I trusted him, and the villain has deceived me. He told me he would take me to the house of a respectable woman at Versailles, but that it would be better for my brother to remain in Paris. He gave me two louis and a gold watch; I thought I could accept them as he showed so much interest in me, but I noticed that the woman to whose house he took me did not seem to be as respectable as he had given me to understand she was. I spent a week there, without anything being definitely arranged. He came to see me whenever he chose, and whenever I suggested a permanent arrangement he replied by saying, "To-morrow, to-morrow."

Finally, this morning the woman told me he had gone to the country, and that a *fiacre* would take me back to Paris, where he would see me on his return. She added that I must return her the watch, as the Comte de Narbonne had forgotten to pay for it. I returned it without a word, and making a packet of my belongings, I left the house.'

Narbonne's infamous behaviour made me so angry that, had I known where to find him, I would have gone there and then and punished him. I consoled the poor girl as well as I could, taking care not to ask any details as to what had taken place between them. I could guess that only too well. I promised to be her friend, and she suddenly asked me if I had anything particular to do that day.

'No, my dear,' I said, divining her intention. 'Where is your brother?'

'What does he matter?'

'He matters very much. Think, my dear Vesian! You want to make Narbonne ashamed of his conduct: if he knew that you went off, the very day he dismissed you, with another man he would justify his conduct. No, we will take your brother, and go and dine in the country at the Gros Cailloux. Here comes Baletti, we will take him too.'

After the repast, Baletti asked Mlle. Vesian if she had any talent for dancing, as he might perhaps persuade Lani to engage her in the *corps de ballet*. There seemed to be no other occupation open to her, unless she would go as a *femme de chambre* to some great lady.

'It will not be long before I see you covered with diamonds,' he hinted.

'He thinks I shall pick up some great lord,' she said, after he had left. 'May be, but I shall take care to choose the very oldest lord I can find.'

'Bravo, my dear; only take care you don't make the old lord jealous.'

It was decided at once, and the next day she began her lessons with Baletti. She was admitted to the opera, but only

remained there a few months. A wealthy man, the Comte de Tressan, or Tréan, became interested in her, and took her away from the theatre. She remained with him until his death, and I hear she is now living in Paris. I often met her, covered with diamonds and driving in a magnificent carriage, and if I have permitted myself to relate her somewhat insignificant history, it was with a view of showing how quickly in those days a pretty girl could turn her beauty to account.

The story of O-Morphi.

Another young woman whose story is interesting, and edifying at the same time, was Hélène O-Morphi,[1] sister of the Flemish actress of that name. When I first knew her she was an untidy little wretch, about thirteen, who ran errands and waited on her sister, and slept in a cupboard on a straw mattress covered with an old curtain. One day when waiting the return of her sister I amused myself talking to the child, and I then noticed for the first time that beneath the rags and the dirt and the tangled hair was the most beautiful face

[1] O'Morphi was a low-class actress, daughter of a secondhand-clothes' merchant and cobbler, of Irish extraction, as her name indicates. There were five sisters, who all led doubtful lives. Three of them succeeded each other in the king's affections. The third, Louise, not *Hélène*, was brought to the king's notice by Richelieu or St. Quintin, or it may have been Boucher, to whom she sat as a model, and who was *perhaps* the artist alluded to in the text. Louis was very devoted to her, and loaded her with jewels. A child was born in 1754, after which Louise, or, as she was generally called, 'la Morphise,' made her appearance in public. Aided by d'Argenson and the Maréchale d'Estrées, she tried to supplant the Pompadour, and spoke most imprudently of her to the king, who, divining that she had been prompted, asked who her instigators were. D'Estrées was exiled. It is possible that Madame de Valentinois was in the conspiracy. A husband was found for la Morphise in the person of Vincent de Beaufranchet d'Ayat. The king gave her a *dot* of 200,000 francs and a magnificent trousseau. In the *acte de mariage*, November 1755, the bride is described as Louise Morphy or Boisfailly, daughter of Lady Marguerite Igny, and *Messire* Daniel Morphy or Boisfailly, Irish gentleman. Madame de Beaufranchet had two children by her husband, who was killed in action. She afterwards married M. le Normand, a relation of the Pompadour's husband. During the Reign of Terror la Morphise was arrested and confined in Sainte Pélagie. On her release she married for the third time. The happy man was Louis Philip Dumont, deputy of Calvados, who was thirty-three and she sixty. She was divorced shortly afterwards, and died in 1815.

and body imaginable. She was fair, with perfect features and large blue eyes. I was so impressed with her appearance that I commissioned a German artist of my acquaintance to paint her portrait. The picture was charming; I wrote under it *O-Morphi*, a word not very musical, but none the less Greek, and signifying beautiful. Who can divine the secret ways of fate? I lent this portrait to a friend, who took it to Versailles; there it was seen by M. de Saint-Quintin, who showed it to His Most Christian Majesty. The king was, as every one knows, a connoisseur. He was so pleased with the portrait that he expressed a desire to compare it with the original. The complaisant Saint-Quintin undertook to arrange the meeting.

A proposition was made to the elder sister, who immediately set to work to wash and dress Hélène. Two or three days later they started for Versailles, where they were received by a valet, who conducted them to a small pavilion in the park. After waiting some time, the king appeared alone and unattended. He asked the little O-Morphi if she was Greek, drew the portrait from his pocket, and declared he was more than satisfied with the resemblance.

Hélène, who was watching his face attentively, began to smile. Thereupon Louis seated her on his knee, and asked: 'What are you laughing at, my child?'

'Because you are as like a six-franc piece as two drops of water.'

The naïveté of this remark amused the king, and he asked her if she would care to remain at Versailles.

'If my sister will let me.'

The good sister hastened to express her loyal acquiescence, and by and by Saint-Quintin appeared, and after giving the actress a thousand louis for herself, and fifty for the portrait-painter, took the little one away.

The young O-Morphi pleased the king as much with her simplicity and pretty ways as with her beauty. He placed her in the Parc-aux-Cerfs, where no one but a few privileged court

ladies were allowed to enter. At the end of a year Hélène presented him with a son.[1] What became of him I know not, he went the way of so many others; for as long as Queen Marie lived no one knew the fate of the natural children of Louis Quinze.

Hélène remained in the Parc-aux-Cerfs about three years, when she fell into disgrace owing to the spite of Madame de Valentinois, the sister-in-law of the Prince of Monaco. This lady told her that if she wanted to make the king laugh she must ask him how he treated his old wife. Too simple to see the trap, poor Hélène fell into it, and put this impertinent question to her royal lover, who glared at her angrily, and said, 'Who told you to ask me that?'

Her disgrace.

Poor O-Morphi flung herself at his feet and told him the whole truth. He left the room, and never saw her again. He gave her a dowry of a hundred thousand francs, and she married a Breton officer. Madame de Valentinois was dismissed from court, and not allowed to reappear for two years. Louis Quinze knew how deeply he wronged his wife, but he respected her as a queen, and woe to any one who was rude towards her.

About this time the Comte de Melfort, who was colonel of the Orleans regiment, asked me, through his mistress Camille, to answer two questions by means of my cabbalistic combination. I wrote out two very obscure answers, which might be taken to mean anything, sealed them up, and gave them to Camille.

The complexion of the Duchesse de Chartres.

Next day she begged me to accompany her to a place she was forbidden to name. The place turned out to be the Palais Royal. I was conducted up a small staircase to the private apartments of the Duchesse de Chartres. By and by the duchesse herself came in and thanked me most graciously for the answers I had furnished to her questions. She said she had many more things to consult the oracle about. I told her if she would write them down, and leave me alone, in three

[1] The child born of this *liaison* was a daughter, not a son, and married the Marquis de la Tour de Pin de la Charche.

hours the replies would be ready. She made me pledge my word of honour not to speak of the matter to living soul, told me to hand the replies only to herself or Madame de Polignac, and then left me. At the appointed time Madame de Polignac came, and I handed her a sealed packet.

The Duchesse de Chartres, daughter of the Prince de Conti, was then twenty-six years old. She was lively and gay, renowned for her wit and love of pleasure. 'A short life and a merry one' were words always on her lips. She was good, generous, patient, and tolerant of the failings of others. She was pretty, but held herself badly, and only laughed when Marcel, the dancing-master, tried to correct her. She danced with her head hanging down and her toes turned in. She was charming; but unfortunately her face was covered with blotches, the result of a disease of the blood that killed her.

All the questions she had asked me referred to her love affairs, and her complexion, which she was most anxious to cure.

I returned to the Palais Royal next day, and saw the charming princess again. In answering her first question, I had made a shot in the dark. As for the second, I had suffered from much the same indisposition myself, and I was doctor enough to know that one must not attempt to cure a cutaneous malady with strong drugs.

I told her that in a week, if she would follow my instructions, the marks would disappear, and that if she continued the same régime for a year, she would be radically cured.

She was to take medicine every day, diet herself, leave off all cosmetics, and wash her face morning and night with a decoction of plantain leaves.

Eight days later I met her walking in the Palais Royal gardens; her skin was quite smooth and free from blemish. She honoured me with a most gracious smile. But the next day the marks reappeared, and I was sent for in haste. An old *valet de chambre* took me into her boudoir, opening from a dressing-room, in which was a bath. I told her that according

to the oracle, she had broken the prescribed rule; and she owned to have taken some ham and some liqueur.

One of her women whispered something into her ear, and she turned to me saying: 'You will perhaps not mind seeing one of my friends here, whose discretion can be relied on?'

Enter the Comte de Melfort.

A man came in, whom I at first took for a groom. It was the Comte de Melfort. She showed him the answers she had received, and as he appeared sceptical, she declared he must be convinced.

Drawing a small ivory box from her pocket. 'Tell me,' she said, 'why this pomade no longer produces any effect?'

She drew up the chart of figures as I directed, and added and subtracted, obtaining results that were, however, only arbitrarily suggested by me. Then I left her, while she translated the numbers into letters, and when I came in—'Ah, sir, what a prescription!' she cried.

'What is it?'

'*It can only act on the skin of a woman who has never borne a child* was the answer.'

'What!' cried the count, 'is that the pomade the Abbé des Brosses gave you five years ago?'

'Precisely.'

'It is astounding!'

De Melfort and I left the palace together, and in the garden he explained the mystery of the pomade. The poor duchess's face was so disfigured, that her husband neglected her cruelly. She appealed to the Abbé des Brosses, who gave her some ointment which, for the time being, completely cured her. The Duc de Chartres saw her in her box at the theatre, and was so charmed with her smooth white face, that he at once made his peace with her. Nine months after, their child, the Duc de Montpensier, was born. When the count had finished his story, he handed me a tortoise-shell box containing the portrait of the duchess, and a rouleau of a hundred louis, to be spent in framing the miniature to my taste. I never had the portrait mounted, for I always wanted the money for something else!

The intrigue of Richelieu and La Popelinière.

The duchess often sent for me, but there was no longer any question of a cure, for she had not the patience to follow my régime. I would stay sometimes five or six hours with her, now in one corner of the palace, now in another. She would have dinner and supper served to me by the good old *valet de chambre*, who never opened his lips. I loved her, but I was too proud to let her know it. One day she asked if by means of the cabbala I could cure Madame de Popelinière,[1] who suffered from a cancer in the breast.

I answered at random, that the cancer was imaginary, and that the lady was perfectly well.

'But,' she exclaimed, 'all Paris knows that she consults doctor after doctor. Still I believe what you say.'

She told the Duc de Richelieu that she was sure Madame de Popelinière was quite well. The duke contradicted her, whereupon she offered to bet a hundred thousand francs, but he would not accept the wager.

A few days after, she told me with a triumphant air that M. de Richelieu had owned the pretended cancer was only a *ruse* to excite the pity of M. de la Popelinière, and make him forgive his wife and take her back. The maréchal had added that he would gladly pay the hundred thousand francs if Madame de Chartres would tell him how she had guessed the secret.

'If you care to earn the money,' she said, 'I will tell him.'

I was afraid of being found out, for I knew how clever M. de Richelieu was, and I thought it wiser to forgo the money. Besides, his relations with La Popelinière were

[1] Popelinière, a flourishing financier, was inveigled into a marriage with Mimi Dancourt, daughter of the comic author, after having lived twelve years with her. She was clever and beautiful, and drew the most distinguished people to her house. She was led away by the fascinations of the Duc de Richelieu: a scandal ensued, which set all Paris laughing, for the injured husband discovered a large hole in the wall of his wife's boudoir, through which her lover, who had *incognito* hired the apartment next door, had easy access to his mistress. Popelinière was glad of any excuse to break the tie. After a short while her lover tired of her, and she died neglected and miserable, of the disease which Casanova refused to believe in.

no secret. Madame de Chartres had herself composed some charming lampoons on the affair.

My brother François had now painted several fine pictures, and wanted to obtain the patronage of M. de Marigny,[1] so one morning we went to this gentleman's levée at his apartments in the Louvre. Taking with us a large battle-piece, we deposited it in a room near his, and sat down to wait. The first person who passed through the room stopped in front of the picture, looked at it, declared it to be badly painted, and walked on. Soon two more people arrived. They began to laugh, and one of them said, 'That must be the work of a schoolboy.' By and by the room filled with people, who all cut jokes at the expense of the picture. My poor brother said never a word, but I saw he was in agonies. After a while he jumped up, declaring he could bear it no longer, and we returned home, ordering our servant to fetch the picture. When he came back, my brother fell on the unlucky canvas and slashed it to pieces with his sword. He determined to leave Paris at once and go somewhere where he could study the art he loved. We decided on Dresden, and in mid-August we left Paris together. We passed by Metz, Mayence, and Frankfort, and arrived at Dresden by the end of the month. My mother, who was there, received us with joy, and declared that both of us did her credit.

He goes to Dresden.

My life at Dresden[2] was very peaceful. To please my mother

[1] Marquis de Marigny, brother of Madame de Pompadour, born in 1727, succeeded Lenormand de Tournhem as *directeur et ordonnateur général des bâtiments du Roi.* He devoted much of his energy to finishing and clearing the Louvre, which, neglected by Louis XIV. since 1680, had been invaded by a crowd of people who had obtained concessions of lodgings, and had established divisions and partitions of every description, even in the principal apartments. Outside and in the courtyard, sheds and outhouses had been built on to the walls. The Louvre was merely a ruin when Marigny undertook its restoration, and received permission to drive out these parasites. He was only able to execute part of his plan, as he could not obtain money even to roof in his constructions.

[2] It was probably on the occasion of this visit that the incident alluded to by the Prince de Ligne occurred, when Casanova, not appreciating his mother's talent as an actress, insisted on her abandoning the stage.

I wrote a tragi-comic play, in which were two harlequins. It was a parody on Racine's *Les Frères Ennemis.* The king was highly amused at it, and made me a superb present. He was a magnificently prodigal monarch, and was ably seconded in all his extravagances by the Comte de Brühl. I left Dresden some short time after the success of my piece. My mother, brother, and sister remained behind. The latter was married to Pierre Auguste, harpsichord master to the Court: he died, leaving a widow and numerous family in affluent circumstances, some two years before I began these Memoirs.

CHAPTER XI

MADEMOISELLE C. C.

From Dresden I went to Austria, and found myself in Vienna, for the first time in my life. I was short of money, and had but one letter of recommendation, which was to the illustrious Abbé Métastasio. I presented this letter the day after my arrival. The poet struck me as being even more erudite than his works had led me to imagine. He was so modest that at first I almost thought his modesty assumed, but I soon perceived it to be real, for when he recited some of his productions he pointed out their beauties as simply as he pointed out their defects. He repeated some stanzas he had made on the death of his tutor Gravino, which have never been published. When he had finished, his eyes were full of tears, and he said with touching naïveté: 'Tell me truly, is it possible to write better than that?'

I asked him if he wrote with ease, and he showed me five or six pages full of corrections and erasures, containing in all fourteen finished verses. He said he could never do more than that in one day.

One day when I was in the Imperial library I met De la Haye, and must own that I was pleased to see him. He was tutor to a young Venetian, and he told me that his friend Bavois was already lieutenant-colonel of a Venetian regiment. I was glad that both my old friend and my old enemy should be well provided for.

Vienna is a beautiful city: in my day, a rich city, and people lived luxuriously, but the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of

His opinion of the paternal legislation of the Empress Maria Theresa.

the empress made life difficult, especially for foreigners. A legion of vile spies, decorated with the high-sounding title of 'Commissioners of Chastity,' overran the place; for the sovereign, who lacked the sublime virtue of tolerance, had taken the register of the seven deadly sins into her own hand, and had decided that six of them could be overlooked, but that the seventh was unforgivable. 'One can,' said she, 'pardon pride, for it is nearly allied to dignity. Avarice is frightful, but closely resembles economy. Anger re-acts on those who give way to it, thus bringing its own punishment. Gluttony is but daintiness pushed to excess. Envy is a low passion which is never acknowledged. Sloth finds its penalty in *ennui*. But incontinence is a thing apart, a pure heart cannot tolerate it, and I declare open war on it. I know that at Rome much indulgence is shown to this crime, and that every cardinal has his mistress, but at Rome concessions are made to the climate which I have no need to make here, where the bottle and the pipe are the principal pleasures. As soon as I know that a woman is unfaithful to her husband I shall shut her up, whether the husband likes it or not. He should have looked after her better.'

Such was the reasoning of Maria Theresa, and in spite of the high morality which inspired it, it led to many abuses.

If a girl wished to pass unmolested while walking in the street by herself, she must keep her eyes bent down, and carry her rosary in her hand. Then she might possibly be going to church, so that if a commissioner should be so foolish as to arrest her, in that case the commissioner would have been hanged!

The Emperor Francis was handsome, and exceedingly deferential to his wife. The empress, who always called him 'Master,' pretended not to observe his gallantries. She did not want any one to know that her husband was unfaithful to her. Her daughters, with the exception of the eldest, were beautiful; of her sons, I only knew the Crown Prince, and I thought he looked strangely sad.

The Abbé Grosse-tête asked me once what I read in the face of this prince, and I replied, 'Arrogance and suicide.'

I was not far wrong, for Joseph the Second did kill himself, though by accident, and it was his vanity and self-sufficiency which prevented him from realising what he was doing.

He arrives in Venice for the Feast of the Ascension.

My stay in Vienna was unmarked by any exciting incident, and I left the city without regret. A desire to see my country and my old friends had taken hold of me. Four days after leaving Vienna I arrived at Trieste, where I took ship for Venice. I arrived there two days before the Feast of the Ascension, and after three years' absence had the good luck to find my kind patron, M. de Bragadin, in fair health and spirits, as were also his inseparable friends, Dandolo and Barbaro. They were not less pleased to see me than I was to see them, and to know that after my peregrinations I had returned, sound in body and in pocket.

The circumstances under which I returned this time were singularly felicitous. I had gained experience of men and manners. I was acquainted with the laws of honour and politeness. I felt that I was superior to my surroundings. I was longing to take up again my old life, but I was at the same time determined to behave with greater moderation and reserve.

I was pleased to find, on entering my rooms, that everything had been preserved in *statu quo*: dust an inch thick lay on my papers, and proved that no one had meddled with them.

A few days after my home-coming the annual fête occurred when the Doge espouses the Adriatic, beautiful widow of so many husbands, but as youthful now as on her first bridal morn. M. de Bragadin, who loved above all a quiet life, was accustomed to spend these fête-days at Padua, so as to escape the noise and tumult attendant on them. I accompanied him, and on the Saturday following, having dined with him, and affectionately taken leave of him, I got into a postchaise to return to Venice. Had I left Padua two minutes earlier or later, much that happened afterwards would have been avoided,

and my destiny, if it be true that destiny depends on trivial combinations, would have been different. The reader will see for himself. At Oriago I met a *cabriolet*, the two horses of which were coming along at a quick trot. In the *cabriolet* were seated a very pretty woman, and a man in a German officer's uniform.

He meets P. C.

A few paces from me, the *cabriolet* turned over; the woman was thrown violently to the ground, and, as they were on the banks of the Brenta at the moment of the accident, they were in danger of rolling into the river. I jumped out of my chaise and ran to their assistance. She was most profuse in her thanks, and, while her postillion and mine were raising the carriage, called me her saviour and her guardian angel. The damage repaired, they continued their route towards Padua, and I, mine towards Venice.

The next day I started, masked, to follow the *Bucentaur*, which was to be towed to the Lido for the imposing and somewhat ridiculous ceremony. This function, the marriage of the Doge and the sea, takes place at the risk of the Admiral of the Arsenal, who stakes his own head that the weather will be fine. The slightest contrary wind would upset the vessel and drown the Doge, with all the serene signors, the ambassadors, and the papal nuncio; furthermore, this tragic accident would make all Europe laugh and say that for once the Doge of Venice had really consummated his marriage!

I was taking my coffee, my mask drawn aside for the moment, in the Square of San Marco, when a masked woman touched me on the shoulder with her fan. I did not pay much heed to her, but by and by she touched me again. As I was walking along the quay of the Sepulchre I saw the same woman attentively staring at the picture of a monster which was being exhibited for ten sols. I approached her and asked her why she had struck me.

'I punished you,' she said, 'for not recognising me, after having saved my life.'

I guessed that this must be the beauty I had rescued on the

banks of the Brenta, and after the usual compliments I asked if she was going to follow the *Bucentaur*. He follows the *Bucentaur*.

'I would,' she replied, 'if I had a gondola.'

I offered her mine, which was very large; and after having consulted her companion, who was also masked, she accepted. I begged them to unmask, but they said they had reasons for wishing to remain unrecognised. I asked if they belonged to any of the foreign embassies, as in that case I should be forced to deprive myself of the pleasure of their company;[1] but they assured me they were both Venetians.

I made love to the lady, but, without precisely repelling me, she hinted that we should first know each other better. I thought her prettier than ever, and offered to be her cavalier all through the carnival if she thought good. After the ceremony I returned with them to their hotel, where we dined together. I invited them to pass the evening with me at the opera.

The next day the officer paid me a visit, and after talking of the rain and the fine weather, I begged him to tell me to whom it was that I had the pleasure of speaking.

This is the story he related to me; (he spoke like an educated man, but I noticed that he did not look me frankly in the face):— The story of C. C.'s brother.

'My name is P. C. My father is rich, and well known on the Bourse, but we have quarrelled. I live on the Quay of St. Mark. The lady whom you saw with me belongs to the family of O.; she is the wife of the well-known broker, C. She has quarrelled with her husband because of me, as I have quarrelled with my father because of her. I wear this uniform because I have a commission in the Austrian service, but at this moment I am engaged in buying cattle for the Venetians. I get the beasts from Hungary and Syria.

[1] It was contrary to Venetian laws for a nobleman to be seen abroad, or in any public place, with the members of foreign embassies, and Casanova, though not noble, was using the gondola, with the servants and liveries, of M. de Bragadin.

This enterprise brings me in a profit of ten thousand florins a year; but just at this moment I am in difficulties because of the fraudulent bankruptcy of one of my customers, and because of my extraordinary expenses. I heard a great deal about you four years ago, and I wanted then to make your acquaintance, but I really think it was Heaven that sent you to me yesterday. If you will help me you will run no risk. Will you back these three bills of exchange for me? I will give you three others which will be met before the first ones fall due. Furthermore, I will arrange that all the cattle landed during the year shall be shipped in your name, so that you can control the sale of them.'

I did not hesitate to tell him that I could not entertain the idea for a single moment. He tried to persuade me, but seeing that I was immovable he left me, saying he hoped we should meet again soon.

Had I been wise I should have dropped his acquaintance, for he was trying to dupe me; but considering that a mere visit of ceremony could not compromise me, I went to see him the following evening.

He tried once more to induce me to back the three bills, and I was about to take my leave disgusted, when he begged to be allowed to present me to his mother and sister.

The mother was an ingenuous and respectable-looking person, but the daughter was a perfect beauty. I was dazzled, and in half an hour completely captivated; her candour, her ingenuousness, her noble sentiments, her vivacity, all helped to make me her slave, for the union of beauty, intelligence, and innocence has always swayed me.

The daily life of Mademoiselle C. C.

Mademoiselle C. C. never went out without her mother. She only read the books her father chose for her, and among them were no romances. She knew nothing of Venetian society, for they received no one at their house. She questioned me closely about the places I had been to, and the people I had met. It was a pleasure to me to answer, but I paid her no compliments. I did not tell her she was beautiful,

or that she interested me, for I had lied so often on these points to others that I wished to treat her differently.

I left the house in a sad and thoughtful mood, almost prepared not to enter it again; for I knew, alas! that I was not made for the chains of matrimony, though I knew that she would make me as happy as any wife could possibly do. I met her brother a few days after, and he told me that his sister did nothing but talk about me, that she seemed to remember every word I had said, and that his mother was delighted to have made my acquaintance.

'She would be a good match for you,' he said, 'for she has a dowry of ten thousand ducats. Come and see me to-morrow, and we will take coffee with her and my mother.'

The scoundrel did not say any more about his bills of exchange; but seeing that I had abandoned the pursuit of his mistress in favour of his sister, he conceived the brilliant idea of selling her to me. I was sorry for the mother and sister of this ignominious creature, but I had not sufficient virtue to renounce my share of the proposed bargain. I even tried to persuade myself that, as I loved her, I ought to prevent her from falling into worse hands. We induced the too confident mother to allow her to go with us to the opera, P. C.'s mistress making a fourth. The next day P. C. told me with an air of triumph that his sister had told his mother that she would rather marry me than any man in the world, and that she was sure I cared for her.

'I adore her,' I answered; 'but do you think that your father would give her to me?'

'No, I do not think so, but he is very old, and in the meantime—make you hay while the sun shines! My mother says she may go to the opera with us again. But I want you to do me a service. I have an opportunity of buying some excellent Cyprus wine, which I could sell again at a large profit; the merchant will not take a bill with my name only, will you add yours?'

I signed the note this time, without discussion. Where is the man who would not have done the same?

At 'Ste Blaise, à la Zuecca.'

I was seriously in love, and thanks to the good offices of the brother, who made us the excuse for his own amours, it was possible to see the object of my affections often. I took her in my gondola, and having dropped the brother and his friend, and thrown aside our masks, we spent hours in the gardens of the Zuecca at Saint Blaise, where we ran races together, the prize being a pair of garters which I had bought for her, and for which she gave me hers in exchange. I remember she outran me, and I had to simulate a fall to make her stop and come to my rescue. She was only fifteen, and absolutely innocent. I was determined to make her mine legally and for life, but when I spoke to her mother the good lady said we must be reasonable and wait; that as my charming C. C. was only fourteen years old, it was useless to ask her father's consent.

The dreadful thing was that, as carnival time was nearly over, we should no longer have an excuse for going about masked; and I had got into the habit of taking C. C., whom I now regarded as my wife in all but name, to a little casino in the country, and spending long hours with her. That would, of course, be in future impossible.

I decided to take M. de Bragadin into my confidence, and in an interview I had with him and his two friends, I laid the matter before them, keeping to myself certain details which it was unnecessary they should know, but insisting that my love for C. C. was so great that I was determined to elope with her, if her father withheld his consent to our union.

'I must,' said I, 'obtain some employment or position which will assure me an income equivalent, at least, to her fortune.'

The worthy gentlemen replied, that if *Paralis* would instruct them what to do they would gladly obey. This, of course, was just what I wanted, and the next two hours were spent in making pyramids and combinations which produced favourable answers to all their inquiries. It was decided that M. de Bragadin should be the one charged to ask the hand of the

young lady, as it was he who undertook to place me in a satisfactory position.

I went to tell C. C. the result of my interview with my friends, and found her and her mother in tears. The brother had been imprisoned for debt that very morning, and they had every reason to fear that the sums he owed were considerable. He had left a letter for me, begging me to go to his assistance. It was not in my power to be of use to him; all I could do was to give his mother twenty-five sequins for his immediate needs.

The circumstance of his imprisonment somewhat depressed our spirits, and I could not help feeling uneasy when C. C. told me that her father was expected home from the country that night. When I was bidding her farewell she slipped a note into my hand, in which she gave me instructions to re-enter the house that night, by means of a key contained in her letter. I should find her, she said, in her brother's room. As the reader may imagine, I was exact at the rendezvous. I entered the house without difficulty, and found my angel awaiting me.

The father of C. C. comes back to Venice.

'My father has arrived in perfect health,' she said, 'but he treats me like a child, though I fear that he will soon see I am no longer a child. God knows what he will do if he discovers I have a lover!'

'What can he do? If he refuses me your hand, I will run away with you, and the patriarch will not withhold from us the nuptial benediction. We shall belong to each other for ever.'

'It is what I desire more than anything in the world. But, O my dear friend, you do not know my father!'

The next day this terrible parent had a long interview with M. de Bragadin, the result of which was worse even than the mother had predicted it would be, for he declared, that as his daughter had still four years to wait before he would allow her to marry, he had decided she should pass those four years in a convent; he added, by way of softening his refusal, that if by

that time I had a good position, and we were both of us still in the same mind, he would consent to our union.

That night the little key was useless, for the door was bolted on the inside. I passed twenty-four hours in the cruellest perplexity, not knowing what to do for the best; as the brother was in prison, it was very difficult for me to hold any communication with C. C.

A prey as I was to desperate and sombre thoughts, I paid a visit to her mother. I was met at the door by a servant, who told me the family had gone into the country, she did not know where, and she did not know when they would be back. I then went to see P. C. in prison, but met with no better results. He knew nothing, and he told me a tissue of lies, in return for which I gave him two sequins.

C. C. is sent to a convent.

Misfortunes never come singly, and I now began to lose heavily at cards. I sold everything I possessed of any value, and got deeply into debt. I was too much ashamed of myself to appeal to my old friends for help, and it seemed as though there was nothing left for me but to kill myself. I was meditating suicide one day, while shaving, when my servant told me a woman wished to speak to me.

The woman came in; she had a letter in her hand. Imagine my feelings when I saw on it the print of a seal I had myself given to C. C.

A letter from C.C.

'Before I write to you at length,' the letter ran, 'I must be sure of the fidelity of this woman. I am in a convent, well and kindly treated. The superior has orders not to allow me to see, or hold correspondence with any one. But in spite of this I think I shall be able to write to you. I do not doubt your good faith, and I am sure you will never doubt mine. I will do whatever you tell me to do, for I belong to you alone. Reply to me in a few words only, until we are more certain of our messenger.'

I asked the woman if she knew how to read?

'Ah! sir, I should be in a sorry plight if I didn't. There are seven of us women in the service of the holy nuns of Murano. Each of us comes in turn to Venice once a week; I

come every Wednesday, so that if you like I can bring you an answer to that letter. The most important of all our commissions is the faithful delivery of letters confided to us, though I need not tell you, this is a secret, and outside of our regular functions. The nuns would not give us their letters if we could not read the addresses, as they don't want what they write to Peter to be read by Paul! You can rely on my discretion, and write what you like to that poor child, only I would not advise you to be as free with the other messengers; they may be honest, but they are poor ignorant creatures, and I am sure they chatter, if it is only to their confessors; as for me, I know I need only tell mine the sins I commit, and to take a letter from one Christian to another is not a sin; besides which, thank God! my confessor is a good old monk, so deaf he never hears anything I say! Well then, this day week I shall be back with her answer; and mind now, you don't keep me waiting, for our minutes are measured out to us like gold.'

I gave the good woman a sequin, whereupon she wept for joy, and I saw that she was my slave for ever. I hid another in the seal of the letter I wrote C. C., telling her I would send her all the money she needed while in the convent, for I guessed that her father did not supply her very liberally.

He takes to gambling again.

As the reader may imagine, I hardly knew how to get through the eight days which must pass before I received C. C.'s answer. I had no money to gamble with, and was boring myself considerably, when a young Milanese, named Antonio Croce, of whom I shall often have occasion to speak, came to see me. He had a plan, he said, by which both he and I could line our pockets. If I would go halves with him, he would start a faro bank at his house. There were seven or eight rich foreigners, who were all in love with his wife, and who would lose their money light-heartedly to win her favour We must each of us, he said, put three hundred sequins in the bank to start with. I knew very well that Croce's proposition was not of the highest morality, and at any other time

I should have sent him about his business, but I was at the end of my resources, and did not want to importune M. de Bragadin; besides, if I had refused, Madame Croce's admirers would have been victimised all the same, and some one else would have profited by their misfortunes.

I went with Croce to the Prato della Valle, where we found the signora surrounded by her court of foreigners. She was very pretty, but as a secretary of Count de Rosemberg, the imperial minister to Venice, was attached to her suite, no Venetian nobleman dared show himself in her society. I noticed among others an enormously wealthy Swede named Gilenspetz, a Hamburger, and an English Jew named Mendex.

Where were we to find the three hundred sequins needed to start the bank? I was obliged to have recourse to M. de Bragadin after all, but the good and generous old man as usual had not a sol in his pocket. He found a money-lender, however, who was willing to advance the sum on his signature, at five per cent. per month, the interest of one month deducted from the total.

The first night we played, Croce and I won sixteen hundred sequins between us, the next night Gilenspetz alone lost two thousand sequins, and the Jew Mendex lost a thousand. Sunday was a day of rest, but Monday the bank won four thousand sequins. On Tuesday, we all dined together, and were just beginning to play, when a commissioner of police came in, and told Croce he wished to say two words to him alone. They went out together, and when Croce returned he said, looking a little uncomfortable, that he had received orders not to allow any more gambling in his house. Madame fainted, the punters went off, and I, after taking half the gold which was on the table, followed their example.

Croce's principal crime in the eyes of the police, was that he had kept the novices and mere amateurs of play to himself, and so prevented them from losing their money at the *foyer* of the opera, where the bankers were generally Venetian noblemen.

CHAPTER XII

M. M.

A MAN never reasons so well as when his purse is full, never shows to such advantage in society, and is never so sure to win, as when it is not of vital importance to him that he should do so. The moment I regained courage and confidence, I regained my luck, and whenever I gambled was sure to win. I paid my debts to all, including the usurer, redeemed my jewels, and was once more able to make a decent figure in the world.

My head was quite full of my dear C. C. I commissioned a Piedmontese, a young artist whom I met at the fair of Padua, and who afterwards achieved fame and fortune in Venice, to paint my portrait—it was a very small miniature; he then painted a Saint Catherine of the same dimensions, and a clever Venetian jeweller mounted them both in a ring. One could only see the Saint Catherine, but, with a pin, press an almost imperceptible blue dot on the white enamel which surrounded it, and back flew a spring, and my portrait was revealed!

The messenger from the convent brought me a letter, which I read eagerly. C. C. told me that if on a certain day I would go to Murano and post myself outside the convent church, I should see her mother, and that I had better speak to her.

Following her instructions, I saw the good lady appear and enter the church. I passed in with her, and kneeling at her side I told her I should always be faithful to her daughter, and asked her if she was going to see her.

'I am going to see her on Sunday,' she replied, 'and I will speak of you to her. She will be pleased, I know, to hear of you.'

He sends his portrait to C. C.

'Will you give her this ring? it is the picture of her patron saint; and tell her to wear it always, tell her to pray to it every day, for without that she can never be my wife. Tell her that for my part I pray to Saint James, and recite a *Credo* while thinking of her.'

The good lady was enchanted with my pious sentiments, and promised to do what I asked. I gave her ten sequins, which I begged her to remit to C. C. as pocket-money: she accepted them, at the same time mentioning that her father provided C. C. with everything needful.

My greatest pleasure in life now was the Wednesday letter, which the old messenger, Laura, brought me faithfully. After a rather serious malady from which she had suffered, and which, with the aid of Laura, she had been able to keep from the knowledge of the Mother Superior, C. C. was more beautiful than ever, old Laura assured me. I longed for a sight of her. An unexpected chance presented itself. One of the novices was to take the veil, a ceremony which always attracted spectators from the outside world. As the nuns on these occasions receive many visitors, it was probable that the boarders also might be allowed to go to the parlour. I ran no risk of being especially remarked. I should pass in the crowd. So without saying a word to any one, I presented myself at the convent church, and after the investiture walked into the parlour with the rest. I got within four paces of my dear little wife, and had the pleasure of seeing her eyes fixed on me in a kind of ecstasy. I noticed that she was taller and more womanly, and consequently more beautiful than before. After this I attended Mass at her church regularly on Sundays and feast-days. I could not see her, but I knew that she saw me, and that the sight gave her great happiness. There was not much danger of my being recognised, as the church was attended only by the people from Murano; neverthe-

He goes to the convent church in order to look at C. C. among the nuns.

less I was on my guard, for I knew her father wished her to forget me, and that he would remove her to the ends of the earth if he discovered that I knew her whereabouts.

I was not afraid of the '*bon bourgeois*' of Murano; but I little knew the craft and subtlety of the holy daughters of the Lord! Nor did I think that there was anything particularly noticeable about me, or attractive to the inhabitants of a convent. I was still unversed in the ways of womanly curiosity, and the little machinations indulged in by vacant hearts and intelligences. I soon learnt to know them better.

My beloved C. C. wrote to me one day and informed me that I had become the puzzle of the whole community, that one and all, boarders and nuns, even the oldest among them, were busy guessing who I could possibly be. They waited for my appearance, they made signs to each other when I came in, when I took holy water, when I knelt down or stood up, my slightest action was of interest to them. They noticed that I never tried to peer behind the grating where they were, or paid attention to any woman in the church; from which the old ones gathered that I was in terrible trouble, and the young ones that I was melancholy or misanthropical.

It was a fact that I was withering and pining away under the ascetic regimen it had pleased me to impose on myself. I was made to make some woman happy, and to be happy with her. I threw myself into play and won as a rule; nevertheless, I grew thinner and thinner, a daily prey to *ennui*.

The first letter from Mother M. M.

On All Saints' Day 1753, after having heard Mass, I was getting into my gondola to return to Venice when a woman rather like old Laura passed close to me, looked at me, and dropped a letter. When she saw that I had picked it up she went on quietly. There was no address on it, and the seal represented a running knot. It was as follows:—

'A nun, who for the last two months has seen you in her convent church, wishes to make your acquaintance. A pamphlet which you lost has come by chance into her hands, and leads her to believe that you speak French, but if you prefer you can

answer this in Italian. If you care to be presented to her, she will give you the name of a certain lady who will bring you to the parlour. If you would rather, the nun will appoint a place in Murano where you can meet her any night you choose. You can sup with her, or you can leave after a quarter of an hour's conversation, as you will; or if you prefer to invite her to sup with you in Venice, fix an hour and a place and she will meet you. She will be masked, and you must come masked also, and alone. You must understand that were she not convinced of the generosity of your heart, and the elevation of your sentiments, she would never have ventured to take a step which might lead you to take an unfavourable view of her.'

The tone of the letter, which I give word for word, surprised me more than the proposition itself. It seemed to bespeak a mad woman, yet its strangeness and a sort of dignity there was about it attracted me. It occurred to me that the writer might be the nun who gave French lessons to my friend, and of whom she had often spoken, describing her as beautiful, rich, and generous. My dear C. C. might have been indiscreet, —perhaps this was a trap? A thousand theories occurred to me, but I discarded all those unfavourable to a project which, as a matter of fact, pleased me mightily. This is how I replied:—

He replies to it.

'I answer you in French, madam, hoping my letter will be as clear to you as yours to me. What you say is interesting, but you will understand, madam, that not being a coxcomb, I am a little apprehensive of your being about to practise some mystification on me, prejudicial to my honour. If it be really true that you consider me worthy of the honour of knowing you personally, I will hasten to obey your command. Of the three means you offer me, I choose the first; I will accompany the lady to the parlour, but as she will not know me, she cannot present me to you. Do not judge me harshly, madam, if I tell you I must conceal my name from you. I will not seek to know yours until you think fit to disclose it to me. I may mention by the way that I am a Venetian, and free in every sense of the word. I beg you to believe in my sincerity, and to measure my impatience by your own. I will go to-morrow at the same hour

to the place where I received your first letter, in hope of a reply to this.'

The next day my female Mercury handed me the following:—

'I see, sir, that I have not been mistaken in you. Of my three propositions you have chosen the one which does the most honour to your head and heart. I respect the reasons which prevent you from making yourself known to me. I enclose a note for the Countess of S——, which I beg you to read before presenting. She will tell you when you can accompany her here. She will not put any questions to you, but you will learn my name; and our acquaintance once made, you can come here masked as her friend, and ask for me whenever you choose. If this arrangement suits you, tell the messenger that there is no answer.'

The note to the countess, which she enclosed, was very brief:—

'My dear friend, come and see me when you have time, and tell the masked bearer of this note when you intend coming, so that he may accompany you. Your convenience will be his. Adieu. You will immensely oblige, YOUR FRIEND.'

I was lost in admiration of the high development of the spirit of intrigue which pervaded the nun's letter. She was so sure that having seen her once I should be desirous of seeing her again, that I was convinced she must be young and pretty. She was too clever in intrigue to be a novice, and I was anxious to see what manner of nun this could be who offered so casually to sup with me in Venice. I could not understand how she could violate the sanctity of her cloister with such ease.

At three o'clock that afternoon I called on the countess. She asked me to fetch her the next day at the same hour, after which we bowed gravely to one another, and parted. The countess was a most distinguished-looking woman, a little past her prime, but still beautiful. The next day being Sunday I went to Mass, dressed with much elegance and with my hair carefully arranged. I was already faithless in

imagination to my dear C. C., for I thought more of this opportunity of showing myself off to my unknown nun than to my charming little wife. In the afternoon I called, wearing a mask, for the countess. We took a two-oared gondola, and arrived at the convent without having spoken of anything but the weather.

He visits M. M. in her convent.

The countess asked for 'M. M.' at the convent gate. This name astonished me, for it was that of a well-known person. We were shown into a parlour, and in a few moments a nun appeared at the grating: she pressed a button and a sort of window opened, through which the two friends embraced. The countess sat facing the nun, and I remained a little in the background. In this way I was able to observe at my ease one of the most lovely women I have ever seen. She was about twenty-two or twenty-three years old, considerably above the average height; her complexion was fair, almost to pallor; her manners full of dignity and decision, yet at the same time modest and reserved; her great eyes were a brilliant blue, and her teeth like two rows of pearls; her hand and arm, which were bare to the elbow, were exquisitely moulded. The two friends talked together in a low voice for about a quarter of an hour. I could not hear what they said, for delicacy compelled me to remain at some distance from them; then, having embraced each other again, the nun turned on her heel and walked away without looking at me.

On the way back to Venice the countess said: 'M. M. is very lovely, and very clever too?'

'So I could see, and so I could imagine.'

'She did not say a word to you?'

'As I did not ask you to present me, she punished me by pretending not to see that I was there.'

When we reached the countess's house, she made me a deep curtsy, saying, 'Farewell, sir,' in a tone meant to convey to me that I must not seek to continue her acquaintance. I did not particularly wish to do so; and I left her to wonder over this strange adventure and its possible *dénouement*.

He ponders over the extraordinary liberty enjoyed by Mother M. M.

I was at a loss to account for the complete liberty enjoyed by my beautiful nun. A casino at Murano, the power to sup alone at Venice with a young man! She must have an official lover; I was only her caprice! I loved C. C. still; and it seemed to me that an infidelity of this kind, should it ever come to pass, ought to be readily condoned by her, since it would effectually palliate the *ennui* in which I languished for her sake, and preserve me to her against her liberation. Among my intimate friends at this time was Countess Coronini, a relation of M. Dandolo's; this lady, who had been a celebrated beauty in her day, had retired to the Convent of Saint Justine. She still maintained relations with the world; and was visited by all the foreign ambassadors and principal personages of Venice. Within the walls of her convent the countess managed to be aware of everything that went on in the city, and sometimes more. I was sure that I should learn something from her about M. M., if I questioned her adroitly. So I resolved to pay her my respects, the day after I had seen the beautiful nun.

After a few ordinary remarks, I led the conversation to the different Venetian convents. We spoke of a certain nun called Celsi, who had so much intelligence and tact, that, although she was ugly, she exerted an immense influence; from her we passed to others who were credited with a taste for intrigue. I spoke of M. M., saying that she must certainly be of this category, but that no one knew for certain. The countess replied with a smile that some people were better informed than others. 'I cannot understand,' she said, 'why she should have taken the veil. She was beautiful, young, rich, free, cultivated, and a good, clear reasoner; there was no physical or moral reason for such a step: it was pure caprice.'

'Do you think she is happy, madame?'

'Yes, if she has not already rued the step she took, or if she does not rue it some day; but, if that happens, I believe she will be discreet enough to conceal her unhappiness.'

I was sure from the mysterious manner of the countess that

she knew more than she would say, and I determined to pay another visit to the convent at Murano, masked, of course. I rang the bell with a beating heart, and asked if I could see M. M., as I had a message to deliver to her from the Countess S. I waited for more than an hour, then a toothless old nun came and told me that Mother M. M. was engaged for the whole day!

A check.

A rake is exposed to these sudden and terrible checks. Such moments are humiliating, they are deadly. My concentrated despair nearly approached madness. I saw that I had been tricked, and that M. M. must be either the most impudent or the most foolish of women, for the two letters I had in her own hand were enough to ruin her. In this disposition I wrote her several missives, all of which, however, I had the good sense to destroy. When I was calmer, I sent her a few lines, saying that she would not see me again at Mass, for reasons she could easily divine. I enclosed her two letters to me, and despatched the packet by a *fourlan*, a sort of confidential commissioner, much employed in Venice in those days, on whose discretion and despatch one could rely, as one used to count on the Savoyards of Paris. I also wrote to C. C., telling her that imperative reasons prevented me from ever going to Mass again at her convent.

Ten days after, as I was leaving the opera, the same *fourlan* accosted me.

'God be praised! I have found you; I took your letter, and I have one to give you in exchange, but as you left me no address, I have been looking for you ever since; I only recognised you now by the buckles of your shoes.'

'Where is the letter?'

'At home, under lock and key, for I am afraid of losing it, if you will wait for me an instant in this café I will fetch it.'

I entered the café, and he returned with a big packet, which contained, firstly, the two letters I had returned, and secondly, a long letter from M. M. She told me that the old nun had not delivered her message correctly; she should have said,

'Mother M. M. *is ill*,' not 'engaged'; she explained why she had thought it better not to speak to me in the presence of her friend, and begged me, whatever I might think of her, not to condemn her unheard, but to grant her at least one more interview. And this precious letter had been lying for ten days at the *fourlan's* lodgings!

I ordered him to take my answer to Murano before dawn next day, so that M. M. might have it when she awoke. I told her that at eleven o'clock that morning I would be at her feet, imploring her pardon for having misjudged her.

His second interview with M. M. behind the convent grating.

I was punctual next day. As soon as I saw M. M. at the grating, I threw myself on my knees, but she begged me to rise. She was blushing deeply, and looked more beautiful than when I had first seen her.

'Our friendship,' she said, 'has begun stormily, let us hope that in the future it will enjoy peace. This is the first time that we have spoken to each other, but after what has passed, we seem like old friends.'

'When may I have the pleasure of expressing, freely and unrestrainedly, my sentiments towards you?'

'We will have supper together at my little country-house whenever you like, only you must let me know two days in advance; or, if you prefer, I will sup with you in Venice, if that is more convenient for you.'

'You are an angel; let us be frank with one another. Let me tell you that I am in easy circumstances, and that so far from fearing expense, I delight in it; and furthermore, that everything I have belongs to the woman I adore.'

'This confidence, dear friend, is very flattering; let me tell you in my turn that I too am rich, and all my wealth is at my lover's service.'

'And—have you no lover but me?'

'I have a friend, who is also absolutely my master—it is to him I owe my wealth. The day after to-morrow I will tell you more. Is there not also a woman whom you love?'

'Yes; but, alas! she was violently torn from me, and for six months I have lived a life of absolute celibacy.'

'Do you still love her?'

'Yes; when I think of her. She is like you, charming and attractive; yet I foresee that you will make me forget her.'

'I warn you that, if you once allow me to take her place in your heart, no power on earth can tear me from thence.'

'And what will your lover say?'

'He will be happy to see me happy. He is like that. Now answer me. What sort of a life do you lead in Venice?'

'Society, the play, gaming-tables, where I fight with fortune, sometimes winning, sometimes losing.'

'Do you go to any of the foreign ministers' houses?'

'No, because I am too closely connected with the Venetian nobility; but I know them all.'

'How can you know them, if you don't visit them?'

'I knew them abroad. For instance, I met the Spanish ambassador in Parma, the Austrian ambassador in Vienna, and I knew the French ambassador in Paris about two years ago.'

She interrupted me, saying quickly: 'It is noon, my dear friend, we must part. Come the day after to-morrow at the same time, and I will arrange for us to sup together that evening.'

She came to the opening in the grating. I stood where the Countess S. had stood, and I kissed her passionately, and left her.

I passed the next two days in a state of feverish impatience, which prevented me from sleeping or eating. Over and above birth, beauty, and wit, my new conquest possessed an additional charm. She was forbidden fruit. I was about to become the rival of the Church.

Had my reason not been overcome by passion, I should have known that this nun in nowise differed from the other women that I had loved, but for the moment she queened it over them all.

Animal nature secures for itself instinctively the three means necessary for its perpetuation.

His physiological theories.

With these three instinctive needs nature has endowed all creatures: Firstly, the instinct of self-nourishment. Secondly, the instinct of propagation. Thirdly, the instinct of destruction. Outside these general laws, however, each species has its own special idiosyncrasy. These three sensations, hunger, desire, and hatred, are habits, merely, with animals. Man alone is endowed with perfect organs, capable of perfect pleasure. He can seek, foresee, compose, perfect, and extend by reflection and recollection.

Dear reader, be patient with me, who am to-day only the shadow of the gay, the fascinating, the dashing Casanova that was. I love to dwell on memories of myself.

Man becomes like an animal when he gives way to these three instincts without reference to reason and judgment; but when mind controls matter, then these instincts procure for us the most complete happiness we are capable of knowing. The voluptuous but intelligent man disdains gluttony, rejects luxury with contempt; the brutal lusts of vengeance, which are evoked by a paroxysm of rage, are repulsive to him; he is dainty, satisfies his appetite in accordance with his temperament; he is amorous, but only happy if happiness is mutual. He seeks to be revenged for insult, but plans the method of it carefully, and in cold blood. If he is sometimes more cruel than the brute, he is also sometimes more noble, and finds vengeance in forgiveness. These three operations are the work of the soul, which for its own pleasure becomes the minister of the passions. We endure hunger the better to enjoy the satisfaction of our appetite; we put off the perfect enjoyment of love, to make it more intense; we postpone a reprisal to make it the more sure. It is also true that we sometimes die from indigestion, that we are mistaken in our affections, and that the individual we wish to exterminate escapes us; but nothing is perfect in this world, and we must accept all risks.

CHAPTER XIII

M. M.

I RANG the convent bell as the clock struck ten, the hour appointed for our meeting.

'Good heavens! my friend,' were the beautiful nun's first words, 'are you ill?'

'I can neither eat nor sleep, and if our appointment to-night is put off, I will not answer for my life.'

M. M. offers an assignation at her casino.

'It will not be put off. Here is the key of my little house; you will find some one there, for we cannot do without servants, but no one will speak to you, and you need speak to no one. You will go masked, and two hours after sunset. There is a staircase opposite the entrance, and at the top of the stairs you will see, by the light of a lanthorn, a green door, which you will open, it will lead you into a suite of apartments where, if I am not already there, you must wait for me. You will find fire and lights and some entertaining books; take off your mask and make yourself comfortable.'

I asked this strange woman, as I took the key she offered me, if she would come dressed in her religious habit.

'I always go out dressed as a nun,' she answered, 'but I have a complete wardrobe in my casino, and can transform myself into a woman of the world when I choose.'

'I hope you will keep on your habit.'

'Why, may I ask?'

'Because I like to see you in it.'

'Ha! ha! I understand. You think I have a cropped

head, it frightens you; but be easy, I have a wig which looks perfectly natural.'

'Heavens! don't mention it; the thought of a wig is terrible. Never fear but what I shall find you charming in any guise, but I beseech you not to put that cruel wig on in my presence. Ah! now I have offended you. I was a fool to speak of it. Tell me, how do you propose to leave the convent?'

'I have the key of a room which opens on to the banks of the river, and I have confidence in the lay sister who waits on me.'

'And the gondoliers?'

'They are the servants of my friend, and he is responsible for their fidelity.'

'What a strange man your friend must be! I fancy he is very old?'

'You are mistaken. He is not yet forty, and most attractive. He has birth, beauty, breeding, wit, sweetness of character—he is all a woman could possibly wish. It is a year since he assumed possession of me, and you are the first caprice I have permitted myself. He knows about you, for I showed him your letters and mine. He was surprised at first, and then he laughed. He believes you are a Frenchman, though you say you are a Venetian; but do not be alarmed, he will take no steps to find out who you are until you tell him yourself.'

I followed her instructions carefully, and found all as she had said: the quiet secluded cottage—casino, as we Venetians call it—with lights shining from the windows, and door obedient to the key, but no servants to be seen. At the top of the stairs was the green door she had spoken of. I pushed it open, and after crossing two ante-rooms, I found her waiting for me in a little salon. She was most elegantly attired, in the fashion of the day, and wore her hair dressed in a superb chignon, but as the recollection of the wig was still in my mind, I refrained from speaking of it. The room was lighted by wax candles in girandoles, and by four superb

candelabra placed on a table among a quantity of handsome books. She seemed to me of a loveliness far other to that which I had admired beneath her nun's coif. I flung myself on my knees at her feet, kissing her hands, telling her in broken accents of my gratitude and devotion. M. M. thought it necessary to make some show of resistance. How charming such refusals are! As a tender, respectful, but audacious lover did I meet her protestations, and as I kissed her beautiful mouth, my very soul seemed to pass from me to her.

At last she said, laughing: 'Dear friend, you will be surprised to hear that I am hungry; I believe I could do justice to supper, if you would keep me company.'

She rang the bell, and a middle-aged woman of respectable appearance answered the summons. She set the table for two, putting the wine, dessert, and sweetmeats on a sideboard. She then brought in eight hot meats, served in Sèvres china, set on silver chafing-dishes, and left us once more alone. The supper was dainty and abundant: I recognised at once the French mode of cooking. We had excellent burgundy and champagne. My companion mixed the salad dexterously; indeed, in everything she did, I admired her graceful ease. Her friend was evidently a connoisseur, and had instructed her in the art of good living. I was curious to know him, and when we were taking punch after supper, I said that if she would satisfy my curiosity in this particular I would tell her my own name.

'All in good time, my friend,' said she; 'let us not be in a hurry.'

Among the charms hanging at her side I noticed a little flask in rock crystal, exactly like one I wore on my own chain: like mine it was filled with cotton saturated with essence of rose.

'This is a rare perfume,' said I, 'and very costly.'

'It is next to impossible to procure,' she answered.

'You are right, the maker of this essence is a crowned head, the King of France himself. He made one pound of it, and it cost him thirty thousand francs.'

'What I have here was given by the king to my lover,' said M. M.

'And mine is some of a small quantity sent by Madame de Pompadour to the Venetian ambassador in Paris, M. de Mocenigo, by favour of M. de Bernis, who is French ambassador here at the present moment.'

Madame de Pompadour's present to the ambassador.

'Do you know him?' she asked curiously.

'I have dined with him. He is a favourite with Dame Fortune, but he deserves it. He is well born, and has a right to call himself Comte de Lyon. He is so handsome, his nickname is "*Belle Babet.*" But see, it is night, the hour when all living things seek rest.'

'What! are you so tired?'

'No, but I am sure that you must be. Rest here. I will sit beside you, and watch you sleep; or, if you prefer, I will go away.'

She took a handkerchief and bound it round my head, asking me to render her the same service. I must own that I shrank instinctively from the wig, but was agreeably surprised to feel instead the most beautiful natural hair, long, fine, waving, and of a reddish gold. At my cry of astonishment and admiration she laughed heartily, then explained to me that a nun is only obliged to hide her hair from the vulgar gaze, not to sacrifice it entirely.

We were disturbed by a noisy alarum, hidden somewhere in the room.

'What is that?' cried I.

'It is time for me to go back to my convent.'

She rang, and the woman who had served us at supper, and who was doubtless her confidante and secret minister, appeared. Having dressed her hair, she assisted her to change her satin corset for the dimity one of a nun; the jewels and fine clothes were carefully locked up; the Mother M. M. stood before me. Her confidante having left the room to call the gondoliers, she kissed me, saying: 'I shall expect you the day after to-morrow.'

C. C. suspects.

Next day Laura gave me a letter from C. C. It ran as follows:—

'Dear,—Don't be angry with me, but give me credit for being able to keep a secret, young as I am. I am sure of your love, and I don't want you to tell me more than you think proper of your affairs, and I am glad of anything which can alleviate the pains of separation for you, only—listen! Yesterday I was crossing the hall, when I dropped something and moved a footstool to recover it. The footstool was just beside a crack in the wall of the parlour. I looked through—I am so dull here that I can't help being anxious—and I saw you, dear, in earnest converse with my friend, Mother M. M. I put the footstool back quietly and went away. Tell me all, dear, and make me happy. Does she know you, and how did you make her acquaintance? She is my bosom friend, the woman of whom I have often spoken, but without telling you her name. It is she who lends me books and teaches me things very few women know. She knows I have a lover, just as I know she has one, but we never ask each other questions. She is a wonderful woman. You love each other, I know, you could not help it, and as I am not jealous, I deserve your whole confidence. I am sorry for you both, for I don't see how you can possibly manage to meet. Everybody in the convent thinks you ill, and I am dying to see you. Come once at any rate. Adieu.'

Honour and delicacy demand that he shall continue to delude C. C.

This truly noble letter frightened me—not on account of C. C., she was true as steel, but because of others. Honour and delicacy forbade my telling her the facts. I lied boldly to C. C., saying that I had heard such wonderful things of M. M., that I had made an opportunity of seeing her, but that there was nothing whatever between us.

Saint Catherine's Day was C. C.'s birthday, and I thought it beseemed me to give the pretty recluse, who was imprisoned for my sake, a chance of seeing me. But I had discovered that I was watched and followed, and I thought it wiser not to visit Murano any more except at night or masked.

The following day I was in the convent parlour betimes. M. M. did not keep me waiting long. She congratulated me

on the good effect of my reappearance at church; the nuns, she said, were delighted to see me again after an absence of three weeks; even the abbess had expressed her pleasure, and at the same time her determination to find out who I was. This made me remember that the day before, a man had dogged my footsteps, so resolutely and so importunately that I had seized the fellow by the throat, and should certainly have shaken the life out of him, had he not managed to slip through my hands. I mentioned this incident to M. M., and we both agreed that it was probably a spy the holy mother had set at my heels. From this we concluded that it would be best for me to discontinue my visits to the chapel altogether. She told me all about the tell-tale chink in the boards, of which she had, she said, been warned by a young novice who was devoted to her. This was, of course, my obedient C. C., but I took care not to seem curious about her.

'And now, dear one,' I said, 'tell me when you will come again?'

'The newly professed sister has invited me to supper in her room, and I have no plausible pretext for refusing.'

'Can you not confide in her?'

'No. If I am not present at her supper I shall make an enemy of her.'

'Are you the only one to pay surreptitious visits to the outside world?'

'Yes, of that I am very sure. It is gold alone which here, as elsewhere, works miracles. But tell me, when can you meet me to-morrow—two hours after sunset?'

'Can I not meet you at your casino?'

'No, for it is my lover himself who is going to escort me to Venice?'

'Your lover! Incredible!'

'But none the less true.'

'I will wait for you there, in the Square of Saint John and Saint Paul, behind the statue of Bartholomew of Bergamo.'

'I don't know the square or the statue except from pictures,

He hires a casino in Venice.

but no matter, I will be there, unless the weather prevents me.'

I had no time to lose, if I wished to find a place to receive my beautiful guest in, but I soon found the very thing I was looking for, a charming casino in the environs of Venice. It had formerly belonged to the English ambassador, but when he left Venice he had abandoned it to his cook. The new proprietor let it to me until Easter for a hundred sequins, which I paid him in advance, on condition that he himself cooked for me. There were five rooms, furnished in the best possible taste. The meals were served in the dining-room through a buttery hatch, so that there was no need for servant and master to see each other. The salon was ornamented with superb mirrors and lustres in rock crystal and gilded bronze. A magnificent picture hung over the white marble chimney-piece, that was inlaid with Chinese plaques. An octagonal-shaped room led out of the salon; its walls, floor, and ceiling were entirely covered with Venetian mirrors. There was a boudoir which might have been furnished for the Queen of Love herself, and a bath of Carrara marble.

I ordered a sumptuous supper, with exquisite wines, to be prepared for that night, at the same time warning the landlord that he was to be sure that no one watched my ingoings and outgoings. The servants were to remain absolutely invisible. I then went and bought the most beautiful pair of slippers I could find, and a cap in *point d'Alençon* lace.

Two hours after sunset I returned to my casino. The French cook was much astonished at seeing me alone, and as he had neglected to light up the rooms, I reproached him severely, after which I told him to serve supper. It came up by a lift, through the door in the wall, and in very good style. I commented on every dish, but, as a matter of fact, I found all excellent. Game, sturgeon, oysters, truffles, wine, dessert, all was good, and all well served in fine Dresden china and silver-gilt plate. When I told him he had forgotten the hard-boiled eggs, the anchovies and dressing for a salad, the

poor cook raised hands and eyes to heaven as though he had been guilty of a terrible misdemeanour.

M. M. meets him in the Square of St. John in man's attire.

I was at Saint John's Square an hour before the appointed time. The night was cold, but I did not notice it. By and by I saw a two-oared boat come up, and a masked figure stepped ashore. My heart beat wildly, but as it drew nearer I saw it was a man, and wished I had brought my pistols. The mask walked once round the statue, and then came up to me, extending a friendly hand. It was my angel! She laughed heartily at my surprise, and taking my arm, we walked away to my casino, which was about a hundred steps from Saint Moïse. Everything was in perfect order. We went quickly upstairs, and I flung away my cloak and mask. M. M. was delighted with the rooms, and examined every corner. She was not sorry either to afford me an opportunity of admiring her beautiful figure, and the richness of her apparel, which did her lover's generosity credit. The mirrors reflected her charming person a thousand times over, and this system of multiplied portraits were evidently new to her. She stood still and looked at herself; I sat on a stool and watched her. She wore a coat of rose-coloured velvet, embroidered with gold spangles, a hand-embroidered waistcoat to match, black satin breeches, diamond buckles, a valuable solitaire on the little finger of one hand, and on the other a ring with a crystal set over white satin. Her mask, of black blonde, was remarkably fine in design and quality. She came and stood in front of me, that I might the better admire all these fine things. I turned out her pockets, and found in them a gold snuff-box, a *bonbonnière* set with pearls, a gold needle-case, a superb opera-glass, two fine cambric handkerchiefs simply soaked with perfume, two richly wrought gold watches with chains and bunches of charms sparkling with diamonds. I also found a pocket-pistol—a little English pistol in exquisitely engraved steel.

'All these, my beautiful one,' said I, 'are not half good enough for you, yet I cannot help expressing my admiration for the

astounding being—I had almost said the *adorable* being—who hopes by such offerings to convince you of his affection.'

'That is much what he said to me when I begged him to escort me to Venice and leave me there. "Be happy," he said to me, "and I only hope that the lucky man whom you honour will be worthy of your condescension."'

'He is a most astounding being! I repeat it. He is simply unique. I fear that I no more resemble him than I deserve the happiness whose prospect dazzles me.'

She asked my leave to go to unmask herself in a room apart. In a quarter of an hour she came back to my side, her hair dressed like a man's, tied with a black ribbon; it came down to her knees.

Their interview.

'Adorable creature!' I exclaimed, 'you were not made for mortal man, and I fear me you will never be mine. Some miracle will tear you from me at the very moment when I think that I hold you. Your divine spouse will perhaps be jealous of a mere man, and will destroy me with his lightning. Who knows, but in a quarter of an hour I may have ceased to exist!'

'Nonsense! I am yours now, this very moment!'

I proposed to ring for supper. She shuddered at the idea of being seen, but was pacified when I showed her the ingenious method by which we could be served without the servants entering the room.

'When I tell my lover this,' she said, 'he will say you are no novice in the art of love-making! And I see well that I am not the only person whom you receive in this discreet little nest.'

'You are the first woman who ever came to me here, adorable creature! Though you are not my first love, you will surely be my last!'

'I shall be content if I make you happy. My lover is satisfied with me; he is gentle, kind, and amiable, but he has never filled my heart.'

'Nor can you have filled his, or he would not permit you such liberty.'

'He loves me as I love you, and you believe that I love you, don't you?'

'I like to believe it.'

The fatal alarum sounded all too quickly, and after a hasty cup of coffee, I took her back to the square of Saint John, promising to visit her in two days. She had put the beautiful lace cap in her pocket to keep as a souvenir.

When, however, I next presented myself in the convent parlour, she told me her friend had just announced his visit, and that I must postpone mine.

'He is going to Padua until Christmas,' she said; 'but in the meantime he has arranged for us to sup at his casino whenever we please.'

'Why not at mine?'

'He has begged me not to go to Venice during his absence. He is prudent, and I intend to do as he bids me.'

'Then I must fain be content as well. When shall we meet?'

'On Sunday.'

'I will go there in the twilight, and read till you come. But remember that nine days before Christmas there will be no more masking, and I shall then have to go to your casino by water, for fear of being recognised by the spy you know of.'

'But I hope you will be able to come during Lent, too, for all Heaven insists that during that time we should mortify the flesh! Isn't it strange that it should please the Lord that at one time we should amuse ourselves wildly and abstain at another? How can a mere anniversary affect Him, who is independent of our doings? It seems to me that if the Lord could have created us virtuous by inclination and did not choose to do so, then it is His own fault if we go wrong. Imagine the Lord keeping Lent!'

'My dear, who taught you to reason like this?'

'My friend, who lent me books, and opened my mind. I think for myself and don't listen to the priests.'

On Sunday, while I was waiting for my divinity, I amused

The literature that had made M. M. a freethinker.

myself with examining the books in the boudoir, which, she said, had made her a freethinker. They were not numerous, but they were well chosen, and worthy of the place. Amongst them was everything that had been written against religion, and everything the most voluptuous pens had written about pleasure. Several richly bound folios contained engravings, whose merit lay all in the correctness of their drawing and the fineness of their execution. There were the illustrations of the *Portier des Chartreux*, engraved in England, those of Meunius, Aloysia, Sigea Toletana, and others, all of remarkable beauty. A quantity of little pictures hung on the walls, all *chefs-d'œuvre* of the same style.

I studied these volumes till my beautiful mistress in her nun's habit arrived.

We decided that while her lover was absent, I should live at the casino; and during the ten days he was away, I had the happiness of receiving her four times.

While there I amused myself by reading, and writing to C. C., but my love for her had dwindled away a good deal. What most interested me in her letters was her enthusiasm for her teacher, the Mother M. M., with whom she was most anxious I should become acquainted! She blamed me for lack of interest in her friend, and for not trying to make her acquaintance in the parlour. I answered that I was afraid of being recognised, and enjoined her to maintain the strictest secrecy.

I do not think it is possible to love two people at the same time, in the same degree, neither can one maintain a vigorous affection by over nourishment, or a paucity of it, for the matter of that. My passion for M. M. was kept at fever heat because I felt as if every meeting might be the last.

'It is certain,' I said to her, 'that some time or other, some one of the nuns will want to speak to you, while you are absent from your room.'

'No,' said she, 'there is no danger, for nothing is more strictly respected in the convent than the right of each nun

to make herself inaccessible to all the others, even the abbess. There is nothing to fear but fire, and then it would indeed seem strange for a nun to remain locked up in her cell. I have won over a lay sister, and the gardener, and one other nun. It is gold and the skill of my lover combined which have worked this miracle. He is responsible, too, for the fidelity of the cook and his wife at the casino, and of the two gondoliers, though we know that one of the latter is a spy in the service of the State Inquisitors.'

On Christmas Eve she wrote me that her lover would be back next day, and that they intended to go to the opera together.

'I shall expect you, dear friend,' she wrote, 'on New Year's Eve, and in the meantime I beg you to read the enclosed at your leisure, and at your own house.'

So, to make room for the other, I packed up my baggage and went off to the Bragadin Palace, where I read her letter:—

'I was piqued somewhat, dear friend, when you said, *à propos* of the mystery with which I am obliged to surround my lover, that so long as you possessed my heart, you were content to leave me mistress of my mind. This division of the heart and mind seems to me purely sophistical, and if it does not seem so to you also, it must be because you do not love me absolutely. You cannot separate me from my soul, or cherish my body, if my mind is not in harmony with it!

'However, lest you should some day think I have been wanting in frankness towards you, I have determined to tell you a secret concerning my friend, although I know he counts on my discretion. I am going to commit treason, but you will not love me the less for it, because, forced as I am to choose between you, and to deceive either one or the other, love has gained the day. It is not *you* who will be betrayed, so do not punish me for it. I am not acting blindly, and you can weigh the motives which have tipped the scales in your favour carefully.

'When I felt I must yield to my desire to know you, I took my friend into my confidence. We formed a high opinion of your character from your first letter to me, because you

M. M.'s plot: she unfolds it to her new lover.

selected the convent parlour as the place for our first interview, and his casino at Murano for the second. But in return for his complaisance he begged me to allow him to be present at our interview, to conceal him in a small dressing-room, from which one can see and hear everything which goes on in the other room. You have not yet seen this hiding-place, but I will show it you when next we meet. Tell me, dearest, could I refuse this strange satisfaction to a man who was so lenient to me? I consented, and naturally I hid the fact from you. Now you know my friend witnessed all we said and did that first night, but this need not trouble you, for he approved you. I was afraid, when the conversation turned on him, that you might say something wounding to his vanity; but as it happened your remarks were flattering enough. This, then, is the sincere confession of my treason; but you are wise, and I think you will forgive it, more especially as it has done you no harm. My friend is anxious to know who you are.

'On the night in question you behaved quite naturally; but would you have done so had you known you were watched? Probably not. But now that we know each other, and that you do not doubt my love for you, I am going to risk everything for everything. On the last night of the old year, my lover will be at the casino, and he will not leave until the next day. We shall not see him, but he will see us. As you will not be supposed to know that he is there, you must be as natural as you were the first time, otherwise he would guess I had told you. One thing you must be careful about, your subjects of conversation. My friend has all the virtues except the theological virtue called faith. So on this point you will have a free hand. You can speak of literature, travels, politics, everything you like, and you need not restrict yourself in personal anecdote. You are sure to meet with his approbation. Tell me frankly, do you object? Yes or no? I shall not close my eyes till I get your answer. If it is *no*, I will find some excuse, but I hope it will be *yes*.'

This letter astonished me, but on reflection I saw that, if anything, the leading part had been assigned to me, and so could afford to laugh.

I answered, assuring her that I would do her pleasure, and would be careful not to let him see I knew his secret.

I spent the six intervening days with my friends in Venice, and on the seventh, New Year's Eve, I repaired to the casino, where I found M. M. awaiting me. She was dressed with the most extreme elegance.

'My friend is not here yet,' she said; 'as soon as he is I will make you a sign.'

'Where is this mysterious cupboard?'

'Here; look at the back of this sofa, which is set in the wall; all the flowers which are carved in relief have a hole in the middle, the dressing-room is behind, there is a couch in it, a table, and all that is needful to pass the night in comfort.'

I complimented M. M. on her costume, remarking that it was the first time I had seen her wearing rouge. I liked the way she had put it on, as the court ladies at Versailles put on theirs. The charm lies in the negligent way in which it is applied; no one tries to make it look natural; it pleases, inasmuch as it permits us to anticipate a greater carelessness and freedom. M. M. said she wore it to please her friend.

'I argue from that,' said I, 'that he is a Frenchman.'

At this very moment she made me a little sign; the lover was at his post, and the comedy began. A screen scene.

We sat down to table, where a sumptuous supper was laid; she ate for two, and I for four. I had eaten nothing that day but a cup of chocolate and a salad of whites of eggs drowned in Lucca oil and *vinaigre des quatre voleurs*. The dessert was served in silver-gilt dishes of the same pattern as the handsome candelabra which were on the table. To please the lover behind the screen, I alluded to these candelabra and admired them.

'They are a present from him,' she said, as I had expected.

'A most magnificent present; did he give you snuffers with them?'

'No.'

'From that I imagine he is a *grand seigneur*.'

'Why should you think so?'

'Because a *grand seigneur* does not even know that candles need snuffing.'

Presents for M. M. and C. C.

My beloved M. M. had expressed a wish to have my portrait: I sent for the artist who had painted me in miniature for C. C., and after three sittings he produced a masterpiece. It was rather larger than the one I had had done for C. C., and made so as to be worn in a locket. The portrait was hidden by an ivory medallion of the same size, on which was an Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel represented as a dark young man, and the Blessed Virgin as a fair woman. (The famous painter Mengs imitated this idea in the Annunciation which he painted at Madrid twelve years later.) The two were mounted by an expert jeweller in the most exquisite taste, and I hung them on a gold chain, of the pattern known as 'Spanish links,' six ells long.

Two days after offering this present to my divinity, I received from her a gold snuff-box, the lid of which contained her portrait in her nun's costume. The bottom of the box was hinged, and on being pressed in a certain manner it opened, and revealed another portrait, in which she appeared lying full length on a black satin couch, smiling at Cupid, who, his bow at his feet, was seated near her.

On Twelfth Night we went together to the opera, and afterwards to the Ridotto, where M. M. was much amused at the patrician ladies, who alone had the privilege of promenading up and down unmasked; we then passed into the larger gambling saloon, where my companion, having lost all her money, began to play with mine, with such extraordinary luck that she broke the bank. On counting our gains after supper, in our little casino, we found that my share alone amounted to a thousand sequins.

Shortly after Twelfth Night I received a letter from C. C.:—

'Ah, my dear little husband, I am quite, quite sure that you are in love with my charming friend M. M. She wears a locket containing a picture of the Annunciation, which is evidently by the artist who painted the miniature I have in

my ring, and I feel certain that your portrait is underneath; besides which, Mother M. M. is very curious about my ring, and asked me the other day if Saint Catherine did not conceal the picture of my lover. I am sorry to have to be reserved and deceitful towards her, but believe me when I say that it will not hurt me in the least if you tell me you care for her. I am fond of her, and she has been too good to me for me to endure this deceit for long; let us be quite frank with each other; it must be terrible to have to make love through an iron grating!'

I replied that she had guessed rightly so far as the locket was concerned; it was a present I had made to M. M., and contained my portrait, but she must keep the secret, and at the same time feel assured that the friendship I had for M. M. did not in any way interfere with my feeling for her.

I knew well enough that my letter was somewhat shifty, but I was weak enough to wish to continue an intrigue which my better sense told me was drawing to its inevitable close; it could not possibly continue, if an intimacy was once established between the two rivals.

The ball in the convent parlour.

I had learned from Laura that there was to be a ball in the big parlour of the convent, and I determined to go, disguised so that my two friends should not recognise me. In Venice these innocent amusements are permitted in convents in carnival time: the public dances in the parlours and the sisters watch them through the gratings; the ball winds up early, every one goes home, and the poor recluses have something to think of during the long dull months that follow. I decided to dress as a Pierrot. This costume, which is comparatively uncommon in Italy, has the advantage of hiding peculiarities of figure and bearing; the large cap covers the hair, and the white gauze stretched over the face prevents the eyes and eyebrows from being recognisable. I started for Murano without taking a cloak, and with nothing in my pockets but a handkerchief, my purse, and the key of my casino. The parlour was crowded, but I was the only Pierrot

among numberless harlequins, punchinellos, pantaloons, and scaramouches. Behind the grating, among the nuns and boarders, I saw my two friends, their eyes fixed on the dancers. I attached myself to a pretty columbine, and together we danced a minuet. She danced divinely, and we were frantically applauded. Then I danced twelve *forlanes* straight off, and then falling down, I pretended to be asleep, and every one respected the sleep of Pierrot. After a *contredanse*, which lasted an hour, a harlequin came up, and with the impertinence which is part of the character, attempted to rob me of my partner. He struck and worried me with his wand, till I quickly caught him by the waistband and carried him round the room; then I put him down and seized his columbine. I packed her on to my shoulder and chased him. Then I had a fight with another, and knocked him down; then, in the midst of the laughter and clapping of the spectators and the nuns, who had never seen such a spectacle, I gained the door and disappeared.

It was still two hours to the time appointed for meeting M. M. at my casino, and these hours I spent gambling, winning at every stroke. With my pockets full of gold, and gloating over the thought of M. M.'s surprise when she should recognise in me the applauded Monsieur Pierrot, I arrived at our casino, and entered the sanctuary. There was my divinity leaning against the chimney-piece. She was dressed as a nun. I approached on tiptoe, looked at her, and stood petrified!

M. M. and C. C. exchange clothes.

For it was not M. M.; it was C. C., in the costume of her friend. The poor girl did not heave a sigh, or proffer a word, or make a movement. I flung myself into a chair. I was stupefied, bodily and mentally, and sat there for half an hour, thinking over M. M.'s perfidy, for, sure, it was she had played me this trick.

But I could not remain all night in dead silence; I must do and say something. C. C., so far, only knew me for the Pierrot she had seen dancing at the convent; or perhaps she had guessed. I owed her something; I had given her the

right to call me husband. I was wretched. I took the covering off my face, and C. C. sighed out, 'I felt it was you.'

After lavishing on her such caresses as I could command at the moment, I begged her to tell me how she came there.

'I hardly know myself,' she answered; 'it is like a dream. After having laughed at the tricks of the Pierrot, whom we little thought was you, dear friend, M. M. and I left the parlour and went to her room. She asked me if I would do something for her, and I said, "Yes, with all my heart." She opened her wardrobe and dressed me as you see; she then said she was going to confide a great secret to my keeping, but that she knew she could trust me. "Know," said she, "that I was about to leave the convent, and stay away until to-morrow morning, but fate has decreed it should be you who are to follow this programme in my stead. In an hour's time a lay sister will come for you; follow her across the garden to the river, where you will find a gondola. Say to the boatman, 'To the casino.' In five minutes you will come to a little house; go in and upstairs; there you will find a comfortable room and a good fire; wait. I must not tell you more than this, but be sure that nothing unpleasant will happen." I looked upon it all as an amusing escapade, I followed her instructions, and here I am. I had been here three-quarters of an hour when you came in. In spite of your disguise, my heart told me at once it was you; but when you recoiled from me I was thunderstruck, for I knew then that though you expected some one, it was not me. But now kiss me. You know I am reasonable, and glad you are happy with M. M.; she is the only woman in the world I could bear to share you with. Kiss me!'

I embraced her again tenderly, at the same time telling her that I thought her friend had played us an ugly trick.

'I will not conceal from you,' I said, 'that I am in love with M. M. You must not judge me too harshly; remember you have been shut up for eight months in your convent, and during that time I have had to console myself as I best could.

I do not love you any the less, but I have become attached to M. M., and she knows it; she has accepted my homage, and now she has given me a mark of her disdain, for if she cared for me as I care for her she would not have thought of sending you in her place.'

C. C. defends M. M.

The loyal and generous C. C. took up the defence of her friend, and strove to persuade me she had been actuated only by the kindest motives. M. M., she argued, was as devoid of jealousy and small-mindedness as she was herself. M. M. was unable to keep her appointment; it was only natural that she should send the friend who was her other self instead.

But I was very angry with M. M. 'It is not the same thing at all,' I said. 'I love M. M., and I can never marry her. As for you, dear, you are to be my wife, and propinquity will give fresh life to our love. But it is not so with M. M. It is humiliating to think that I have only inspired her with a fleeting caprice, is it not?'

We continued arguing in this strain until midnight, when the prudent concierge brought us supper. My heart was too heavy to eat, although I made a pretence of doing so. I could not help seeing that C. C. had improved and developed. Nevertheless I remained indifferent to her, though the poor thing was full of tact. She continued to be tender without being passionate, and perfectly sweet in every way. Two hours before daybreak, as we were seated before the fire, she asked me what she should say to M. M. on her return to the convent.

'Tell her all,' I said; 'hide nothing from her; and above all, tell her that she has made me very unhappy. Believe me, dear friend, I love you with all my heart, but I am in a most difficult position.'

The alarum sounded. I had hoped that M. M. would appear during the course of that long night and justify herself, but no! With tears in our eyes we parted, C. C. to return to her expectant friend, and I to Venice.

It was bitterly cold, and a strong wind was blowing; there

was neither boat nor boatman to be seen along the quay, the rain beat through my linen dress. I could not go back to the casino, for in a fit of temper I had given the key to C. C. to remit to M. M. My pockets and purse were full of gold pieces, and Murano is celebrated for its thieves, who rob and assassinate with impunity; they are indeed granted many a privilege because of their skill in the glass factories; the government has even made them citizens to keep them there. I had not even the little knife about me which in my dear country every honest citizen must carry to defend his life. I wandered about until I came to a cottage, through whose window a light was shining. With much difficulty and much bribing I induced the proprietor to get up, and, accompanied by his son, row me back to the city. The storm had by this time increased in fury, and several times we were within an ace of drowning; one of the men fell overboard, but scrambled back into the gondola; we lost an oar, and were all drenched to the skin; at last, however, we got into the Beggar's Canal, and from there to the Bragadin Palace.

The accident to the gondola.

Five or six hours later, when M. de Bragadin and his friends came to see me, they found me in bed, in a high fever and delirious, but they could not help laughing at the sight of the dripping Pierrot costume on the sofa. By the evening I was better, though still very ill, and when the faithful Laura came in the morning I could not read the letters she brought me; it was many days before I could do so.

The two charming creatures each wrote to me protestations of esteem and affection, and expressed their desire that we should form a trio of friends. They implored me to think better of my determination to abandon the casino.

M. M. had indeed been present during my stormy interview with C. C., but she had prudently refrained from interfering with our hoped-for reconciliation. Then sleep had overtaken her, and she had not waked until the noise of the alarum roused her. C. C. had given her the key, which she now sent back to me, and together they had fled out into the

storm, and back to the convent, where they changed their dresses, and M. M. went to bed, while C. C. sat at her pillow and listened to her confession, how she had seized the opportunity of C. C. being called away to examine her ring, and with a pin had moved and disclosed the spring. Then she had guessed that they both loved the same man. In spite of this disclosure M. M. had not changed her manner to C. C., but had thought only of how she should prove her generosity to the other two. She had thought herself so clever when she had substituted C. C. for M. M., but 'our lover,' as they called me, had, alas! taken the matter in bad part. Then C. C.'s aunt had come in and told them a long story of the Pierrot and an accident to the boat, which terrified them. But the aunt was able to assure them that the Pierrot was saved and was a son of M. de Bragadin. When she had gone, M. M. turned to C. C. and asked her if I was really a son of M. de Bragadin, for he had never been married? Then C. C. told her the whole story, and how I was in treaty with her father for her hand. They hoped to meet me at the casino soon, either together or singly.

How could I resist this? As soon as I was well enough I wrote explaining the reason of my long silence, and fixing a rendezvous with M. M.

4th February 1754.

On the 4th of February 1754, I again found myself *tête-à-tête* with her. We fell spontaneously into each other's arms, and our reconciliation was complete. I asked her if we were really alone. She took a candle, and opening a large wardrobe, which I had already suspected of being practicable in some way, she shot a bolt, and behold, a small apartment with a sofa, and over that sofa three or four little holes through which the occupants of the chamber we were in could be observed.

'You want to know,' she said, 'if I was alone on the fatal night when you met C. C. here? I was not; my friend was with me, and don't be angry, for he was delighted with you and with C. C. in her distress. How well she reasoned, he

thought, and only fifteen!' Then we talked of my Pierrot disguise, and how it had led to their discovery of my real estate; and she admitted that she was glad I was not a patrician, as she had feared.

I knew perfectly well what she meant, but I pretended to be ignorant.

'I cannot speak to you openly,' she continued, 'until you promise to do what I am going to ask of you.'

'Speak, sweetheart, and count on me. I am sure you will ask nothing that could compromise my honour.'

'I want you to ask my friend to sup openly with us at the casino; he is dying to make your acquaintance. I have already told him who you are, as otherwise he would not have dared to suggest such a thing.'

'I imagine that your friend is a foreigner. One of the ministers, perhaps.'

'Precisely.'

'I hope he will do me the honour of not preserving his incognito on that occasion?'

'I shall present you to him in due form by his right name, and mention his political qualifications.'

'In that case then I consent; fix the day and I will be there.'

'Now that I am sure of your coming, I will tell you everything,' she said. 'My protector is M. de Bernis,[1] the French ambassador.'

[1] Pierre de Bernis was born 22nd May 1615 at St. Marcel, Ardêche. He was educated at the school of Louis le Grand and the seminary of St. Sulpice. His father was a friend of Cardinal de Fleury, whose aid he solicited for his son. On leaving St. Sulpice at the age of nineteen, Pierre was received in the best society on account of his birth, his good looks, and his talent for writing *vers de société*. The Princesse de Rohan made him the *mode*. Thanks to the patronage of several *grandes dames*, he entered the Academy when only twenty-nine years of age, while Voltaire, who was then fifty, was still waiting to be admitted. The friendship of Madame de Pompadour counted for much in his success. Verses on her dimples obtained for him a pension and a lodging in the Tuileries, which latter she furnished with odds and ends from her own apartment. He was sent ambassador to Venice, in 1752, recalled in 1755, and made member of the Grand Council. He was charged to conclude a secret

'I can now understand why you dreaded to hear that I was a patrician! The State Inquisitors would not have been long in showing their zeal! They would have soon interfered with us, and I shudder to think of the awful consequences which would surely have ensued. I should have been put in "The Leads," and you would have been dishonoured, and the abbess, and the convent! Great Heavens! what risks you have run! As it is, we are safe, and nothing remains but to fit the date of the supper.'

'Four days from now we are going to the opera, and after

treaty between France and Austria, which was to oppose the alliance between England and Prussia. This famous treaty, which astonished all Europe, was conceived by Madame de Pompadour, the Comte de Kaunitz, and de Bernis, but its conclusion and execution were due to the young minister. For the first time in nearly three hundred years the houses of Bourbon and Hapsburg entertained friendly relations. In 1757, while Minister of Foreign Affairs, he wished to stop the Seven Years' War by means of any honourable peace, but this was contrary to Madame de Pompadour's designs. She became his enemy: he was exiled from court, and took refuge near Soissons. Clement XIII. raised him to the cardinalate: he was already in minor orders, and was ordained priest so as to receive the red hat, which was conferred upon him two days before leaving Paris. The magnificence of his receptions, the polished ease of his manner, his tact, ability, generosity, and great talents had all combined to make him one of the most striking figures at the court of Louis XV. There is a strong contrast between his political life and his poetry. In the one we find gravity, judgment, simplicity, good taste, and elegance; in the other lightness, affectation, forced sentiment, and superficial ornamentation, and a profusion of florid adjectives, which caused Voltaire to bestow on him the nickname of 'Babet-la-Bouquetière.' One cannot but smile at the difference between morality as he taught and practised it (that is, in his early days; after his elevation to the cardinalship his conduct was exemplary). It is difficult to realise that the man who supplied M. M. *with her small, choice library* is the same who wrote, speaking of the Regent,

'De nos jours caressa la licence
Honora trop les arts et trop peu l'innocence;
La modestie alors déchira son bandeau
Et la foi conjugale éteignit son flambeau.'

And again, apostrophising the art of printing—

'Pourquoi, toujours soumis à la cupidité,
Prêtes-tu ton burin à la perversité?
Pourquoi conserves-tu de coupables maximes
Qui troublent les états et fomentent les crimes?'

the second ballet, will come on here, if that is agreeable to you.'

After the departure of my beautiful nun I returned post-haste to Venice, where my first care was to send for my cook. I wanted the supper to be worthy of host and guests.

A party of three at the casino.

Four days after this, the time appointed by M. M., she appeared at the casino with the ambassador.

'I am delighted, sir,' he said, 'at this opportunity of renewing our acquaintance, for madame tells me we knew each other in Paris.' While saying this he looked at me keenly, as though trying to recall my face.

'I had the honour,' I answered, 'of dining with your Excellency at M. de Mocenigo's, but you were so occupied with Marshal Keith, the ambassador from the Court of Prussia, that I could not succeed in attracting your attention.'

'I remember you now,' he said, 'for I asked some one if you were not one of the secretaries of the Embassy. However, from this day forth we shall not forget each other, and I hope our intimacy will be a lasting one.'

We sat down to table, when of course I did the honours. The ambassador was a connoisseur, and found my wines excellent. The supper was delicate, abundant, and varied, and my manner towards the handsome couple was that of a private individual receiving his sovereign and the royal favourite. I saw that M. M. was pleased at my attitude, and at the manner in which I talked with the ambassador, who listened to me with the greatest interest. Though we were naturally a little shy, the conversation was animated and amusing. Monsieur de Bernis was a thorough Frenchman, and could thrust and parry in conversation as only one of his nationality can. We spoke of the romantic manner in which our acquaintance had begun, and from thence M. M. led me adroitly to speak of C. C. and my attachment to her; her description of my little friend so pleased the ambassador that he asked why she had not been invited to the supper.

'Why,' said the artful nun, 'it might easily be managed

The plan of M. M.: he yields.

another time, as she shares my room; I could bring her here without any difficulty—that is, if M. Casanova desires it.'

This offer astonished me somewhat, but it was not then the moment to show my surprise.

'If I am to be of the party,' said the ambassador, 'I think she ought to be warned beforehand.'

'I will tell her,' I said, 'to obey madame blindly; at the same time I must beg your Excellency to be indulgent towards a girl of fifteen, who is quite unversed in the ways of the world.'

The next morning I received a letter from M. M., in which she said, that she could not rest until she was sure that the proposed *partie carrée* was to my liking; if I had consented merely from politeness she would undertake to postpone it indefinitely.

I could see then, when it was too late, that I had been the dupe of two cunning diplomats. There was no doubt of it! The ambassador admired C. C., and equally without doubt the complaisant M. M. had determined to further his ends. She could do nothing without my consent, and this she had obtained very cleverly. I had jumped at the bait; at the same time she had made it impossible for me to reproach her, by offering to quash the arrangement, and she knew very well that my vanity would not let any one suppose me jealous; there was nothing left for me to do but to put a good face on it, and not appear stupid and ungrateful in the eyes of a man who after all had shown me the most unheard-of condescension. I hastened therefore to reiterate my invitation, though I was now conscious that our ideal intercourse was drawing to a close.

The ambassador was the first to arrive on the fateful night. He was most civil to me, and told me that had he known me in Paris he would have put me in the way of making my fortune. Now, when I look back on it all, I say to myself, 'Supposing he had done so, where and what should I be now?' Perhaps one of the victims of the Revolution, as

he himself would undoubtedly have been had not fate decreed he should die at Rome, in the year 1794. He died very rich, but very miserable.

I asked him if he liked Venice, and he replied that it was delightful, and if one had plenty of money one could amuse oneself there better than anywhere else. 'But,' he added, 'I am afraid I shall not be here much longer; keep my secret, though, for I do not wish to sadden M. M.'

A party of four at the casino.

We continued this confidential talk until the arrival of M. M. and her young friend. C. C. looked perfectly ravishing, and during the supper, which was fit for a king, the ambassador was most attentive to her. Wit, gaiety, decency, and *bon ton* presided at the table, but did not exclude the Gallic salt which Frenchmen know well how to insinuate into any conversation. M. M. treated the cardinal like an intimate friend; to me she behaved politely, she might have been C. C.'s elder sister.

M. de Bernis thanked M. M. for the most delightful supper he had ever assisted at in his life, thus obliging her to invite us to another the week following. At this second supper, however, he did not appear. Just as we were ready to sit down to table, the concierge came in with a letter, in which the ambassador said that a courier had brought him some unexpected despatches, and it was impossible for him to join us.

'It is not his fault,' said M. M., 'we must amuse ourselves as we best can, but let us make another rendezvous. Shall we say Friday?'

I acquiesced, not realising that once more I was walking into a trap; but the next day, in thinking over recent events, my eyes were opened, and I saw how I had played into the ambassador's hands: the story of the courier was an invention; the *Suisse* at the door of the ambassador's house told me that no despatches had been received for two months. He had voluntarily stayed away, so as to leave me with the two friends. I, in my turn, could not be less obliging; when

Friday night came, I must invent some excuse for absenting myself.

He sees through M. M.

It was M. M.'s doing. She wanted me to believe in her love, and she was able to assume all those virtues a man best prefers—honour, delicacy, and loyalty—but she was still a libertine at heart, and yearned to make me her accomplice. She had subdued the spirit to the flesh to such an extent, and her conscience to such a pitch of flexibility, that it no longer reproached her. She had manipulated events to her liking, and she relied on a sense of false shame in me, to stand her ally.

De Bernis and she knew well enough that C. C. was a weak woman, and that once deprived of my moral support she would not be able to withstand them. I was sorry for C. C., but I felt that I could never marry her now.

C. C. wrote and described the supper to me: it made me laugh. She liked the ambassador, but she tried to persuade me that she loved me. M. M.'s letter was still more singular. She told me that C. C. had become a freethinker like ourselves, and was now superior to prejudices. M. M. herself had been under no delusion as to my polite fiction. I had, she thought, magnificently returned the ambassador's civility. I said to myself, '*Georges Dandin, tu l'as voulu*,' and I had the effrontery and courage to write to C. C., congratulating her on her new conquest, and bidding her emulate and imitate M. M. in everything.

On Shrove Tuesday we all four supped together, and this was the last evening I ever spent in C. C.'s company. She was very lively, but having decided on a line of conduct, I devoted myself entirely to M. M. The ambassador proposed after supper that we should play a game of faro: having cut the cards, and put an hundred double louis on the table, we managed so that C. C. should win the whole sum. She was dazzled at the sight of so much gold, and begged her friend to take care of it for her, until she should leave the convent to get married.

Now, although her infidelity had led me to look upon her in a totally different light to that in which I had hitherto regarded her, I could not help feeling that it was owing to me that she had wandered so far astray, and that consequently I must always remain her sincere friend. Had I reasoned as clearly in those days as I do now, I should probably have acted otherwise. I should have said, 'It was I who first set the example of infidelity; I told her to follow the advice of M. M., when I knew that her counsels must be vicious; why should I expect a poor weak girl to be stronger than a man who is twice her age?' Following this line of argument, I should have condemned my own conduct rather than hers, and should not have changed towards her, but the fact is, that while I thought myself supremely broad-minded, and above all prejudices, I was nearly as limited and as much a slave to custom as most men who expect immaculate virtue in their wives, while insisting on absolute licence for themselves and their mistresses.

De Bernis bids them farewell.

On Good Friday, when I arrived at the casino, I found de Bernis and his mistress plunged in sorrow; supper was served, but he ate nothing; M. M. was like a marble statue. Discretion and good breeding forbade me questioning them, but when M. M. left us, de Bernis told me that he had orders to leave for Vienna within fifteen days. 'I may as well tell you,' he said, 'that I do not think there is any likelihood of my returning, but do not let her know this, it would only add to her grief. I am going to work with the Austrian cabinet on a treaty which will make all Europe talk. Write to me as a friend, and without reserve, and if you really care for our mutual friend, look after her, and above all be careful of her honour; be strong to resist temptations which may expose you to what would be fatal to you both. You know what happened to Madame de Riva, who was a nun at the convent of S——? As soon as the scandal became public she disappeared, and her protector, M. de Frulai, my predecessor, went mad, and died shortly after. J. J. Rousseau told me

that his madness was the effect of poison, but Rousseau always sees the darkest side of things. I think he died of grief at being unable to help the unhappy lady, whom the Pope has since dispensed from her vows. She lives now at Parma, married, but without respect or consideration. Let loyal and prudent friendship be stronger than love; see M. M. sometimes in the convent, but do not meet here, for the gondoliers will surely betray you as soon as I am gone. So for God's sake be careful in the future, and above all keep me informed, for I shall always be interested in her and her fate, from duty and from sentiment.'

The minister then sent for the concierge, and drew up a deed in his presence, which he made him sign. By this deed he made over the casino and everything in it to me, and ordered the concierge to treat me in everything as his master.

We were to have one farewell supper together; but when, on the appointed evening, I entered the casino, I found M. M. alone, as pale as death, and almost as cold.

'He has gone,' she said, 'and he commends me to you. I shall perhaps never see him again. Fatal man! I thought I only cared for him as a friend, but now that I have lost him, I see all that he was to me. Before knowing him I was not happy, but I was not miserable, as I am now, and as I shall be for the rest of my life.'

He pronounces judgment on the character of M. M.

During that long and wretched night her character was completely revealed to me. She was a creature of the moment, as wildly transported with joy over good fortune as she was cast down and overcome by sorrow when things went against her. To-day, when years have bleached my hair, and calmed the ardour of my senses, I can judge her dispassionately, and I feel that my beautiful nun sinned against modesty, that most worthy attribute of her sex. But if this unique woman was wanting in that virtue—I then thought the lack of it admirable—she was equally free from the frightful venom called jealousy, a miserable passion which burns and dries up its victims, and the objects of their hate.

For some time we faithfully followed de Bernis's injunctions, and only saw each other in the convent parlour; then, giving way to our feelings, we disobeyed him, and appointed a meeting at the casino.

'I am sure,' said M. M., 'I can rely on the gardener's wife, she will let me in and out of a small door at the bottom of the garden; all that we need is a gondola and a boatman. Surely, if you pay him well enough, you can find one who will serve us faithfully.'

'Listen,' said I, 'I will be the boatman myself, you will let me in through the little door, and I will stay with you here, and the following day as well, if you think you can hide me.'

'No,' said she, 'your project is too dangerous; let me know as nearly as possible the time you will come in your boat, and I will be waiting for you. We will go to our dear casino; after all, it is the safest place for us to meet in.'

I bought a boat, and a boatman's costume, hired a *cabane* in which to keep them, and after having made one or two trial trips round the island, I went one hour before sunset to the little door in the garden wall. It opened an instant after my arrival, and M. M. came out, wrapped in an immense cloak.

It must be owned that my first experience as *barcarolo* was not encouraging, and would certainly have cooled the ardour of lovers less infatuated than we were. The nights were short, and M. M. had to return to her convent before three in the morning, which gave us but little time to be together. Once, an hour or so before it was time for her to start on her homeward journey, a frightful storm broke, and we were obliged to sit out in driving wind and rain; although I was a strong and competent oarsman, I had not the skill of a professional. I do not know what would have happened to us, if we had not had the luck to be overtaken by a four-oared barque, which, for two sequins, consented to tow us to our destination. If salvation had not come to us in the shape of the barque, we should have had to elope together,

and my life would have been irrevocably bound to hers. Then I should not have been sitting here at Dux, at the age of seventy-two, writing these Memoirs.

For three months we contrived to see each other weekly, and always by the same means. I, of course, grew more skilful in the management of my boat, and in all this time we did not meet with the slightest accident.

Note.—In the Letters of the Prince de Ligne to Casanova *à propos* of the propriety of printing the more personal anecdotes of the *Mémoires* we have the mysterious direction : '*Faites imprimer M. M. et L. L. puisque A. S. est mort.*'

CHAPTER XIV

THE FALSE M. M.

De Bernis having left Venice, I became intimate with Murray, the English resident minister. He was a fine fellow, learned, and very fond of women. He kept Ancilla, one of my old loves, and she died in his arms, a hideous sight, of the illness which killed Francis the First of France. Murray cynically bragged about his heroism in loving her to the end. He did not replace her for some time, but flew like a bee from flower to flower. Some of the prettiest women in Venice passed through his hands. Two years later he left for Constantinople, where he represented the Cabinet of St. James with the Sublime Porte.

About this time, fate threw in my way a patrician named Mark Anthony Zorzi, a man of some talent, celebrated for his witty couplets; he was devoted to the drama, and produced a comedy which the public dared to hiss. The piece was condemned for its want of merit, but he was convinced that its failure was due to the influence of the Abbé Chiari, the titular poet of the Theatre Saint Angelo. From that moment Zorzi looked on the abbé as his enemy, and vowed vengeance against him. He hired a set of ruffians, who attended the theatre nightly, to hiss, without rhyme or reason, every one of the unfortunate Chiari's comedies. I did not care for Chiari, either as man or author, and Zorzi's house was an agreeable one to frequent; he had an excellent cook and a charming wife. I repaid his hospitality by criticising his enemy's productions, about

Causes which, in his own estimation, led towards his incarceration in 'The Leads.'

which I wrote *martelliers*, a form of doggerel verse much in vogue. Zorzi had these verses printed and distributed. My poor lines became one of the factors in my subsequent misfortunes. They gained me the dislike of M. Condulmer, a person of much political influence. This good gentleman was over sixty, but was still alert and vigorous; he was fond of money and play. It was said he practised usury on the sly, but he was careful to maintain a good reputation, and passed for a saint, as he went to daily Mass at Saint Mark's, and had been seen on many occasions weeping before the crucifix. He had another reason to dislike me besides my lampoons. Before I appeared on the scene he was first in the good graces of the wife of Zorzi, who after my advent grew cool towards him; he was also part proprietor of the theatre of Saint Angelo, and the non-success of the poetical abbé's pieces affected his pocket painfully.

Unfortunately for me he was appointed Councillor of State, and in this quality served for eight months as inquisitor, in which eminent and diabolical position it was easy for him to insinuate to his colleagues that it would be a good thing to put me in prison. The notorious 'Leads'—*I Piombi*—were made for disturbers of the public peace and repose, like myself.

At the beginning of the winter came the astonishing news of the treaty of alliance between the houses of France and Austria. This treaty totally changed the political face of Europe, and had hitherto been considered by the powers as impossible. All Italy rejoiced at the alliance, for had the slightest friction arisen between France and Austria, her fair fields would have become the theatre of war. This marvellous treaty was conceived and concluded by a young minister who until then had been looked upon merely in the light of a *bel esprit*. The whole thing was planned in secret, in the year 1750, by Madame de Pompadour, the Comte de Kaunitz, and the Abbé de Bernis, who was not made ambassador to Venice till the following year.

For two hundred and forty years the houses of Hapsburg and Bourbon had been at enmity: the reconciliation between them, which was brought about by de Bernis, lasted barely forty years, but was probably as durable a one as could possibly be made between kingdoms so essentially opposed to one another. After the signing of the treaty de Bernis was made Minister of Foreign Affairs. Three years later he re-established the French parliament, and as a reward received a cardinal's hat, but almost immediately after this honour he was disgraced and practically exiled to Rome.

What both he and I had foreseen, came to pass: he was not able to return to Venice, and in him I lost a most devoted and powerful protector. He signified to M. M. in a letter, breaking the fact to her in the most affectionate and delicate manner, that their separation was a final one. I have never seen a human being so heartbroken; her grief was such that I believe she would have succumbed to it, had I not fortunately prepared her for the blow, some time before it fell. I received instructions from de Bernis to sell the casino and all that it contained, and to hand the proceeds to M. M.; only the books and engravings were to be sent to Paris in charge of the concierge. Truly they constituted a pretty breviary for a future cardinal!

So by the middle of January we had no casino. I could now only see M. M. at the convent grating. She came to me there, one day early in February, looking like a dying woman. She told me she thought she would not live long, and gave me her jewel-case, containing her diamonds and the greater part of her money; she only reserved a small sum for herself. She also gave me all the curious books she possessed, and her love-letters; if she recovered I was to return them to her, but in case of her death I was to keep everything. I promised her that I would live at Murano till she was better, and old Laura found me a furnished room and lent me her pretty daughter, Tonine, as a servant. I was terribly afraid Tonine would console me to her own destruction. I meant to ask Laura to

Old Laura lends him her daughter as a servant.

provide me some one plainer, but I thought better—or worse—of it, and Tonine stayed and devoted herself to my comfort.

A few days later I heard through C. C. that her friend was delirious, and had raved loudly for over three days, in French fortunately, or she would certainly have put the decorous nuns to flight. This was the worst day of her illness. The moment her senses returned to her, she asked C. C. to write and tell me that she would be sure to recover if I would promise to carry her off as soon as her health would allow of a long journey. I said she might count on me, that my own life depended on it. From that time she began to mend; by the end of March she was out of danger. She was not to leave her room till after Easter. I went on living at Murano, and Tonine, my pretty servant, made the time pass pleasantly for me. M. M.'s letters were loving, but they had ceased to interest me. It was difficult and tiresome to me to answer them.

At the end of April I saw M. M. at the convent grating. She was very thin and much changed. I flatter myself that my behaviour inspired her with confidence, and that she did not notice the change which a new love had worked in me. I dared not take the hope of the projected elopement from her, lest she fell ill again. I kept my casino, which didn't cost much, and went to see M. M. twice a week, and on other days I stopped at the casino and made love to Tonine.

One evening when I was supping at the casino of Mr. Murray, the English resident, with my friend Dr. Righellini, I purposely turned the conversation on a beautiful nun, M. E., whom we had seen that afternoon at the Convent of the Virgins, a religious house under the jurisdiction of the Doge.

'Between Masons,' said the Englishman, 'I think if you asked M. E. to supper, and offered her a handsome present, she would come.'

'Some one has been hoaxing you, my dear friend,' I answered, 'or you would not say such a thing. It is anything but easy to gain access to the most beautiful nun in Venice.'

'She is not the most beautiful nun in Venice. Mother M. M. of Murano is far better looking.'

'I have heard of her,' said I. 'I have even seen her—once. But I do not think that she could be bribed.'

'I think she could,' said he, smiling; 'and I am not over credulous.'

'I will wager anything you are mistaken.' His wager.

'You would lose your wager. As you have only seen her once you would perhaps not recognise her portrait.'

'Indeed I should. Her appearance made a great impression on me.'

He took half a dozen miniatures out of a table drawer.

'If you recognise any of them,' said he, 'I hope you will be discreet.'

'You can count on my silence,' said I. 'Here are three whom I know, and one who is certainly like M. M., but so many women have traits in common.'

He persisted, and even went so far as to tell me, under the seal of secrecy, that M. M. had supped with him in her nun's dress, and had accepted a purse containing five hundred sequins. He had never been to see her at the convent, he said, for fear of arousing the suspicions of her official lover, the French ambassador. Although I could not stifle the rising doubts in my mind, I still had sufficient faith in M. M. to wager Murray five hundred sequins that he was mistaken, and we determined to decide the wager as follows. He was to make a rendezvous with the supposed M. M. through Capsucefalo, the man who had introduced him to her. As soon as she arrived at the appointed place he would leave her for an hour or so, and then he and I were to go to the convent at Murano and summon M. M. to the parlour. If the answer came that she was ill, or busy, I was to admit that I had lost the wager. He was moreover to take his nun, whether she was M. M. or no, to my casino. My pretty Tonine was to prepare a cold supper and to keep out of the way on the fateful night.

We dined there first, Righellini, Murray, and I, and Tonine

waited on us. Murray and Righellini were delighted with her. She confided to me afterwards her amazement at seeing the Englishman[1] walk away as fresh and steady as possible with six bottles of my good wine in him. He looked like a handsome Bacchus, limned by Rubens.

When we came to the convent gate I was more dead than alive, though I did not love M. M. any longer. I entered the parlour with my Englishman. It was lighted by four candles, and after a few moments of the most horrible suspense my dear M. M. appeared, with a lay sister, holding small flat candlesticks in their hands. Murray looked very serious, and did not even smile when M. M., brilliant and beautiful, addressed him.

'I am afraid,' she said, 'that I am making you miss the first act of the opera?'

'I had rather see you, for one moment, madame, than the best opera in the world.'

'You are English, I think, sir?'

'Yes, madame.'

'The English nation is now the first in the world, for it is as free as it is powerful. Gentlemen, I am your very humble servant.'

So we were dismissed! As soon as we were outside the door of my casino—'Well,' said I, 'are you convinced?'

'Come along, and hold your tongue. We will talk about this when we get home; meantime, you must come in here with me. What should I do left alone for four hours with the creature in there? Capsucefalo is to fetch the pretended nun at midnight, and I promise you some fun. I shall throw them both out of the window.'

The false nun.

When I entered the room with Murray, the false nun flung a handkerchief over her face, her mantle and her mask were on the bed. She began to abuse Murray for introducing a third person, but he silenced her by brutally calling her by her right name. We found a pair of pistols and a dagger

[1] Murray was a Manxman.

hidden in the folds of her dress, which we took from her, threatening her with imprisonment if she made the slightest disturbance. After some protest she decided that it would be better to make friends with us, if possible, and told us the whole story. Capsucefalo had told her that there was a lot of money to be made out of Murray if she were only clever enough to play the game under his directions. She had studied the rôle until he had pronounced her perfect in it; but she was only a poor courtesan from Venice, whose name was Innocente.

We sat down to supper and supped well. We thought fit to utterly neglect the creature, and did not even offer her a glass of wine. Shortly after midnight we heard some one knocking gently at the door. Murray opened it, and admitted Capsucefalo, who did not change countenance when he saw me, but said, 'Oh, it is you, is it? Well, you know how to keep your mouth shut.'

Murray, who was playing carelessly with the fair one's pistols, asked him quietly, where he was going when he left us, and where he intended to take his protégée.

'Back to the convent.'

'I hardly think so. I fancy it is more likely you will keep each other company in prison.'

'I think not,' said the other, in no wise disconcerted; 'for the affair would make too much noise, and the laugh would not be altogether on your side. Come,' said he, addressing his companion, 'it is time we were off.'

Murray, calm and cold as became an Englishman, poured Capsucefalo out some chambertin, and the scoundrel had the impudence to drink to his health.

'That is a fine ring you have on,' said Murray; 'may I look at it more closely? It is a good diamond; what did you give for it?'

'Four hundred sequins,' answered Capsucefalo somewhat abashed.

'I will keep it at that price,' said Murray, putting it

into his pocket, 'and we will cry quits, eh, procurer of nuns?'

Capsucefalo remained for a moment speechless, then with a low bow he left the room, followed by his companion.

I congratulated Murray on the neat way in which he had outwitted the knave. He laughed, and shrugging his shoulders, said, 'That is how legends grow; but for you I should have been firmly convinced that the nuns of Venice are as immoral as they are lovely!'

I told the whole story to M. M., and it was curious to note her changes of expression—fear, anger, indignation and pleasure—when I told her that the gentleman who accompanied me to the parlour was the English consul. She expressed disdain when I told her that he had said he would willingly give a hundred guineas a month for the privilege of seeing her from time to time, even with the grating between them. She teased me about Tonine, and I confessed. She told me that I owed it to her, however, to have Capsucefalo put away, and I was obliged to promise her that if the resident did not get rid of him I would. However, two or three days later, when I was dining with Lady Murray (English women, when they are the daughters of titled people, retain the parental title after marriage[1]), Murray told me that he had spoken to the Secretary of the Inquisition about the affair, and that Capsucefalo had been sent back to Cephalonia, and forbidden to re-enter Venice on pain of death. As for the courtesan, no one knew what became of her.

He dines with Lady Murray and her daughters.

About this time M. de Bernis wrote to me, and to M. M., begging us to think seriously before putting our project of running away together into execution. He said that I must talk sense to our nun, and point out to her that if we went to Paris it would be impossible for him to protect us, and that not all his influence could guarantee our safety. We agreed with him and wept, but indeed M. M. was growing convinced, and I had very little more trouble with her.

[1] Casanova instructs us here out of the depths of his ignorance.

I think that in every man's life there are distinct periods governed by good or bad luck. I was now entering upon one of these latter. I was unsuccessful in whatever I undertook. I had had a long run of luck in love and at cards both. I had won steadily for many months, but now, though love still smiled upon me, chance forsook me altogether. I lost not only my own money, but M. M.'s. At her request I sold her diamonds, but their price went the way of our other possessions. It could now no longer be a question of eloping together. We had nothing to elope on.

Murray, the English resident, makes him a proposition.

One day Murray made me a proposal with regard to Tonine, which I did not feel I should be justified in keeping from her. I loved her, but I knew well enough that we should not be able to spend the rest of our lives together. If I would give her up he offered to establish her in well-furnished apartments where he could see her when he chose. She was to have a maid, a cook, and thirty sequins a month for table expenses, excepting wine, which Murray would attend to himself. He would allow her an annuity of two hundred crowns a year, to which she would be entitled after she had been a year with him. Tonine cried, though she liked the Englishman well enough, except when he tried to speak Venetian, which made her die of laughing. She made me talk of it to her mother; such details were, she said, a little delicate to be spoken of between mother and daughter. Her mother was delighted, however, so that was settled.

Then I went to see M. M. She was sad, for C. C.'s father had died, and her people had removed her from the convent, and were trying to marry her to a lawyer. C. C. had left a letter for me, swearing eternal fidelity. I answered honestly that I had no prospects, and left her free. All the same C. C. did not marry till after my escape from 'The Leads,' when she knew that I could never again set foot in Venice. I saw her twenty-nine years later, a sad little widow. If I were in Venice now I certainly would not offer to marry her, it would be an impertinence at my age, but I would share my

little all with her, and we would live together like brother and sister.

The reader will remember my satires on the Abbé Chiari. He had answered them in a pamphlet in which I was somewhat roughly handled. I replied to this pamphlet, and threatened the abbé with the bastinado if he were not more careful in his way of speaking in future. He took no public notice of this threat, but I received an anonymous letter bidding me mind myself and leave the abbé alone. About this same time a man named Manuzzi (whom I afterwards found out to be a vile spy in the pay of the inquisitors) offered to get me some diamonds on credit, and on this pretended business obtained admission to my rooms. While there he began to turn over my books and manuscripts, showing special interest in those which dealt with magic. Like a fool I showed him some books dealing with elementary spirits. My readers will do me the justice to believe that I was not the dupe of this nonsense. I merely amused myself with it, as one may amuse oneself with a clever toy. A few days later the traitor told me that a certain person, whose name he was not at liberty to mention, would give me a thousand sequins for five of my books, provided he was convinced of their authenticity. I confided them to him, and in twenty-four hours he brought them back, saying that the would-be purchaser feared they were forgeries. Some years afterwards I learnt that he had taken them to the Secretary of the State Inquisitors, and the fact of my having such books in my possession was sufficient to convince this official that I was a magician.

He is proud of his books, and shows them.

Everything went against me in this fatal month. A certain Madame Memno took it into her head that I was teaching her son the precepts of atheism. She appealed to the uncle of M. de Bragadin to check me in my nefarious career, and naturally the old man was only too glad of an excuse to attack me, for like all de Bragadin's family he was jealous of me. He declared I had obtained an undue influence over his nephew by means of my *cabbala*.

Things were growing serious; an *auto-da-fé* might even have become possible, for the things I was accused of concerned the Holy Office, and the Holy Office is a ferocious beast with whom it is dangerous to meddle. There were certain circumstances connected with me, however, which made it difficult for them to shut me up in the ecclesiastical prisons of the Inquisition, and because of this it was finally decided that the State Inquisitors should deal with me. I learnt afterwards that a paid denunciator, supported by two witnesses, had been found to solemnly declare that I did not believe in God, and worshipped the devil. As a proof of this it was alleged that when I lost at play I was never heard to curse Satan! I was also accused of not observing Fridays and other days of abstinence. I was suspected of being a Freemason, and was known to be intimate with foreign ministers who doubtless, said my traducers, paid me large sums of money for information I obtained from my patrician friends. This was a long and serious list of charges against me. It was obvious that I was looked on with disfavour by many influential personages, and several of my real friends, who were truly interested in me, advised me to travel for a time, but I was too obstinate to listen to their counsels. I knew I was innocent, and therefore I thought I had no cause for fear, besides which the actual troubles and anxieties with which I was beset prevented me from attending to what I considered imaginary difficulties. I was heavily in debt, and had pawned all my valuables. Fortunately I had confided my miniatures, papers, and letters to my old friend, Madame Manzoni. How necessary this precaution was my readers will soon see. On returning from the theatre one night I found my door had been forced; the Grand Inquisitor himself, my landlady told me, accompanied by a body of police, had paid me a domiciliary visit, and had turned over everything in my apartment. They told the woman they were looking for a large case of salt, which was an article of contraband; of course they did not find the pretended object of their search, and after

a thorough investigation of my belongings, retired, seemingly empty-handed.

Certain hints of arrest: M. de Bragadin urges him to fly.

'The case of salt,' said my old friend, de Bragadin, 'is nothing but a pretext. I was a state inquisitor for several months, and I know something of their ways. They do not break open doors in search of contraband goods. Believe me, when I tell you, you must leave Venice at once. Go to Fusina, and from thence to Florence, and do not return till I tell you you can do so without risk.'

Blind and presumptuous as I was, I would not listen to his advice. He then, and as a last resource, begged me to take up my abode in the palace with him, for a patrician's palace is sacred, and the archers of the police do not dare to cross the threshold without a special order from the tribunal. Such an order is rarely or never given.

I am ashamed to say I refused even this request from the dear and worthy old man to whom I owed so much love and gratitude; had I listened to him I should have saved myself much misery, and him much grief. Long and earnestly he urged me to take some precautions for my safety, but in vain. I was moved when I saw him actually weeping; but as I did not want to yield, I begged him to spare me the sight of his tears. With a strong effort he controlled himself, made a few casual remarks, and then with a kind, affectionate smile embraced me, saying, 'Perhaps this is the last time we shall see each other, but *Fata viam invenient.*'

I returned his embrace and left him; his prediction was fulfilled. I never saw him again; he died eleven years later.

I was not in the least concerned about my safety, but I was troubled about my debts. On leaving the Bragadin Palace that last time I went to see one of my principal creditors, to persuade him to grant me a delay of eight days before forcing me to pay what I owed him. After a painful interview with this man I went home to bed.

The next morning, before it was light, the door of my room was flung open, and the terrible Grand Inquisitor entered.

'Are you Jacques Casanova?' he asked.

He then commanded me to rise and dress myself, and to give him all the papers and documents in my possession, whether written by myself or by others.

'In virtue of whose order?' I asked.

'The order of the State Tribunal,' he replied, and I knew there was nothing for me to do but to obey.

CHAPTER XV

A VENETIAN STATE PRISON

Who can explain the influence which certain words exercise over us? Strong in my courage and my innocence, I was yet positively petrified by the word 'tribunal,' and could only passively obey.

Messer Grande.

'Take them,' said I, pointing to the papers which covered my writing-table. Messer Grande stuffed them into a sack, and then told me I must give up the bound manuscripts I possessed. I showed him where they were hidden, and I knew now that it was Manuzzi who had betrayed me, for these were the books he had offered to buy—the *Clavicula of Solomon*, the *Zecor-ben*, a *Picatris*, a full *Essay on the Planetary Hours*, and the conjurations necessary for holding colloquies with demons of all descriptions. Those who knew I had these books thought that I was a great magician, a supposition which had somewhat flattered me.

Messer Grande confiscates his books.

Messer Grande also took the books I had on my table, *Petrarch*, *Ariosto*, *Horace*, the *Military Philosopher*, a manuscript which Mathilde[1] had given me, the *Portier des Chartreux*, and *Aretino*.

While these things were being gathered up, I dressed myself mechanically, shaved, put on a laced shirt, and my best clothes. Messer Grande watched me imperturbably, dressing as if for a wedding. There were about forty archers outside the door, which showed they expected some difficulty in arresting me! Two would have been enough. It is odd that in

[1] Probably a slip of Casanova's for M.M.?

London, where every one is brave, one man can arrest another single-handed. Among cowards thirty are not considered too many: it is, perhaps, because the coward turned assailant is more frightened than the coward whom he assails! Anyhow in Venice I have often seen a single man stand up against twenty policemen, and escape from them in the end; and I remember once in Paris helping a friend to get away from forty vile myrmidons of the law!

I was taken to the Grand Inquisitor's house, and locked up in a room there. I was quite incapable of thinking or making any plans for my defence, and I spent four hours dozing on a sofa, waking up every now and then, only to fall asleep again, as though under the influence of some powerful narcotic. About three o'clock the captain of the archers came in and told me he had orders to conduct me to 'The Leads.'[1] In silence I followed him; we took a gondola, and after many twistings and turnings, entered the Grand Canal, and landed at the prison quay. After going up and down several staircases, we crossed an enclosed bridge, connecting the ducal palace with the prison, and spanning a narrow canal, which is called the 'rio di Palazzo.' We crossed a long gallery, and entered a room in which sat an individual in patrician dress, who, after looking me up and down, said, 'Put him in safe keeping.' This man was the secretary of the inquisitors, Domenico Cavalli. He was evidently ashamed to speak Venetian before me, for he ordered my detention in the Tuscan *patois*. I was handed over to the guardian of the prison, who held an enormous bunch of keys. I followed him up two little flights of stairs and down a gallery, ending in a locked door. Beyond

[1] The prison took its name from the fact that the roof was covered with sheets of lead instead of tiles. The garrets of the palace were divided into cells which formed the prison, and were entered by a narrow staircase from the Salle Bussola. In the space between the last room and the roof were a dozen cells, where state prisoners were confined, but at the present day the partitions are down to make a depôt for paper, and the prison is suppressed. It was by the last window on the side of the Bridge of Sighs that Casanova escaped. Victor Hugo describes 'the Leads' in *Angelo, Tyrant of Padua*.

this door was another gallery, and another door opening on to a long dirty garret, ill lighted by a window in the roof. At first I thought this garret was my destination, but I was mistaken, for, taking up a huge key, the gaoler opened a heavy door, barred with iron, and only about three feet and a half high, with a small round hole in the middle; he made a sign to me to pass through, but at that moment I was busily staring at an iron machine solidly clamped to the wall, in the shape of a horse-shoe, and about fifteen inches in diameter.

He talks with the gaoler.

'I see, sir,' said the gaoler smiling, 'that you want to know the use of that little instrument. When their Excellencies order some one to be strangled, he is seated on a stool, his back against the wall, that collar round his neck; a silken cord goes through the holes at the two ends, and passes over a wheel; the executioner turns a crank, and the condemned man yields up his soul to God! So we have every reason to believe, for, thank Heaven, the confessor does not leave him till he is dead.'

'Most ingenious,' said I, 'and I think it must be you who have the honour of turning the crank.' He did not answer, but made me another sign, in reply to which I passed through the door; I had to bend myself double to do so. He locked me in, and then asked me through the grated hole what I would like to eat. I answered that I had not thought about eating so far, whereupon he left me, and I heard him carefully fasten the doors behind him.

There was a window in the cell, about two feet wide, crossed by iron bars, the thickness of a man's thumb. This formed sixteen panes, five inches square. This window would have let in plenty of light had it not been half blocked by an immense oaken roof beam. I could not stand upright, as the walls were only five feet and a half high; on one side was a kind of alcove, capable of holding a bed, but there was no bed, or table, or chair, or furniture of any kind, except a small tub, and a narrow bench screwed to the wall, four feet above the floor. On this bench I laid my paduasoy mantle, my beauti-

ful new coat, and my hat, trimmed with a long white feather and Spanish point lace. It was terribly hot. I went to the hole in the door to get some air, and saw several enormous rats running about freely in the outer garret. These animals have always been abhorrent to me, and make my blood run cold. I hastily shut up the hole with a wooden shutter which hung on the inside.

First hours in prison.

I passed eight hours, leaning my arms on the window ledge, silent and motionless. The sound of a clock striking roused me; it was strange that no one came near me. I was not hungry, but I was thirsty, and had a bitter taste in my mouth. After another interval of three hours I grew furious. I shouted and yelled, and kicked against the walls and doors; but all to no purpose. After an hour of this exercise I shut the grating, lest the rats should get in, and lay full length on the floor. I was now convinced that the barbarous inquisitors had abandoned me to die of starvation. Yet I failed to see how I had merited such treatment. I was a libertine, a gambler, outspoken, and too fond, perhaps, of the less innocent pleasures of life, but I had committed no crime against the state. Varying my meditations with curses and imprecations, worn out with fatigue, tortured with hunger and thirst, God was good to me—I fell asleep.

God is good to him: he sleeps.

It was pitch dark when I awoke. I was lying on my left side on the hard narrow plank. I stretched out my right hand to find my handkerchief, which I had by me, when to my horror it encountered another hand, stiff and cold as ice. I have never in my life been so frightened, and it was several minutes before I recovered my senses sufficiently to perceive that it was my own left hand I was grasping; it had become insensible through the hardness of the boards, and the weight of my body. This incident, trivial in itself, made me think. I saw I was in a position which distorted and exaggerated everything, so that what was true appeared false, and what was false appeared true. I determined to be on my guard against the chimeras my heated imagination was certain to

conjure up; for the first time in my life, at the age of thirty, I called to my aid the philosophy whose germs had always been dormant in me. Many men die without ever having really reflected in their lives, and this not because they are lacking in intelligence, but because circumstances of a sufficiently extraordinary nature have never arisen to shake them out of their routine.

At last the day began to break, after what seemed an interminable night, and I heard the sound of bolts being withdrawn. The harsh voice of the gaoler came through the door, 'Well, have you had time to think of what you would like to eat?'

I replied civilly that I should like some rice soup, boiled beef, a roast of some kind, some bread, wine, and water. I saw that he was astonished at my not complaining, and he asked if I did not wish for a bed and some furniture? 'For,' said he, 'if you think you are only here for one day you are mistaken.'

'Bring me what you think is necessary.'

'Where am I to go for these things? Here is a pencil and paper, write down what you want.'

I made a list of the things I required, clothes, furniture, and the books the inquisitors had taken out of my room.

'Not so fast, not so fast,' said the brute; 'cross off books, paper, pens, looking-glass, and razors—all those are forbidden fruit here; and give me some money to pay for your dinner.'

I had three sequins in my pocket, and I gave him one, and he went off to serve, as I afterwards learned, the seven other prisoners who were confined in the cells under the leads. He reappeared at noon, with the furniture and food. I was given an ivory spoon to eat with, knives and forks were forbidden.

He asks for books that are not edifying.

'You must order what you want for to-morrow,' he said, 'for I can only come to you once a day. The secretary says he will send you some instructive books to read; those you asked for are not edifying.'

'Tell him I wish to thank him for having given me a cell to myself.'

'You do not know what you are saying. You have been put by yourself as a punishment, you will soon long for company.'

He was right; a man shut up alone in a dismal place where he can only see the person who brings him his food for a few minutes once a day becomes wretched. I began to crave for human society, and would have welcomed an assassin or a leper. Solitude in a prison cell means despair; one must know it from actual experience, and I would not wish my worst enemy such a fate. If a man of letters is supplied with paper and ink, his misfortunes are lessened by nine-tenths, but my persecutors did not want to make things pleasant to me.

I set my table and sat down to dinner, but though I had been fasting for forty-eight hours, I could only swallow a few spoonfuls of soup. I passed the day in my armchair, but when night came it was impossible for me to close my eyes, for three reasons: firstly, the rats; secondly, the terrible din made by the clock of Saint Mark's, which sounded as if it were in my room; and thirdly, the thousands of fleas which invaded my body, bit and stung me, poisoning my blood to such an extent that I suffered from spasmodic contractions amounting to convulsions. When Laurence, the gaoler, came to make my bed and sweep out my cell, he brought me two big volumes, which I carefully abstained from opening, as I knew that the sight of their titles would cause me a movement of indignation, which it would be impossible for me to suppress, and the spy would carefully describe it to the inquisitors. One of the books was called *The Mystical City*, by Sister Mary of Jesus of Agrada.[1] The other was *The Adoration of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ*, by the Jesuit, Father Caravita. This second one

Rats and fleas.

The Mystical City, by Sister Mary of Jesus of Agrada.

[1] Maria d'Agrada was a member of the Coronel family, all of whom were singularly religious. They founded a convent in 1619 at Agrada, of which Maria, born 1602, became superior. Her confessor ordered her to burn the life of the Blessed Virgin, which she had written in obedience to a pretended revelation. She did so, but soon after recommenced and finished the work, which is a strange example of mysticism.

did not appeal to me particularly, but *The Mystical City* looked interesting.

It was the outpouring of the extravagant imagination of an over-devout, melancholy, cloistered Spanish nun. Her chimerical, fantastic, and monstrous visions were dignified with the name of 'revelations.' She claimed to have received a divine mission to write the life of the Blessed Virgin, the information and instructions necessary for the work being furnished by the Holy Ghost Himself! She dated the life of Mary, not from the day of her birth, but from that of her immaculate conception in the womb of her mother Anne.

This Sister Mary of Agrada was the superior of a convent of Cordeliers, founded by herself. Having narrated in detail everything which her divine heroine did during the nine months she passed in the maternal breast, she proceeds to inform us that at the age of three years old she swept out the house, aided by nine hundred angel servants whom God sent her, and who were commanded by Michael, who came and went as a messenger between her and God.

The most striking thing about this book is the strong sense the reader has that nothing was invented by the author, fanatic though she was; invention cannot rise to such heights; everything was written in full faith and conviction, and bears the stamp of sincerity. It is the work of an exalted brain, drunk with the idea of God, revealing to others, without a shadow of pride, those things believed to have been revealed to it by the Holy Ghost.

The book was published with the permission of the Holy and Horrible Inquisition, and this was, to my mind, the most astonishing thing of all about it, for, so far from exciting zeal or fervour for religion in one's mind, it seemed to me only calculated to make one treat Christian mysteries and Christian dogma as fabulous.

I passed a week over this *chef-d'œuvre* of aberration, and began to feel its obsession. As soon as I went to sleep the influence of Sister Mary of Agrada made itself felt, aided no

doubt by melancholy, bad food, and want of air and exercise. My extravagant dreams amused me when I recalled them waking; if I had had the materials at hand I would have written them down, and, who knows, might have produced an even madder work than that poor maiden's. And this shows me how mistaken we are when we think the mind of a man is a positive force; it is only a relative one. The Spanish nun's book held everything to unhinge a well-balanced mind, but that mind must first be isolated, put in 'The Leads' and deprived of all occupation.

Many years after, in the year 1767, I was going from Pampeluna to Madrid. We stopped to dine at a little town in Old Castile. Such an ugly and dull little town! How I laughed when I learned it was Agrada!

'It was here, then,' I thought, 'that the brain of that holy maniac conceived her wonderful book.' An old priest, who was highly edified at the interest I showed in the historian of the Mother of Christ, pointed out to me the place where the book was written, and told me that the father, mother, sister, in fact all the family of the blessed biographer, had been great saints. He told me that Spain was soliciting her canonisation from Rome at the same time as that of the venerable Palafox.

At the end of nine or ten days I had spent all my money, and when Laurence asked for more I had to tell him I had none.

'Where shall I go for some?'

'Nowhere.'

My taciturnity and laconic way of speaking displeased this ignorant, talkative, and curious fellow much. Next day he told me the tribunal allowed me fifty sols a day, which was paid to him; he would give me an account of it every month, and spend my savings as I wished.

Seventy-five francs a month was more than I required for food, especially as heat and inaction had deprived me of all appetite. We were then in the dog-days, and the sun's beams darting down on the leaden roof of my prison kept me, as it

were, in a perpetual vapour bath. I had now been fifteen days in this hell, and, incredible as it may seem, during all this time nature had absolutely refused to fulfil her functions; when at last she consented to act, I thought my last hour had come, and to this day I am subject to a cruel infirmity due to my sufferings in prison.

He is ill.

I became so ill that Laurence decided to ask for a doctor. A grave, kind personage came, who bled me and gave me lemonade and barley-water. He told me that my mind had much influence on my body, and that I was unduly melancholy.

'It is not surprising,' said I, 'considering the two books which form my whole library.'

He came to see me four times, and brought me Boëtius. His visits and the change of literature had such a salutary effect that by the end of September I was comparatively well. I now began to cherish a hope of recovering my liberty, and occupied my mind day and night with schemes of escape.

Laurence allowed me as a special favour to go out in the garret while my cell was swept. I was standing there one day surrounded by the archers of the guard, when the great central beam of the roof began to move slowly towards the right, and then with a jerky movement fell back into its original place. As soon as I could collect my thoughts, I knew that this must be due to an earthquake. Such was my frame of mind that this event caused me a sensation of pleasure, and when four or five seconds after the same movement was repeated, I cried out: '*Un' altra, un' altra, gran Dio, ma più forte!*'[1]

In those few seconds of time I had speculated on the possibility of the palace crumbling to pieces, and of my being flung safe and sound on the Square of Saint Mark.

This shock which we felt was the vibration of the terrible earthquake that destroyed the city of Lisbon.

Description of 'The Leads.'

'The Leads,' where state prisoners are confined, means simply the attics under the leads of the ducal palace. To reach them one must pass through the palace and over the bridge I have

[1] 'Another, another, great God, but stronger!'

already spoken of, and which has been nicknamed the 'Bridge of Sighs.' One can only get to the cells by passing through the hall called the 'Bussola,' where the inquisitors assemble. The secretary keeps the key of this hall, and only gives it to the gaoler in the morning, when he is waiting on the prisoners. The floor of my cell, which looked west, was directly over the hall where the inquisitors assemble at night after the daily sitting of the Council of Ten.

There seemed to be only one possible way of escape, and that was to pierce the floor of my cell; but to do this I must have instruments; to get instruments I must bribe one of the archers, and I had no money. But having once got the idea into my head, I was not easily discouraged. I have always held that what a man wants to do, that he will do, in spite of all difficulties; but he must begin early, for after a certain age fortune forsakes one, and cannot be whistled back.

Laurence informed me that there was a new secretary, M. Pietro Businello, a good fellow whom I had known in Paris, on his way to London in his quality of consul of the Venetian Republic. I was not sorry.

One afternoon the bolts were shot back, and Laurence appeared, leading in a young man, weeping bitterly. After having taken off his handcuffs, he pushed him over towards me, and left the cell without deigning a word of explanation. As he was four or five inches shorter than I was, he could stand upright, and having dried his eyes, he began to make the tour of the cell. As he drew near the bed, on which I was lying, I bade him sit down.

'Who are you?' I asked.

Story of young Maggiorini.

'My name is Maggiorini, from Vicenza. My father is a coachman to the Poggiani. I was apprenticed to a hairdresser for five years, and on leaving him went as *valet de chambre* to the Comte de X. I had to dress the hair of his only daughter, and I fell in love with her; she returned my passion, and for some time we were happy. Then circumstances made it necessary for us to confide in some one. The confidante whom

we chose, her old nurse, told her that she felt it was her duty to inform her father. We begged her to wait a day or two, and in the meantime we made up our minds to elope. My sweetheart laid her hands on all the money she could, and on her departed mother's diamonds. We were to leave this very night for Milan. Yesterday the count sent for me, and giving me a letter, told me to go at once and deliver it at a certain address in Venice. He spoke so kindly and quietly that I had not the slightest suspicion of what he was preparing for me. I hastened off with the fatal letter, and as I was leaving the house to which I had carried it, I was arrested and taken to the guardhouse, where they kept me all night. From the guardhouse I was brought here. But it seems to me, sir, that I have a right to consider the young countess as my wife?'

'You are mistaken.'

'But nature——'

'Nature, when man is fool enough to listen to her, brings a man to "The Leads"—where you now are.'

The poor young man began to weep afresh. He was a nice-looking boy, honest, open, and evidently very much in love. I forgave the young countess her indiscretion, while at the same time I condemned her father for exposing her to such temptation. If one lets a wolf into the sheepfold, one must not complain if a lamb gets snapped up sometimes! I gave him half my supper and the mattress off my bed, and the next day they brought him a mattress and fifteen sols' worth of food: this was the sum a paternal tribunal allowed him for his maintenance. I pointed out to Laurence that with my fifty sols he could feed us both, and might spend the surplus on having Masses said for himself, as he was very pious. He was so charmed with this proposal that he told us we could walk in the garret for half an hour. This promenade suited my health and my plan of evasion. At the end of the rat-haunted garret was a lot of old furniture, two large wooden cases, and a pile of manuscript papers.[1] I took up a handful

[1] These were doubtless part of the very mass of Venetian archives that were afterwards destroyed by fire mentioned by Armand Baschet.

one day and carried them back to my cell. They were the reports of criminal trials, and most diverting. I was able to read what had certainly at one time been kept very secret. Some of them dated from two or three centuries back, and were full of singular interrogations and replies, most indicative of the style and manners of the day. Some of them were veritable *chroniques scandaleuses*, dealing with the behaviour of confessors with their penitents, guardians with their wards, professors with their pupils, and so forth, and procured me many an hour's distraction. Among the rubbish was a warming-pan, a boiler, a fire-shovel, some tongs, old candlesticks, from which I judged that some bygone illustrious prisoner had been allowed the use of these objects. But what interested me most was an iron bolt, as thick as a man's thumb, and a foot and a half long. I touched none of these things, for as yet my plans were not sufficiently mature for me to know what would be useful.

He finds and reads the State papers of the Venetian Republic.

One morning they took away my companion; and this was a real sorrow to me, for ignorant and unlettered though he was, he was well-meaning, and he was a human being. Laurence told me he had been sent to the prisons called '*Les Quatres*,' which are in the basement; they are very dark, but the prisoners are allowed a lamp. I heard afterwards that the poor fellow was there for five years, and was then sent to Cerigo for another ten! What ultimately became of him I do not know.

Fortunately they did not deprive me of my daily half-hour in the gallery, and I now began to examine it more closely. One of the cases was filled with writing-paper, pens, and balls of string; the other was nailed down. A piece of polished black marble, about twelve inches long, fascinated me. I looked at it longingly every day, without in the least knowing what to do with it. At last the temptation to possess it grew too strong, and I slipped it into my pocket. When I got back into my cell I carefully hid it among my shirts.

CHAPTER XVI

'THE LEADS'

LAURENCE, who was a great gossip, could not understand how it was I never questioned him. He wanted to plume himself on his brilliant faculty of discretion. He began to account for my attitude by supposing that I did not consider his information worth having, and this piqued his *amour-propre*. Anyhow, he began to volunteer scraps of news.

'I believe,' said he one day, 'that you will soon have another visitor, for the six cells up here are all full, and if any person of quality comes, of the kind that cannot be sent to "*Les Quatres*," he needs must be quartered on you. At "*Les Quatres*" all sorts of folks get taken in; but here it is different, we only have distinguished characters, whose crimes are unknown to the vulgar. If you only knew, sir, who are your companions in misfortune, you would be astonished. They say that you yourself are a man of learning, but, you will excuse me, it takes more than *learning* to be treated as you are treated here. Fifty sols a day is a good round sum. Three francs a day are allowed for a citizen, four for a gentleman, and eight for a foreign count. I know, for it all passes through my hands.'

The gaoler sings his own praises.

He then began to sing his own praises.

'I am not a thief, nor a traitor, nor a liar, nor a miser, nor bad-tempered, nor brutal, as my predecessors were, and when I have drunk a pint too much I am all the nicer for it. If my father had sent me to school, and I had learned to read and write, I might by this time be Grand Inquisitor myself,

who knows? Signor André Diedo esteems me highly; my wife, who is only twenty-four, and who does your cooking for you, is very fond of him, and can go and see him whenever she likes. He has her shown in even if he is in bed, a favour he does not accord to any of the Senators, I can tell you. You will get all the new-comers here, but not for long, for as soon as the secretary has found out from their own mouths what he wants to know, he packs them off. If they are foreigners they are taken across the frontier, for the government does not assume the right to dispose of the subjects of other countries. The clemency of the tribunal, sir, is wonderful, there is not another in the world which treats its prisoners so kindly. You may think it hard not to be allowed to write, or receive visits, but if you come to think of it, writing and visiting are a great waste of time.'

The very day after this harangue the gaoler brought me a comrade; a thin, stooping man, about fifty, with a large mouth and bad teeth. He had small grey eyes and thick red eyebrows, which made him look like a screech-owl, and he wore a little wig of black horse-hair, that smelt most disagreeably of oil. He did not say a word all day, though he accepted a share of my dinner. I did not question him, for I knew that sooner or later he would have to talk. Before many days were over I learned that he was a usurer, imprisoned for exacting an extortionate rate of interest. He was led away one day, and returned weeping, to draw out of his boots two purses full of gold. He went off with them, and this was the last I saw of him. I concluded he had been threatened with torture if he did not make restitution.

New Year's Day 1756.

On New Year's Day 1756, Laurence came in with a large packet for me: it contained a dressing-gown, lined with fox-skin, a quilted silk counterpane, and a large bear-skin bag to put my legs in. Imagine my joy at receiving these presents, the more welcome as the cold was now intense; furthermore, I was told I was to receive six sequins a month, with which I could buy what books I liked, and might subscribe to the

Gazette. All this came from my dear old friend and father, M. de Bragadin; Laurence told me he had gone down on his knees to the inquisitors, and begged them with tears to allow him to send me these proofs of his constant affection.

One must have been in a position like mine to feel what I felt at that moment. I wrote in pencil on a scrap of paper—

'I thank the generosity of the tribunal, and the untiring goodness of M. de Bragadin.'

One fine day when I was walking in the garret my eyes fell on the bolt, of which I have already spoken, and I saw in a flash how I could make an offensive and defensive weapon of it.

I carried it away under my dressing-gown, and worked at it for eight days, rubbing it on the bit of marble until I had sharpened it up to a point. I made eight long pyramidal facets, and produced an octagonal dagger, as well proportioned as if it had been turned out by an armourer. It was not achieved without much trouble and fatigue. I had no oil, and had to spit on the stone to moisten it; my right arm became so stiff it was impossible for me to move it, and the palm of my hand was an open wound, but when I looked at my shining weapon I forgot my pains. I was delighted with this tool, though I had as yet no idea how to use it, but the first thing was to hide it from prying eyes. I found a safe place for it in the stuffing of the back of my armchair, and, as I afterwards found, this was the best place I could have chosen.

I own that I am proud of my evasion; not of my success, for good luck had a large share in that, but of my courage and strength of mind in conceiving such a project, in spite of all I had against me.

I was certain that under my cell was the room in which I had seen Cavalli, the secretary. This room was cleaned every morning. The thing to do was to make a hole through the ceiling, let myself down with the sheets of my bed, and hide under the table till the door was opened. If there should be

an archer outside, I must trust to Providence and my weapon to get rid of him. The difficulty was to keep Laurence and his men from sweeping under my bed, more especially as I had particularly asked them to do so, on account of the fleas.

He will not let them sweep under his bed.

I pretended I had a violent cold, and that the dust made me cough. For a few days this worked all right, and then Laurence grew suspicious, came in with a candle, and every corner was swept out. The next morning I pricked my finger, and showing the blood-stained handkerchief to the gaoler, 'You see,' I said, 'what the dust did; I coughed so violently I must have broken a small blood-vessel.'

The doctor was sent for, and when I told him the cause of my illness, he said I was perfectly right, nothing was so bad for the lungs as dust: he told us a young man had just died from the same thing; and, in fact, if I had bribed him, he could not have served me better.

I was too profitable a person for Laurence not to wish to take care of me, and the archers were ordered not to disturb me any more by sweeping, and Laurence was profuse in his apologies, assuring me he had only kept my room clean to please me.

He makes himself a lamp.

The winter nights were very long. I had to pass nineteen mortal hours in the dark. A miserable kitchen-lamp would have made me so happy, but how was I to get it? Truly 'Necessity is the mother of Invention.' I had a small earthen pot, in which I cooked eggs: this filled with salad oil, with a wick made of cotton frayed out of my counterpane, would do for a lamp, but how was I to light it? I asked Laurence to get me some pumice-stone for the toothache from which I pretended to be suffering, and as he did not seem to know what pumice-stone was, I added, as negligently as I could, that a flint would do just as well, if I soaked it in vinegar. The credulous fool gave me half a dozen. I had a large steel buckle on the waistband of my under-drawers, so was now the proud possessor of flint and steel; yet I had to have recourse again to the doctor, and on pretence of a skin

eruption got some flowers of sulphur; under the sleeves of my beautiful coat, between the silk and the lining, the tailor had sewn pieces of *amadou*: flint, steel, matches, tinder, I had them all.

I lighted my lamp and I decided to begin working on the floor the first Monday in Lent; but, alas! I had to wait, for on Carnival Sunday, Laurence brought in a big fat Jew, named Gabriel Schalon, famed for the ability with which he found money for young men of good family whose luck was against them. This Jew was talkative, stupid, and ignorant. I wished him at the bottom of the sea, for I had no intention of taking him into my confidence. I let him into the secret of the lamp, and I learned afterwards that he told Laurence, but the latter evidently attached no importance to it.

On Wednesday in Holy Week, the secretary made his annual visit to the prisoners, and those who wished to obey the law of the Church and keep Easter Sunday might do so, after first signifying their wishes to him. On his appearance the Jew flung himself at his feet, weeping and crying, but his lamentations produced no effect. I merely made him a low bow, which he returned, and for two or three minutes we looked at each other without speaking. Seeing that I had no intention of breaking the silence, he bowed again, and left us. I must have looked very odd with my eight months' beard, and my costume made for a summer's day gala.

On Holy Thursday a Jesuit father came to hear my confession; and on Easter Day a priest brought me the Blessed Sacrament.

My confession was couched in too laconic a fashion for the child of Ignatius. 'Do you pray to God?' he asked me.

'From morning to night, and from night to morning, for in my present situation everything, my agitation, my impatience, the very wanderings of my mind even, must be a prayer to the Divine Wisdom, which alone sees my heart.'

'As it was from us you learned your religion,' said he,

'practise it as we do, pray as we do, and remember *that you will leave here on the day of the saint whose name you bear.*' The priest prophesies his departure.

The father's prophecy made such an impression on my mind, that I passed in review all the saints of the calendar to whom I could possibly lay claim. It could not be Saint James of Compostella, because it was on his day that Messer Grande came and staved in my door. There was Saint George, a saint of fair consideration, but I did not know much about him. I could as a Venetian count on the protection of Saint Mark; then there was Saint James, the brother of Christ, but his day came and went. They say at Padua that Saint Anthony works thirteen miracles a day; he worked none for me. I finished by only having confidence in my Saint Pike, as wielded by my own right arm. Yet the Jesuit had not made such a bad shot after all, for I left *I Piombi* on All Saints' Day.

A fortnight after Easter I was relieved of my troublesome Israelite, so could get to work in earnest.

The flooring was made of larch-wood; after working for six hours I had scraped off a towelful of chips; these I put to one side, intending to empty them behind the cases in the garret. The first plank was four inches thick; when I got through it, I found another of the same size. In three weeks I had made a hole in the three planks of which the flooring was composed, and then I despaired, for below the planks was a layer of bits of marble, forming what is called in Venice a *terrazo marmorino*. This is the ordinary paving of all Venetian houses except the very poorest; the nobles themselves prefer the *terrazo* to the most beautiful *parquet*.

Of course my bolt made no impression on this cement, and I was almost discouraged when I remembered the story of how Hannibal made a passage through the Alps, after softening the rocks with vinegar. I poured all the vinegar I had into the hole, and the next day, whether it was that it had really had some effect, or whether it was that I was stronger for rest, I managed to crumble away the mortar which held the mosaic

together. Under the marble was another plank, which I guessed must be the last.

How I prayed while I worked: strong minds may say that prayer is no good, they do not know what they are talking about! I know from experience how efficacious prayer is, for if help does not come directly from God, it comes from the confidence we feel in Him.

By the twenty-third of August my labour was ended, the hole was sufficiently wide and long for me to squeeze through. There was only now the plaster of the ceiling to remove. I could see through a tiny hole into the secretary's room. I fixed the date of my evasion for the vigil of the feast of Saint Augustine, for I knew that on that day there was an assembly of the Grand Council in another part of the building. This vigil fell on the twenty-seventh.

On the twenty-fifth, a misfortune befell me which, when I think of it now, makes me shiver, in spite of the many years which have gone by since then.

At noon precisely I heard the bolts drawn back. I flung myself into my armchair. Laurence came in, crying: 'I bring you good news, sir. I bring you good news.'

For a moment I thought it was my pardon, and I trembled lest the discovery of the hole should revoke it.

'Follow me,' said the gaoler.

'Wait till I am dressed.'

They change his cell as a favour.

'No, come as you are. You are only going to step out of this villainous cell into another one, which is clean and has been newly done up, where there are two big windows from which you can see half Venice, and where you can stand upright.'

I nearly swooned. 'Give me some vinegar,' said I, 'and go and tell the secretary and the tribunal that I thank them for their kindness, but I beg them to let me stay here. I am used to this place now. I would rather not change.'

'Are you mad, sir?' said Laurence with the most irritating good nature. 'You do not know what is good for you. You

are going to be taken from hell to be put in paradise, and you refuse? Come, come, you must obey. Get up. I will give you my arm, and your books and traps shall be brought after us.'

It was useless to rebel. More dead than alive, I tottered out, leaning on his arm. We went down two narrow corridors, up three steps, across a hall and then through another corridor, only about two feet wide, at the end of which was the door of my new abode. It had a grated window in it, looking on to the corridor, and in this latter were two windows, also grated, which commanded a fine view as far as the Lido; but nothing pleased me then, though afterwards this window was a veritable boon to me, for through it there came a soft fresh breeze, such as I had been long stranger to. My one gleam of consolation was when the archers brought in the armchair in which my tool was hidden. They brought in my bed, and then went to fetch the remainder of my things, but they did not come back.

For two mortal hours I sat in an agony of suspense. The door of my cell remained open, and there was something strangely ominous and unnatural about this. Besides 'The Leads' and '*Les Quatres*' there are nineteen subterranean prisons in the same ducal palace, frightful cells, destined for unhappy creatures who are not condemned to death, though may be their crimes have merited capital punishment.

'The Wells' in the ducal palace.

The judges of the world have always thought they were showing great mercy to certain criminals when they left them their lives, but as a matter of fact they have thus often imposed sufferings worse than death. These subterranean prisons are living tombs; they are called 'The Wells' because there is always two feet of water in them, which flows in through the grating that lets in the daylight, such as it is. The wretch who is condemned to one of these cells has to pass his time perched on a trestle, which supports his straw mattress, and is, at the same time, his wardrobe, dining-table, and larder. A pitcher of water is brought him in the morning with a little

thin soup and some bread. This he must eat up at once if he does not want the rats to get it. Those who are sent to 'The Wells' generally finish their days there, and, strange though it seems, some of them live to be very old.

While I was waiting the return of the archers, I saw myself, in imagination, hurled into one of these horrible holes. By and by I heard hurried steps, and Laurence came in, pale with anger, foaming at the mouth, and blaspheming God and the saints. He ordered me to give him the hatchet and the tools I had used for piercing the floor, and at the same time to tell him the name of the archer who had furnished me with them. I replied that I did not know what he was talking about. When he ordered his men to search me, I jumped up, and stripping myself naked, 'Do your duty,' I said, 'but don't one of you dare to touch me.'

They hunted through my mattress and pillows, and the cushions of the armchair, but never thought of looking among the springs in its back.

'You won't say where the instruments are with which you have made the hole in the floor, but we know how to make you speak,' said Laurence.

'If it be true that I have made a hole in the floor, and I am questioned about it, I shall say that it was you yourself who gave me the tools, and that I have returned them to you.'

He angers the gaoler, and suffers accordingly.

This answer and my determined tone somewhat took him aback. He continued to curse and tear his hair, and as an immediate punishment for me shut the windows of the corridor, so that I was stifled for want of air.

At break of day he brought me some horrible wine and some water, so dirty it was impossible to drink it. Everything was equally bad, the meat stank and the bread was hard. He did not listen when I complained, but busied himself sounding the walls and floor with an iron bar. I watched him with a seemingly indifferent air, but did not fail to notice that he did not strike the ceiling. 'It is through there,' thought I, 'that I shall pass out of this hell.'

I spent a cruel day. An exhausting sweat, and hunger brought on by want of food, made me so weak, I could scarcely stand. I could not even bear to read. The next day the wretch brought me such putrid veal for my dinner that the smell alone made me sick.

'Have you received orders,' said I, 'to kill me with hunger and heat?'

He did not answer me, but went out locking the door noisily behind him. I asked for pencil and paper that I might write to the secretary. No notice was taken of my request. This cruel treatment on the part of my gaoler and his ingenious methods of torturing me so wrought on my naturally violent temper that I determined to kill him. On the eighth day of semi-starvation I made up my mind to plunge my pike into his belly. But I slept well that night, which calmed me, and I contented myself with telling him I would have him assassinated as soon as I was free. He only laughed. At last I hit on the means of making him speak. In the presence of the archers, I ordered him in a voice of thunder, to bring me my accounts, and to tell me exactly every penny he had spent of my money. This disconcerted him, and he told me in an uneasy voice that he would bring me the settlement next day. He appeared in the morning with a large basket of lemons M. de Bragadin had sent me, a fine roast fowl, and a big bottle of water. He gave me his account. On glancing down it I saw there were four sequins to my credit; I told him to give three to his wife, and divide the remaining one among the archers. This small act of generosity won their affection.

'You say, sir,' said Laurence, 'that it was I who gave you the tools you used in making that enormous hole. I suppose I must believe you, though I don't understand it. But would you mind letting me know who gave you the materials for your lamp?'

'You did. You gave me oil, flint, matches, the rest I had.'

'Merciful Lord! and did I give you a hatchet?'

'I will tell you everything, and I will tell you the truth, but only in the presence of the secretary of the Inquisition.'

'For God's sake, then, hold your tongue. I should lose my place, and I am a poor man with children.'

He went off, holding his head in his hands, and I congratulated myself on having found means to frighten him. He would hold his tongue for his own sake.

One day I ordered him to buy me the works of Maffei. He hated laying out money for books, and he said, 'If you have read all those you have I can borrow some from another prisoner, which would be an economy.'

He asks for books; not novels, which he hates.

'Novels, probably, which I hate.'

'No; scientific books. If you think you are the only intellectual person here you are mistaken.'

'Well, take this from me to the other intellectual person, and ask him to lend me one in exchange.'

I gave him the *Rationarium* of Petau, and in five minutes he returned with the first volume of Wolff.

I thought I might possibly enter into a correspondence with my fellow-prisoner, and was delighted to find these words written on the margin of one of the pages—

Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius.

The reader will remember that I was not allowed pencil or ink, but I had made a very good pen out of the nail of my right hand little finger, which I wore very long, and the juice of mulberries made capital ink. I wrote six Latin verses, and a list of the books I possessed, on a piece of paper, and slipped it under the binding[1] of the borrowed book; above the title I wrote *Latet*.

He enters into correspondence with Marin Balbi, and forms a low opinion of his discretion.

When the second volume was brought me next day I found a loose sheet of paper, on which was written, in Latin—

'There are two of us in the same prison, and we are delighted at the prospect of corresponding with you. My name is

[1] Italian books of that period were mostly bound in parchment, turned over and stitched, thus forming a pocket on each cover.

Marin Balbi; I am a Venetian nobleman and a monk, and my companion is Count Andréa Asquini of Udine. He wishes me to tell you that his books, of which you will find a note on the back of this volume, are at your service, but we warn you that we must be very careful not to let Laurence know of our intercourse.'

It was all very well to warn me to be careful, but rather ridiculous to do so on a loose sheet of paper, which Laurence might easily have found. This incident did not give me a very high idea of my correspondent's sagacity.

I wrote to Balbi telling him who I was, how I had been arrested, and my ignorance as to the motives of my punishment. He replied in a letter sixteen pages long, recounting all his misfortunes. He had been in prison for four years, for having seduced three young girls, whose children he had had the naïveté to baptize in his own name. The first escapade had brought him a lecture from his superior, the second a threat of chastisement, and the third the realisation of the threat. The father superior of his convent sent him his dinner daily. He said that the superior and the tribunal were tyrants, that they had no authority over his conscience; that, persuaded that the children were his, he considered he had only acted honestly in giving them his name; and that he was not able to stifle the voice of nature speaking in favour of these innocent creatures.

From this letter I could judge tolerably accurately what manner of man he was. Eccentricity, sensuality, want of logical power, spite, stupidity, imprudence, and ingratitude, were all plainly shown forth; for after telling me that he would be very miserable without Count Asquini, an old man who had plenty of books and money, he proceeded to turn him into ridicule. Outside I should not have given a second thought to such an individual, but in 'The Leads' the value of everything was distorted. In the back of the book I found a pencil, a pen, and some paper.

In another letter he gave me the history of all the prisoners

A letter from the indiscreet Balbi.

then under lock and key. It was the Archer Nicolas who furnished him with information, and also with such things as Laurence refused to buy for him. He had told him, he said, all about my hole in the floor; the patrician Priuli was now in my cell; and it had taken Laurence two hours to repair the damage I had done. He was obliged to let the carpenter, the locksmith, and all the archers into the secret. One day more, Nicolas affirmed, and I should have been free, and Laurence would have been hanged; for every one believed he had supplied the tools. M. de Bragadin had offered the archer a thousand sequins if he helped me to escape, but Laurence got wind of this and wanted to earn the recompense himself, without incurring any risks; he counted on obtaining my pardon from M. Diedo, through his wife. Balbi begged me to tell him the whole story, and how I had procured the instruments, at the same time assuring me of his discretion; that he possessed *no* discretion was proved by his asking me to describe my attempt in writing.

I began to think that perhaps all this was only a trick on the part of Laurence, so I answered that I had made the hole with a big knife I had, and which I had hidden on the top of the window-ledge. Several days went by and Laurence did not visit the spot mentioned, so I saw that my letter had not been intercepted.

I knew I should never be pardoned: if I were ever to regain my liberty it must be by my own exertions, and the only way out of my cell was through the ceiling, for every morning they sounded the boards and walls. I could not pierce the ceiling, it must be done from the other side. There was but one person who could help me, and that was the monk; I began by asking him if he wanted to be free. He replied that he and his comrade would do anything to break their chains, but all the projects which suggested themselves were impossible. I gave him my word of honour that he would succeed if he would only promise to obey me implicitly.

I then described my tool to him, and told him I would find

means of sending it to him; with it he must break through the ceiling of his cell, and then through the wall, so that I could join him. 'This done,' said I, 'your share will be finished, I will undertake the rest.'

He replied that even if he managed to make these two apertures we should still be in prison; we should merely exchange our cells for the garret, which was closed by three barred doors.

'I know that, reverend father,' I answered, 'but I do not propose to leave by the doors. Tell Laurence to buy you about forty big religious pictures, and stick them up all over your cell. Such a pious proceeding will not arouse any suspicion in his mind, and will hide the hole in the ceiling; if you ask me why I don't do this myself, it is because I am looked on with distrust, and any new departure of mine would be carefully criticised.'

These instructions he carried out, and in a short time wrote and told me that the walls of his room were well decorated, and that he had even managed to fix two or three of the largest pictures on the ceiling.

A big version of the Vulgate comes in useful.

A version of the Vulgate had just appeared, in a big in-folio volume, and this I ordered Laurence to buy for me, hoping to be able to hide the precious tool in the back of it, but to my disappointment the book was too short. The ingenious Balbi, not wishing to be behindhand in inventiveness, told me he had discovered a simple and practical means of getting the weapon. Laurence had often spoken to him and Count Asquini of my fur-lined cloak, and Count Asquini wished to buy one like it; I was to send mine to him by Laurence, to see if he approved of the pattern, and was to wrap the tool in it. I sent the cloak next day, but was not such a fool as to follow Balbi's advice; even if Laurence suspected nothing, a folded pelisse is an awkward thing to carry, and he would be sure to throw it over his arm.

When the cloak arrived minus the pike, the monk of course imagined it had been discovered, and wrote bewailing his folly

in having suggested such a plan, and mine in having so easily followed his suggestion. I knew from this what to expect if our enterprise failed.

The dish of macaroni.

On the day of the feast of Saint Michael I told Laurence I wanted to cook a dish of macaroni myself, seasoned to my own taste, and that I should like to send some of it to the person who lent me the books. He made no objection, and brought me all the necessary ingredients. I hid the pike in the back of the Bible (it poked out about two inches at each end), put a huge dish of macaroni and cheese, swimming in butter, on the top of the book, and handed it all to Laurence with instructions to be careful and not spill any grease on the cover. He was too much occupied with the smoking macaroni to notice anything peculiar about the book, and it was a beautiful sight to see him bearing it out carefully on outstretched arms, his eyes fixed on the dish, grumbling at me the while for having put in too much butter; he declared if it was spilt it would not be his fault. He returned in a few minutes to tell me that it had travelled safely.

Father Balbi got to work at once, and in eight days made a sufficiently large hole in his ceiling, hiding it in the daytime with a picture stuck on with paste made of bread. On the eighth of October he wrote that he had passed the whole night working on the wall which separated us, and had only succeeded in removing one brick. He immensely exaggerated the difficulty of separating the bricks, which were held together with a strong cement, but he promised to continue, though, he added, he was convinced we should only aggravate our situation.

Alas! though I assured him that on the contrary we should succeed, I was not really sure of anything, except that I wanted to get out of my horrible prison, and that to do so I was determined to brave every danger.

On the sixteenth of October, at ten o'clock in the morning, as I was translating an ode from Horace, I heard a slight movement above my head, followed by three little taps. This was the signal agreed upon between us.

Balbi worked until the evening, and next day wrote that he hoped to finish that same afternoon. The hole, he said, was a circular one, and he must take great care not to pierce my ceiling. This was most important, for the slightest appearance of dilapidation in my cell would betray us.

I fixed on the following night to leave my cell never to return. I was sure that with help I could make a hole in the roof of the ducal palace, and in three or four hours, once outside, I would find some means to get to the ground in safety.

A new fellow-prisoner.

But fate was once more against me. That same day, it was a Monday, at two o'clock in the afternoon, while Balbi was working overhead, I heard the door of the outer cell open. I had only just time to give the alarm signal for him to retire into his cell, when Laurence appeared with two archers, and a little badly dressed man, whose arms were tightly bound. The gaoler apologised for bringing me a very bad character as a companion, and the person thus described paid not the slightest attention to him or to me.

'The tribunal must do as it pleases,' said I, in a tone of ill-assumed resignation. Laurence had a straw mattress brought for my fellow-prisoner, and told him the tribunal allowed him ten sols a day for his food; he then left, locking us in together.

I was in despair at this fresh *contretemps*, but as I wished to gain the scoundrel over to my side, I told him he could have his meals with me. He kissed my hand gratefully, asking if he might, all the same, keep the ten sols which the tribunal allowed him per diem. When I said yes, he fell on his knees, and lugging an immense rosary out of his pocket, began to examine the four corners of the room.

'What are you looking for?'

'Pardon me, sir. I am looking for a picture of the Blessed Virgin, or a tiny little crucifix would do, for I am a Christian, and never in my life had I such need of prayer. I want to recommend myself to Saint Francis of Assisi, whose name I unworthily bear.'

I thought it possible that he imagined me to be a Jew; therefore, to prove that I was at heart as good a Christian as he was, I gave him the Office of the Blessed Virgin. After kissing the picture in the beginning of the book, he asked my permission to tell his beads, after which pious recreation he begged me to give him something to eat, as he was dying of hunger. He ate everything I had to offer him, and drank the remainder of my wine, which made him very intoxicated, so that he wept and chattered at the same time.

From his prolific but disconnected conversation, I gathered that he was a spy in the service of the Inquisition, but that not satisfied with one master, he had tried to place his talents at the disposition of two. It would take a cleverer rogue than he to play such a dangerous game successfully. The Holy Tribunal had discovered his treachery, and clapped him into prison.

He tries Soradaci, and finds him wanting.

As soon as he was asleep I wrote to Balbi, telling him not to lose courage, that it was necessary to suspend our work for the time being, but that I hoped to be relieved of my companion ere long. The next day I ordered Laurence to procure me a picture of Saint Francis, a crucifix, and two bottles of holy water, four times as much wine as I usually consumed, and an immense quantity of garlic and salt: these last two articles were the favourite dessert of my fellow-captive. Laurence told me that Soradaci, that was the scoundrel's name, was to go before the secretary in a few days to be questioned; he would very likely be set at liberty after that. I felt certain that his treasonable instinct would lead him to betray even me, from whom he had received nothing but kindness, but I determined to make sure. I wrote two letters on indifferent subjects but creditable to me in sentiment, one to M. de Bragadin, and one to the Abbé Grimani, and these I confided to Soradaci, begging him if he regained his liberty to deliver them. He swore fidelity on the crucifix and the holy pictures, declaring he would let himself be hacked to pieces rather than injure me. He sewed the letters in the lining of

his coat. After they had been in his possession two or three days, Laurence came to take him to the secretary. He was absent several hours, and I began to hope that he had gone for ever, when he reappeared.

'You can give me back my letters,' I said, 'you are not likely now to have a chance of delivering them.' At first he tried to put me off, pretending that it was dangerous, the gaoler might come in while he was ripping open his coat; then he protested that in all probability he would be questioned again in a day or two and then set free. Finally, he flung himself on his knees at my feet, and declared that in the presence of the secretary he had been seized with such a fit of terror and trembling that that functionary had suspected something was wrong, and had had him searched. The two letters were of course discovered, and the secretary had confiscated them.

I believed just as much of this cock-and-bull story as I chose. While chuckling inwardly at the success of my ruse, I covered my face with my hands, and flinging myself before the picture of the Virgin, I demanded of her, in loud and solemn tones, vengeance on the miscreant who had broken his sacred vow, after which I lay down on my bed, my face turned to the wall, and during all that night and the following day, I did not say one word in answer to Soradaci's cries, tears, and protestations of repentance. I was acting a part in the comedy I had planned. I wrote to Balbi to come at seven o'clock that night to finish his work, and to be not one minute earlier or one minute later, and to work for exactly four hours and no longer.

'Our liberty,' said I, 'depends on rigorous exactitude.' It was now the twenty-fifth of October, and the moment when I was to execute my project, or abandon it for ever, was not far distant. The State Inquisitors and the secretary went every year to pass the first three days of November at some village on the mainland. Laurence profited by this absence to get drunk every night, and consequently slept later in the morning.

I had got into that superstitious frame of mind which leads men, at some momentous point of their career, to be influenced by a verse in the Bible or a verse in Virgil. My intellect, weakened by long months of captivity, clamoured for an oracle. I determined to consult the divine poem *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto. I wrote my question on a slip of paper, with a combination of numbers which was to point out stanza and verse, and I found the following line :—

'Fra il fin d'ottobre e il capo di novembre.'[1]

The aptitude and precision of this verse seemed to me admirable. I won't say that I placed absolute faith in it, but it was excusable of me, I think, to feel elated at the promise it held forth.

The most singular part of this is, that between the end of October and the beginning of November there is only the instant of midnight, and it was precisely on the stroke of twelve on the thirty-first of October that I left my cell.

He confuses and befools Soradaci.

Soradaci had had nothing to eat for twenty-four hours, and I judged that the moment had now come to make an impression on his confused and stupid mind, to render it, if possible, more confused and more stupid than usual. I called him, and he dragged himself along the floor to my feet, where, weeping bitterly, he told me that if I refused to forgive him, he should die during the day, for the curse of the Blessed Virgin was on him ; he suffered terribly in his stomach, and his mouth was covered with ulcers.

'Sit down,' said I, 'and eat this soup. Know that Our Lady of the Rosary appeared to me at daybreak, and ordered me to forgive you. You will not die, and you will leave this cell with me. The grief that your horrible treason caused me prevented me from closing my eyes all night, for those letters will certainly condemn me to prison for the rest of my days. My only consolation was the certitude that I should see you die in agony within three days. While in this state of mind,

[1] 'Between the end of October and the beginning of November.'

unworthy, I must admit, of a Christian, I had a vision. I saw the Mother of God herself; she spoke to me in these words: "Soradaci is devoted to the Holy Rosary, and for this reason I protect him, and I desire you to pardon him, so as to counteract the curse which he has invoked on himself. As a reward for your generosity in forgiving him, I shall order one of my angels to assume human form and to come down from heaven, and break through the roof of your prison, so that you can escape. You may take Soradaci with you, but only on condition that he swears to abjure the trade of a spy." After these words the Blessed Virgin disappeared.'

The animal, who had listened to me with open eyes and mouth, suddenly asked at what hour the angel would come, and if we should see him?

'He will be here at sunset; we shall not see him, but we shall hear him at work, and he will leave at the hour announced by the Blessed Virgin.'

'Perhaps you only dreamt all this?'

'No, I am sure of what I say. Do you feel that you can give the promise?'

Instead of answering, he curled up on his mattress and went to sleep. He woke up two hours later, and asked if he might take the proposed oath.

'You can put it off,' said I, 'until the angel appears in the cell, but then, if you do not swear to renounce your villainous trade, which has brought you here, and which will lead you to the gallows, I shall make you stay behind me, for such is the order of the Mother of God, and she will surely withdraw her protection from you.'

The angelic visitation.

I could read on his ugly face that this procrastination was to his taste, for he did not believe in my angelic visitation. He looked compassionately at me, and evidently thought I was wandering; but I smiled inwardly, for I knew the coming of *the angel* would frighten him out of his miserable wits.

An hour before the appointed time we dined. I drank

nothing but water, and gave Soradaci all the wine and all the garlic, his beloved delicacy.

At the first stroke of seven I flung myself on my knees, ordering him to do likewise. As soon as I heard a little noise, the other side of the wall, 'The angel is coming!' I cried, prostrating myself, and at the same time giving him a violent blow which toppled him over on his face. We remained for a quarter of an hour in this position, during which time the sound of Balbi's tool was plainly audible. I then permitted him to rise to his knees, and for three hours and a half I recited the rosary, forcing him to repeat it with me. From time to time he fell asleep, but he never interrupted me; now and then he would gaze furtively at the ceiling, and from there to the picture of the Blessed Virgin, as though demanding from her an explanation. At half-past eleven, 'The angel is going—prostrate yourself!' I commanded in a solemn voice.

I made Soradaci swear not only that he would not say a word to Laurence of our heavenly visitor, but also that while the gaoler was in our cell he would lie on his bed, with his face turned to the wall. This precaution was needful, for a wink would have been sufficient to betray us.

It was natural that I should want to regain my liberty, and there were only two ways in which I could manage the scoundrel whom fate had thrown into the same cell with me. I must either subjugate him, or suffocate him; the latter would have been easier, and less dangerous, but does any man living say that I had better have done so? If there is such a man, I pray God to enlighten him. I think, in acting as I did, I did my duty, and the victory which crowned my exploit may be taken as a sign that Providence was not displeased with me.

Soradaci obeyed me scrupulously, and remained with his face hidden while Laurence was in our cell. I verily believe that if he had made the slightest movement I should have strangled him. When the gaoler had departed I told him that the angel would descend through the roof about noon, that he would bring a pair of scissors with him, and that he

(Soradaci happened to be a barber by trade) must cut off my beard and the angel's.'

'Will the angel have a beard?'

'Yes. After you have shaved us we shall get out on to the palace roof, break through it, and descend on the Square of Saint Mark, from whence we shall go to Germany.'

He did not answer, and ate his dinner in silence. My heart and mind were too full to eat; I had not been able to sleep for two nights.

At the given moment the angel appeared; Soradaci prostrated himself, while Father Balbi slid through the hole and flung himself into my arms.

He is shaved with the angel, by Soradaci.

'Your task is over,' said I, 'and mine is just beginning.' He gave me back my tool and a pair of scissors with which Soradaci arranged our beards in a very creditable manner. I told the monk to stay with him while I made a tour of inspection. The hole in the wall was narrow, but I managed to squeeze through. I entered Balbi's cell, where I found Count Asquini, a fine-looking old man, whose figure, however, was not made for gymnastic feats, such as climbing about on a steep roof covered with sheets of lead. He asked me what I proposed to do next, and told me he thought I had acted rather lightly and hastily.

'I shall go straight ahead,' I answered, 'until I find liberty or death.'

'You think,' he said, 'that you will get from the roof to the ground, but I don't see how you are to do that, unless you suddenly grow wings. Anyhow, I dare not go with you; I shall stay here, and pray God for your safety.'

I returned to my cell, where I spent four hours cutting up my sheets, blankets, mattress and palliasse into strips. With these I made a hundred fathom of cord. I made a packet of my coat, cloak, some shirts, stockings and handkerchiefs. We then passed, all three of us, into the count's cell. I had now flung away my Tartufe's mask, and spoke openly before Soradaci.

In two hours, with the aid of the monk, I managed to make a hole in the attic roof. To my horror I saw that it was bright moonlight, and as on fine nights everybody promenades in the Square of Saint Mark, this forced us to wait until midnight; the extraordinary spectacle which we should have presented scrambling about on the leads would certainly have aroused first curiosity and then suspicion.

I asked Count Asquini to lend me thirty sequins, promising to return them as soon as I was safe in Germany, but the poor old man, in spite of his virtues, was a miser at heart. At first he tried to persuade me that I did not require any money; finally, with many tears, he offered me two sequins, which I was obliged to accept.

Count Asquini is seventy, and afraid.

The first proof which Balbi gave me of his noble character was to tell me ten times over that I had broken my word to him, for I had told him my plan was complete, whereas it was nothing of the sort. He added that had he known this he would not have joined in the enterprise. Count Asquini, with the wisdom of seventy years, tried to persuade me to give it up, telling me that it was hopeless, for even if we fell into the canal, which was the best thing that could happen to us, we should break our arms and legs, for the water was not deep enough to destroy the force of the fall. He was a barrister, and naturally eloquent, but what moved him most, I knew, was his two sequins.

'The steepness of the roof,' he said, 'which is covered with sheets of lead, will not permit you to walk upright. The cords you are taking will be useless, for you will find nothing to fasten them to; but supposing you do, one of you will have to lower the other two, after which he will be obliged to go back to his cell. Which of you is capable of this heroic self-sacrifice? Then again, by which side do you hope to get down? Not by the pillars opposite the square, you would be seen; not by the church, for it is enclosed in gates impossible to scale; not by the court, for you would fall into the hands of the archers. On the fourth side is the canal;

have you a boat or gondola awaiting you? No, you would have to swim to Saint Apollonia; and even if you swim like sharks, what a state you would be in when you got there!'

This speech, which our desperate circumstances certainly justified, made my blood boil, the more so as it was interlarded with the reproaches of the monk, and the weeping and wailing of Soradaci. Nevertheless, I had the courage to listen to it patiently without answering harshly. I felt I was in a delicate position, the slightest thing might decide the cowardly Balbi to remain, and alone I could not hope to succeed. Soradaci implored me to leave him behind. 'You are the master,' he said, 'but if you order me to follow you it will be to certain death. I shall fall into the canal, I am convinced, and I shall be of no use to you. Let me stay here, and I will pray to Saint Francis for you.' The fool little knew how pleased I was to be rid of him. I borrowed pen and ink from Asquini and wrote the following letter, which I gave to Soradaci:—

'"I shall not perish, but live to sing the praises of the Lord."

'It is the duty of our Lords, the State Inquisitors, to use every means in their power to keep a guilty man in prison, but the prisoner, if he is not on parole, should do everything he can to escape. Their right is based on justice, his on nature. They did not ask his consent to imprison him, he need not ask theirs to set himself free. 31st Oct. 1756.

'Jacques Casanova, who writes this, in the bitterness of his heart, knows that he may be recaptured, in which case he appeals to the humanity of his judges not to make his lot harder than that from which he is fleeing. He gives everything in his cell (provided he is not so unlucky as to be brought back to it) to Francis Soradaci, with the exception of his books, which he gives to Count Asquini.

'Written one hour before midnight, without a light, in Count Asquini's cell, the 31st of October 1756.'

I instructed Soradaci to give this letter to the secretary

himself, who would doubtless come up to question him and Asquini personally.

It was now time to start. The moon was no longer visible. I tied half the cords on one of Balbi's shoulders, and his packet of clothes on the other, doing the same for myself; then the two of us, in our shirt-sleeves, our hats on our heads, went through the opening.—

'E quindi uscimmo a rimirar le stelle.'[1]—DANTE.

[1] 'And then we went out to contemplate the stars.'

CHAPTER XVII

THE ESCAPE

I WENT out first, Balbi followed me; Soradaci had orders to put the sheet of lead covering the hole back into its place, and then to go and pray with all his might to Saint Francis. I crawled along on all fours, pushing my tool into the cracks between the leaden roofing, and dragging the monk after me. With his right hand he firmly clutched the band of my breeches, so that I was in the painful position of a pack-horse and saddle-horse combined, and this on a steep lead roof made more slippery by the damp of a thick fog! Half-way up the monk called out to me to stop; one of his packages had slipped, but he was in hopes it had lodged in the gutter piping. My first impulse was to give him a kick and send him after it, but I checked myself, and asked him if it was the packet of cords; he said no, it was his clothes and a manuscript which he had found in the prison attic, and which he expected to sell for a high price. I told him he must bear his loss patiently; he sighed, and we crawled on. By and by we got to a gable, on which we could sit astride; two hundred feet in front of us were the cupolas of Saint Mark, which is, properly speaking, the private chapel of the Doge, and no monarch in the world can boast of a better or finer. Here my unfortunate companion lost his hat, which rolled over and over till it joined his clothes in the canal. He declared this was a bad omen, but I cheered him by pointing out that if the hat had fallen to the left, instead of to the right, it would have tumbled at the very feet of the guards in the courtyard. It

Astride on a gable.

was a proof, I told him, that God was protecting us, and at the same time, it was a lesson to him to be more prudent.

I left Balbi perched on the gable, while I explored the roof in search of some skylight or window, by means of which we could enter the palace. After searching for more than an hour without finding any point to which I could fasten my cords, the canal and the courtyard were not to be thought of; to get beyond the church, towards the *Canonica*, I should have to climb such perilous slopes that I abandoned this idea also. Nevertheless, something must be done. I fixed my eyes on a garret window facing the canal, about two-thirds from the top of the roof. It was far enough away from our part of the palace for me to feel sure it was not connected with the prisons. If I could get in through it I should probably find myself in some attic, inhabited or otherwise, belonging to the apartment of some one of the palace functionaries, and at break of day the doors would be opened. I was morally certain that any of the palace servants, even those of the Doge himself, so far from giving us up to justice, would only help us in our flight, even had we been the worst of criminals, so hateful was the Inquisition in the eyes of all men. I let myself slide down the roof till I arrived astraddle the garret window; by leaning over I could feel it was filled with small panes of glass, behind which was a grating. The glass was easily disposed of, but in my nervous state of mind the grating, slight though it was, filled me with dismay. I was weary, hungry, over-excited, and this obstacle seemed insurmountable. I was beginning to lose my head, and my courage, when the simplest incident imaginable restored my mental equilibrium. The bell of Saint Mark's struck twelve! The day now beginning was All Saints, the prediction of the Jesuit father flashed through my mind, and at the same moment I remembered the line from Ariosto—

The bell of St. Mark's.

'Fra il fin d'ottobre e il capo di novembre.'

The sound of the bell was as a speaking talisman to me,

bidding me be of good heart, and promising me victory. I broke the glass, and after a quarter of an hour's hard work with my pike I lifted out the entire grating; blood was streaming from a wound in my left hand, but I was too excited to notice it.

I got back to my companion, who welcomed me with the grossest insults, for having left him so long, at the same time assuring me he was only waiting for seven o'clock to return to the prison. 'And what did you think had become of me?'

'I thought you had fallen over.'

'And this is how you show your joy at my safety! Follow me now, and you will see where I have been.'

We scrambled to the garret window, and held a consultation as to the best means of entering it; it was easy enough for one, as the other could lower him by the cords, but how was he to follow after?

Balbi's selfishness.

'Let me down first,' said the amiable Balbi, 'and when I am safe inside you will find some means of rejoining me.' His brutal selfishness made me feel like digging my pike in his stomach, but I again restrained myself, and silently did as he asked. When I drew up the cord, I found the height from the window to the floor was fifty feet, the window was high in the roof of an immensely lofty gallery. Not knowing what to do, I wandered over the leads, where, on a sort of terrace I had not visited before, I found a tub full of plaster, a trowel, and a ladder. I dragged the ladder after me to the window, and managed to push it in as far as the fifth rung, but beyond that it was impossible, as there was an interior beam, which barred its entrance. The only thing was to push it from below instead of from above, as I was then doing. I fastened the cord to the ladder, and let it slip, till it hung balanced on a point of the gutter piping, and then slid gently along till I was beside it. The marble gutter offered a slight rest to my feet, and I lay on my stomach up the roof; in this position I had the strength to raise the ladder and push it before me.

I got about a foot of it inside, which diminished the weight sensibly, when in my efforts to force it I slipped, and rolled over the roof, hanging only by my elbows to the gutter. In this frightful position I remained, as it seemed to me, some moments, but did not lose my presence of mind; the instinct of self-preservation made me, almost against my will, use all my strength in the supreme effort of hoisting myself back on the roof. I succeeded. I now lay along the gutter, panting and exhausted, but safe for the moment, though not out of danger, or at an end of my troubles, for the effort I had made caused a nervous contraction of my muscles, which resulted in a cramp so painful I completely lost the use of my limbs. I knew that immobility is the best remedy for cramp, and I had the sense to remain perfectly still until it passed away. What a terrible moment it was! By and by I was able to move my knees, and as soon as I had recovered my breath, I raised the ladder (which had fortunately been held in place by the frame of the window), and managed to introduce several more rungs of it through the opening, until it leaned parallel with the sill.

I then took up my pike, and once more climbed slowly and painfully up the slippery leads, till I got to the window, where I had no further difficulty with the ladder. I pushed it all in, and my companion held the other end of it firmly.

I flung into the attic the remaining parcels of clothes, the cords, and such *débris* and rubbish caused by my demolitions as I could gather up. I was particularly anxious not to leave any marks of my passage behind me on the roof. It was there that the archers, led by Laurence, would first search for us, and it was possible that we might still be lurking in the attic when they came that way. This done, I descended the ladder into the garret, where the monk received me, more graciously this time.

Arm in arm we walked round the shadowy place in which we found ourselves. It was about thirty feet long by twenty wide; at one end was a door barred with iron; this, however, was not

locked, and we went through it into another room, in the middle of which was a big table surrounded with chairs and stools. We opened one of the windows, but could see nothing but precipices, so to speak, between the windows. I closed the window, and went back to where we had left our baggage. Perfectly incapable of further effort, I fell on the floor; with a roll of cords to serve for a pillow, I gave myself up to sleep. Had I been certain that death, or torture, awaited me on waking, it would have made no difference. Even now I can remember the heavenly sensations of rest and forgetfulness which came over me as I sank to slumber.

He sleeps in the jaws of death. Balbi reproves him.

I slept for three hours and a half: the monk aroused me by shouting and shaking me. He told me it had struck five, and he could not understand how, given our position, I could sleep! *I* could, though! For two days and nights I had not closed my eyes, and for the same length of time had eaten nothing; the efforts I had made were enough to wear out the strength of any man. My nap had restored my vigour, I was able now to think and to act.

'This place,' said I, 'is not a prison, so there must be some way out of it.'

There was a door at one end, through which we passed into a gallery lined with shelves filled with papers: these were the archives, as I afterwards learned. A little stone staircase took us to a second gallery, and a second staircase into a large hall, which I recognised as the ducal chancery. On a desk lay a tool, a sort of long slim chisel which the secretaries use to pierce parchments with, so as to attach the lead seals of the chancery to them. I forced the desk with it, and found a letter to the *proveditor* of Corfu, announcing the despatch of three thousand sequins, which he was to spend on the restoration of the old fortress. Unfortunately the money was not there; God knows with what pleasure I should have taken it had it been otherwise!

The ducal chancery.

I tried to force the door of the chancery with my chisel, but soon saw that it was impossible. I decided to make a hole in

the panelling. With my pike I smashed and battered as well as I could, the monk helping me with the chisel, and both of us trembling at the noise we made.

In half an hour the hole was large enough, but it presented a terrific appearance, for the edges were splintered and broken, and bristling with sharp points, like the spikes on the top of a wall; it was about five feet from the ground. Putting two stools one on the other, we mounted on them, and taking Balbi first by the thighs and then by the ankles, I managed to lower him in safety. There was no one to help me, so I stuck my head and shoulders through as far as I could, and told the monk to drag me over the splinters, and not to stop, even if I reached the other side in pieces; he obeyed, and I arrived in frightful pain, with my hips and thighs torn and bleeding.

We ran down another staircase, at the bottom of which was the great door of the royal staircase. At one glance I saw that it was impossible to get through that without a mine to blow it up, or a catapult to beat it down. My poor pike seemed to say: *Hic finis posuit.*

Calm, resigned, and perfectly tranquil, I sat down, saying to the monk: 'I have done, it is for God or fortune to do the rest. I don't know if the palace sweepers will come to-day, as it is a holiday—All Saints Day, or to-morrow, which is All Souls. If any one does come, I shall make a run for it as soon as I see the door open, but otherwise, I shall not move from here, if I die of hunger.'

At this speech the poor man flew into a rage, calling me madman, seducer, liar. I let him rave without paying any attention to him. Even if some one opened the door, how to pass unnoticed in the state I was in?

Balbi looked like a peasant, but he was at least intact. His scarlet flannel waistcoat and his violet skin breeches were in good condition, and he was unscratched, whereas my appearance was horrible. I was covered with blood, and my clothes were in ribbons. I had torn my stockings, and scraped

all the skin off my knees while I was hanging from the gutter piping; the broken panel of the chancery door had caught and rent my waistcoat, shirt, and breeches into rags. My thighs were furrowed with deep wounds.

I bandaged myself up as well as I could with handkerchiefs, smoothed my hair, put on a clean pair of stockings and a laced shirt with two others on the top of it, stuffed as many handkerchiefs and stockings as I could into my pockets, and flung the remainder into a corner.

He puts on his hat, and leans out of the window.

I must have looked like a reveller who had wound up the evening in some wild orgy! To crown all I put on my fine hat, trimmed with Spanish gold lace, and a long white feather; and thus attired I opened a window. It is not surprising that I immediately attracted the attention of the loungers in the courtyard, one of whom went to tell the concierge. The good man thought he must have locked some one in by mistake the night before, and ran off for his keys. I heard them jingling as he came upstairs; I could hear him puffing at every step. I told Balbi to keep close to me, and not to open his mouth. I stood, my pike in my hand, so that I could get out of the door the moment it was opened. I prayed to God that the concierge would make no resistance, as I was prepared to kill him if need were.

The poor fellow was thunderstruck at my aspect. I rushed past him and down the stairs, the monk at my heels. I went rapidly, yet avoiding the appearance of flight, down the magnificent steps called the Giant's Staircase, paying no heed to Balbi, who kept saying, 'To the church, to the church.' The door of Saint Mark's was not twenty paces away, but one could no longer take sanctuary there. The monk knew that, but fear had spoilt his memory. I went straight through the royal gate of the palace, across the little square, and on to the quay, where I got into the first gondola I saw, saying to the boatman, 'I want to go to Fusina quickly; call up another gondolier.' While the boat was being unfastened I flung myself on the cushion in the middle, while the monk took his

place on the seat. We must have been an odd-looking couple: he with his extraordinary face and bare head, my beautiful cloak flung over his shoulders, and I with my most unseasonable elegance, plumed hat, and ragged breeches, laced shirt and bleeding wrists. We must have looked like a pair of charlatans who had been in some drunken fray.

When we were well started I told the boatman I had changed my mind, I would go to Mestre. He replied that he would take me to England if I would pay him enough, and we went gaily on.

On the Grand Canal rowing to Mestre.

The canal had never seemed to me so beautiful, more especially as there was not a single boat in sight. It was a lovely morning, the air was fresh and clear and the sun had just risen. My two boatmen rowed swiftly. I thought on the awful nights I had passed, the dangers I had traversed, the hell in which only a few hours before I was imprisoned; my emotion and my gratitude to God overcame me, and I burst into tears. My worshipful companion, who up till then had not spoken a word, thought it his duty to console me. He made me laugh.

At Mestre I arranged for a post-chaise to take us on to Treviso; in three minutes the horses were in. I looked round for Balbi, he had disappeared; I was on the point of abandoning him when I caught sight of the scamp in a coffee-house, drinking chocolate and flirting with the waiting-maid. When he saw me he called out to me to come and join him, and to pay for what he had consumed, as he was penniless. Speechless with rage, I grasped him by the arm and marched him up to the post-chaise. We had not gone many yards before I met a man I knew, Balbi Tomasi, a decent fellow, but reported to have dealings with the inquisitors; he recognised me and cried out: 'Hallo! what are you doing here? I am delighted to see you, have you run away?'

'I have not run away, I was set at liberty.'

'Impossible! I was at M. Grimani's only yesterday, and I heard nothing of it.'

He is recognised by a spy of the Inquisition.

Reader, it is easier for you to imagine the state of mind I was in than for me to describe it. I thought this man was paid to arrest me; that in another moment he would call up the police, who were all over Mestre, and I should be ignominiously marched back to 'The Leads.' I jumped out of the carriage, and asked him to step to one side with me. As soon as we were at a safe distance from the others I seized him by the collar; he saw the pike I was brandishing and guessed my intention; with a violent effort he wrenched himself away, and ran with all his might down the road, jumping over a wide ditch, from the other side of which he kissed his hand to me several times, as a sign that I had his good wishes. I was glad I had been saved from committing murder, for I began to think he meant me no harm. I got back into the chaise, looking disdainfully at the cowardly monk, who saw now the danger he had exposed us to, and we went on in silence to Treviso.

There I ordered a chaise and pair for ten o'clock, though I had no intention of taking them, firstly, because I had not enough money, and, secondly, because a post-chaise is easily tracked; it was merely a ruse. The landlord asked if we wished breakfast, but though I was fainting with hunger I had not the courage to eat anything; a quarter of an hour's delay might prove fatal. I wanted to get out into the open country where one man, if he is clever, can defy a hundred thousand.

We passed out of Treviso by Saint Thomas's gate, and struck across the fields. After walking for three hours I fell down exhausted. I told Balbi to get me something to eat or I should die; he said contemptuously that he had thought I was braver. He had filled his own stomach full before leaving 'The Leads,' and he had taken some chocolate and bread since. However, he found a farmhouse not far off, and brought me back a good dinner for thirty sols; after which we walked for another four hours, and then stopped by the roadside, twenty-four miles from Treviso. I was exhausted; my ankles were swollen and my shoes worn through.

I felt that it was impossible for me to continue to travel with Balbi; to think for him as well as myself, and to be constantly bickering and reproaching one another. His presence irritated me in my worn and nervous state, and I felt willing to pay any price to be rid of him.

'We must go to Borgo di Valsugano,' I said; 'it is the first town across the frontier of the Republic; we shall be as safe there as if we were in London; but we must use every precaution, and the first is to separate. You will go by the woods of Mantello, and I by the mountains; you will take the easiest and shortest way, and I the longest and most difficult; you will have money, and I shall have none. I make you a present of my cloak, which you can easily change for a coat and a hat; here is all that is left of the two sequins I took from Asquini. You will be at Borgo the day after to-morrow, in the evening, and I shall turn up about twenty-four hours later. Wait for me at the inn which is on the left, the last house in the town. For to-night I shall trust to luck to find me a bed somewhere. I am absolutely in need of rest and peace, which I can't get with you. I am, moreover, certain that they are looking for us, and that if we show ourselves together at any inn we shall be arrested. You go your way, and let me go mine.'

'I have been expecting some such speech,' said Balbi, 'and shall answer it by reminding you of all your promises. You said we should not separate, and I do not intend to; your fate shall be mine, and mine yours.'

'You are determined not to take my advice?'

'Most determined.'

'We shall see.'

He digs a hole in which to bury Father Balbi.

I took my instrument out of my pocket, and began quietly to dig a hole in the ground. After half an hour of this occupation I told him to recommend his soul to God, for the hole I had just made was to bury him in.

'I will get rid of you somehow—alive or dead.'

He looked at me for some time in silence, wondering

whether I was in earnest or not, then coming over to me—'I will do as you wish,' he said.

I embraced him, handed him the money, and renewed my promise to meet him at Borgo.

I cannot say how pleased I was to see him disappear down the road. His presence paralysed me. As soon as he was out of sight I got up and walked across country till I came in sight of a little village. A shepherd was feeding his flock on the hillside, and I asked him the name of the village and its principal inhabitants. One red house which was conspicuous among the rest he told me belonged to the captain of the local police. I cannot explain the instinct which led me to go straight up to this house, the very one that I should have avoided. A little child was spinning a top in the courtyard; I spoke to it and it went and called its mother. A pretty young woman came out, and asked me politely if I wished to see her husband, as unfortunately he was away from home.

'I am sorry,' said I, 'that my *confrère* is absent, but I am charmed to make the acquaintance of his wife.'

'His *confrère*! then I am speaking to M. Vetturi. My husband will be so sorry to miss you.'

'I hope he will be back soon, for I was going to ask him to let me sleep here to-night. I really cannot go on in the state I am in.'

'You shall have the best bed in the house, and a good supper, but I do not expect my husband back for three or four days. Two prisoners have escaped from 'The Leads,' one a patrician, and the other an individual named Casanova, and my husband has had orders from the inquisitors to search for them. But what have you done to your knees?'

'I was shooting in the mountains, and I slipped on some sharp rocks. I lost a good deal of blood, and it has made me very weak.'

'O poor gentleman! My mother, who lives with us, will soon cure you.'

This archer's pretty wife had very little professional acumen.

Hunting in a silk coat and white silk stockings! How her husband must have laughed at her afterwards; but I am sure God rewarded her innocent kindness.

He sleeps at the house of the head of the local police.

Her mother dressed my wounds most tenderly, lecturing me on foolhardiness the while she washed and bandaged me. She gave me a good supper, and probably undressed me like a child, for I fell asleep to wake next morning in bed, rested in body and mind, my wounds almost healed. I had slept for twelve hours.

I dressed myself quickly, went downstairs, out of the house, and across the yard, without taking any notice of two men who were standing there, and who were very likely policemen. I walked straight ahead of me, and soon left the village behind. My heart was full of gratitude to the kindly, hospitable women who had fed and tended me. I only regretted that I was unable to thank them for their goodness. I walked for five hours till I came to a church, the bell of which was ringing. It was All Souls Day, and the villagers were flocking in to Mass. I joined the number, being in the reckless frame of mind when a man will follow his lightest whim. Coming out of church I met Mark Antony Grimani, nephew of my guardian, the state inquisitor.

'What are you doing here, Casanova, and where is your companion?'

'I gave him all the money I had, and he has taken another road. If your Excellency would give me a little help I could easily manage now.'

'I can give you nothing, but you will find hermits along the road who will not let you starve; but tell me how you escaped from "The Leads"?'

'My story would no doubt interest you, but it is long, and in the meanwhile the hermits may eat up the provisions which are to prevent me from dying of hunger.'

I bowed ironically and went my way. In spite of my extreme need I was not displeased at this refusal. It made me feel that I was a far finer gentleman than this patrician,

who bade me beg from the monks. I learned afterwards that his wife reproached him bitterly for his hard-heartedness. There is no doubt that benevolence and generosity is commoner among women than men.

I continued my way until sunset; then, tired, harassed, and hungry, I stopped at a lonely, decent-looking house. I asked the concierge if I could see the master. He answered that his master had gone to a wedding, but had ordered him to welcome any friends who might come during his absence. So luck favoured me a second time, and again I found a good supper and a good bed.

He dines at a Capuchin monastery.

The next day I dined at a Capuchin monastery, and in the afternoon came to a villa, the owner of which was a friend of mine. I was shown into his study, where he was writing. He dropped his pen in alarm when he saw me, and told me to be off at once. I asked him to lend me sixty sequins, offering him my note of hand, drawn on M. de Bragadin, but he answered that he could give me nothing, not even a glass of water, lest he incurred the anger of the tribunal. He was a money-changer, a man about sixty years old, and under great obligations to me.

Shaking with rage, I seized him by the collar, and pulling out my pike threatened to kill him if he did not help me. He opened a drawer full of gold, in his desk, and told me to take what I wanted.

'Count me out six sequins,' I said.

'You asked for sixty.'

'Yes—as a friendly loan; but as I must take them by force I will only have six, and I will give you no receipt for them. They shall be paid you back, though, at Venice, where I shall write and tell of your mean and cowardly conduct; and now let me go quietly, or I will come back and burn your house down over your head.'

I slept at a peasant's hut that night, and in the morning bought an old redingote, a pair of boots, and a donkey; further on I exchanged the ass for a cart and two horses, and

He passes the Venetian frontier.

with this equipage arrived at Borgo di Valsugano, where I found Balbi. If he had not spoken to me I should not have known him. A long riding-coat and a felt hat worn over a cotton night-cap disguised him completely. He told me a farmer had given him these things in exchange for my cloak, that he had eaten well along the road, and had met with no adventures.

I passed two days in bed writing letters to Venice, in all of which I spoke of the money-changer and his brutality. I then went on to Bolzan, where an old banker of my acquaintance lent me a trusty messenger to carry news to M. de Bragadin. He returned in six days with a hundred sequins, and I began to clothe my companion and myself. The miserable Balbi was perpetually reminding me that but for him I should never have escaped, that whatever fortune I might make eventually, half of it would belong by rights to him. He made love to all the servants, and, as he was anything but handsome, met with many rebuffs, which he accepted with true philosophy, beginning again the next day. From Bolzan we went to Munich, where I lodged at 'The Stag.' I found my old friend the Countess Coronini, who was living at the Convent of Saint Justine, and was in high favour at Court. She told me that she had spoken of me to the Elector, who said there was no reason why I should not remain in Bavaria, but that he could not guarantee the safety of Balbi—a runaway monk.

I got a letter of introduction to the Dean of Saint Maurice, at Augsburg, and packed Balbi off to him, in a carriage, with everything he could want. I was glad to be rid of him so cheaply, and in four days received a letter from him saying the dean had received him kindly.

My health was much impaired. I was suffering from a constriction of the nerves, which alarmed me somewhat, but a month's rest and a strict régime restored me completely.

Some Venetian friends of mine, Madame Rivière and her family, came to Munich during this time. They were going

on to Paris for the marriage of the eldest daughter, and offered to take me with them. They would not hear of my bearing any share of the expense, and I thankfully accepted the offer. Two days before leaving I received another remittance from Venice, and as I felt it my duty to convince myself of Balbi's wellbeing, I took a post-chaise to Augsburg. I found him well lodged, well served, and well clothed, and congratulated him on his good fortune. He asked me bitterly what I meant by that, saying that he had not a penny in his pocket.

He meets friends at Munich.

'Ask your friends for some money.'

'I have no friends.'

'That must be because you have never been a friend to any one but yourself.'

'Take me with you to Paris.'

'What would you do there?'

'Why, what will you do?'

'Work, and put my talents to account. Your wings are strong enough now for you to fly alone. I have done all I can for you, and you ought to be grateful for the comfortable situation you are in.'

Some months later the dean wrote to me that Balbi had run away with one of his women servants, taking with him a large sum of money, a gold watch, and twelve silver forks and spoons. The dishonest wretch took refuge at Coire, in Switzerland, where he asked to be received into the Calvinist Church, and to be recognised as the legitimate husband of the woman who was with him. When he had spent all his money his wife left him, and he went to Brescia, a town belonging to the Venetian States, where he assured the governor of his repentance, begging him to take him under his protection. He was sent in chains to Venice, and re-imprisoned in 'The Leads,' where he remained two years, and was then sent to an isolated monastery near Feltre, whence he escaped to Rome. The Pope dispensed him from his monastic vows. As a secular priest he was no longer in the power of

the Inquisition, and he returned to Venice, where he led a dissolute and miserable life, dying in 1783.

Paris, 5th January 1757.

We journeyed to Paris in a most excellent and comfortable *berline*, and I did my best to entertain my companions, and render myself as amusing and serviceable as possible in return for their generosity. We arrived on the 5th of January 1757. I went straight to my friend Baletti, who received me with open arms, though I had not written to him. He was expecting me, for he had heard of my flight from prison, and knew that it would be necessary for me to get as far from Venice as possible. There was general rejoicing in the house when they knew of my arrival. This interesting family was devoted to me. I procured a nice apartment near them, and then took a *fiacre* to the Hotel de Bourbon,[1] intending to present myself to M. de Bernis, who was then Minister of Foreign Affairs, but I found he had gone to Versailles. I was, of course, anxious to place myself as soon as possible under the protection of the complaisant lover of my beautiful M. M., and so I went on to Versailles, but had the misfortune to cross M. de Bernis on the road. There was nothing for it but to return to Paris; but when we got to the gates we saw a crowd of people rushing about in great confusion, and crying out, 'The king is assassinated; they have assassinated the king.' They stopped my carriage, and made me get out; I was taken to the guard-house, where in a few minutes I was joined by twenty or thirty people, all as innocent as I was. We stayed there, sulky and suspicious, staring at each other, until at last an officer came in, and apologising to me, said we were at liberty to go our ways.

'The king is wounded,' he said, 'and has been taken to his apartments; nobody knows who the assassin is, but he has been arrested.'

[1] This palace, which was built in 1722 by the Duc de Bourbon, has gone through many changes, and been used for many purposes. In 1796 the Council of the Five Hundred held their sittings there; under the Empire it was used by the Corps Legislatif. From 1814 to 1848 it served as the Chamber of Deputies, and in 1851 the National Assembly sat in a provisionary hall which occupied part of the courtyard.

It took me three hours to get back to Paris, and in that short time I was passed by at least two hundred couriers, galloping *ventre à terre.* At each moment a fresh one went by, and each one cried out the news he was carrying; finally, I gathered that the king had been bled, that his wound was a slight one, so slight that if he chose he could go on to Trianon; and that it was decreed that the wretched assassin[1] was to be drawn and quartered alive, and then burnt.

When I got to Paris the gossips flocked round me, and I had to repeat what I had heard ten times over.

[1] The excitement and misery of the Seven Years War and the well-known immorality of the king preyed on the already diseased mind of Damiens. He was convinced that no change for the better would take place till the king personally suffered. His intention was to wound Louis, not kill him. He went to Versailles and waited two days before an opportunity occurred. As the king was coming through the porch which now leads to the Museum, Damiens stuck a penknife into the king's back, exclaiming, 'I did it for God and the people, because France is perishing.' Casanova's faintly compassionate attitude towards Damiens is exceptional in his times, and speaks for his humanity.

CHAPTER XVIII

MADEMOISELLE DE LA MEURE

So here I was once more in Paris, glorious Paris. I was beginning to learn to look upon it as my adopted country, for I could not hope to return to the one which had given me birth. I was no stranger to Paris, but hitherto I had considered it only as a centre of amusement; now I considered it as the field on which my fortune was to be won. I must bring into play all my physical and mental powers; I must become acquainted with great and influential persons, take my colour from them, and do everything in my power to please them.

'I will be,' I said to myself, 'reserved in speech and behaviour, and this will gain me a reputation the fruits of which I shall gather by and by.'

My adopted father, good, generous M. de Bragadin, had promised me an allowance of a hundred crowns a month, so that I was fairly well provided for, and could wait till chance served me.

Naturally enough my first idea was to address myself to the late French ambassador to Venice; he was then in high favour at court, and I knew him well enough to be sure of his support.

I told the story of my escape in every salon: it took me two good hours. I wrote a letter which I took myself to the Palais Bourbon, left it, and waited. Next morning at eight o'clock I received a note giving me an appointment for the same day.

M. de Bernis received me most cordially; he told me he

had heard from M. M. of my escape; and he showed me her letter giving him all the details of my flight. These details were in every respect incorrect, and were evidently imaginary; but this was not M. M.'s fault, she had only repeated the current version of my story as it had been told to her. 'C. C.,' she wrote, 'comes very often to see me, but, alas! our poor friend is not over happy in her married life.'

The Cardinal de Bernis prints the account of his escape.

I promised M. de Bernis to write out the account of my adventures. He said he would send a copy to M. M. On taking leave of me he very gracefully slid a rouleau of a hundred louis into my hands; I spent this money on replenishing my wardrobe, which was excessively meagre. I wrote my story in eight days, and sent it to my generous protector, authorising him to have as many copies of it printed as he liked, and begging him to distribute them to such persons as he thought would be useful to me.

Three weeks after he told me he had spoken about me to M. Erizzo, the Venetian ambassador, who said, that though personally he had no cause for reproach, he should prefer not to receive me, as he did not wish to get into trouble with the Holy Office. M. de Bernis also told me that he had given my narrative to the Marquise de Pompadour, and that he would take an early opportunity of presenting me to that influential lady. 'You can go, my dear Casanova,' he said, 'to M. de Choiseul and to the comptroller-general, M. de Boulogne; you will be well received, coming from me; if you are clever you will be able to do something with the latter. Try and invent something which will bring money into the royal coffers, but avoid complications and chimerical combinations.'

For the moment I could think of nothing which would add to the king's revenues except new taxes; but I went to M. de Choiseul.[1] He received me in the dressing-room, where he

[1] He owed his success principally to his friendship with La Pompadour. After being ambassador to Rome and Vienna he became successively Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of War. He retired in 1770 as a result of

was writing, while his valet dressed his hair. He put several questions to me, writing all the time I was answering them. When he had finished his letter, he said, 'Tell me how you managed to escape from prison.'

'Your Excellency, it would take at least two hours to tell you, and you appear to be very busy.'

'Tell me, in brief, how did you get through the roof?'

'I could not tell you that in less than half an hour.'

'Why were you imprisoned?'

'The interest of my story, your Excellency, lies in its details, and they are lengthy.'

'Well, you will tell me them some other time. I must go to Versailles now; come and see me again. And in the meantime how can I be of use to you?'

I had been somewhat put out by his careless reception of me; but these last words were said so kindly that my good humour returned.

Then I went to M. de Boulogne, in appearance, manners, and costume a very different person from the Duc de Choiseul. He was old, and looked clever, and I respected him.

'Tell me your views,' he said, 'either now or in writing: M. Pâris Duverny[1] wants twenty million francs for his military college, and we must find that sum without charging the state or depleting the royal treasury.'

the plots against him, but returned after the accession of Louis XVI. Though the queen welcomed him heartily, the king, who had been warned against him, was exceedingly cold, and de Choiseul retired again to his chateau at Chanteloup.

[1] Pâris, otherwise called Duverny, was one of four brothers, financiers, who banded together to destroy the system of John Law. He was too strong for them; they were exiled, but returned after his fall. Their influence and power was immense, and they were hated. They were exiled again by Cardinal Fleury in 1726, and Joseph was imprisoned in the Bastille. After Fleury's death in 1743 they became more influential than ever. Madame de Pompadour befriended them, and for the nineteen years she was in power Pâris Duverny managed all the finances of the Empire. He founded the École Militaire in 1751. In 1846 his coffin was opened, as there had been much mystery as to the manner in which he had disposed of his wealth. Nothing, however, relating to its whereabouts was discovered.

'I have a scheme in my head which would bring the king the interest on a hundred millions,' I said.

He undertakes to raise twenty millions for the French king.

'How much would it cost?'

'Nothing, but the expense of collecting.'

'I know of what you are thinking.'

'I am surprised at that, sir, for I have told no one.'

'Come and dine with me and M. Duverny to-morrow, and we will talk it over.'

Duverny, the financier, was honest and honourable. He was the brother of de Montmartel; scandal said he was the father of Madame de Pompadour.

On leaving the comptroller-general I went and walked about in the Tuileries Gardens, reflecting on this strange turn of fortune. On hearing that the king needed twenty millions, I had incontinently declared I could procure a hundred, without the faintest idea where they were to come from. This hard man of business had asked me to dinner to prove to me that he had already grasped my scheme before I told him of it. 'I must,' I thought, 'first find out what Duverny and Boulogne have in their minds, perhaps I can suggest some amendment to their scheme, or else preserve a mysterious and provocative silence.'

The dinner was to be at Duverny's house at Plaisance, a little beyond Vincennes. I presented myself at the door of the man who had drawn France out of the gulf into which, forty years before, Law's system of gambling operations had plunged her.

Cost of the trial of Damiens.

There were several people at dinner, and the conversation was exceedingly tiresome. The death of Fontenelle was discussed, and the trial of Damiens, which was to cost five millions. When dessert was served, however, the host, leaving his guests, begged me to follow him into another room. There we found a man of about fifty, who was presented to me as M. de Calsabigi. Duverny, taking a book from his hand, gave it to me, saying, with a smile, 'M. Casanova, here is your project.'

On the first page of the book I read—

'A lottery of ninety tickets; each lot, which is to be drawn once a month, can only fall on five numbers.'

'I own, sir,' said I, 'that that is my project.'

We spent the remainder of the night discussing the means of organising the lottery, and I may say, without vanity, that the amendments and rectifications I proposed were so valuable as to lead them at once to acknowledge their importance. Calsabigi's scheme was a crude one, but I soon convinced them of my power to develop it into a working possibility.

He institutes a lottery.

It would be tedious to describe at length all our calculations; suffice it to say that M. l'Alembert was called in, in his quality of arithmetician, and that he perfectly approved of my plan. De Bernis presented me to Madame de Pompadour, who was good enough to remember that she had met me some five years previously, when my bad French had considerably amused her. My knowledge of the language, she said, had increased since then, and become so perfect that I ought seriously to think of taking out papers of naturalisation. She showed the deepest interest in the lottery; and in eight days the council passed a decree authorising it. The scheme was briefly this: to limit the winning numbers to five; had they been six it would have been perfectly fair; as it was, the sixth fell to the State, so that the king would draw every month a profit of a hundred thousand crowns.

I was offered six of the receiving offices and four thousand francs a year from the profits of the lottery. Calsabigi was to have three thousand francs at each drawing, and the head office in the Rue Montmartre; he was far better paid than I was, but I was not jealous, as I knew that in reality the idea was his. I rented five of my offices for two thousand francs a year each, and the sixth, in the Rue Saint Denis, I furnished in a most luxurious manner, and put my valet in charge. He was a very intelligent young Italian, who had been in the service of the Prince de la Catolica.

As I wanted to attract people to my office, I posted bills

stating that all winning tickets signed by me would be paid within twenty-four hours. This took with the crowd, and we sold many more tickets in the Rue Saint Denis than at the other offices. My first receipt was forty thousand francs, out of which we had eighteen thousand francs prizes to pay. I had provided myself with the necessary funds, knowing I should be reimbursed. As there was no delay, our office became the popular one: my valet was on the road to fortune, for each winner gave him something for himself. The total receipts were ten million francs. Paris alone furnished four millions, and the State made a profit of six hundred thousand francs; this was not bad for the first time! The Parisians had won a number of small prizes, which gave the lottery a brilliant reputation; it was easy to predict that the next time the receipts would be doubled.

My lottery was, after all, nothing but a tax that fell particularly heavily on certain persons, at the same time offering them a problematical gain, so the government merely exploited the avarice and cupidity of the public; and I shall not refer to it again until certain subsequent events in my life make it necessary to do so.

I must now go back to the first month of my second sojourn in Paris. My brother François returned to Paris. Shortly after my arrival there he came from Dresden, where he had spent four years studying, and copying all the famous battle pictures. We met with mutual pleasure, but on my offering to use my influence to facilitate his reception into the Academy, he replied proudly that he wanted no recommendation but his own talent.

'The French,' he said, 'rejected me once. I bear them no grudge for doing so, but to-day I hope for a better reception.'

He painted a very fine picture, which he exhibited at the Louvre. It was received with acclamation, and the Academy bought it for twelve thousand francs. He became famous, and in twenty-six years made over a million francs, but his

foolish extravagance, and two unfortunate marriages he made, kept him a poor man.

In the month of March, my dear old friend, Madame Manzoni, sent me all my manuscripts and miniatures, which the reader will remember I had placed in safety with her some time before my incarceration in 'The Leads.' The messenger was a young Venetian nobleman, the Count de Tiretta.

The Comte de Tiretta takes him to see La Lambertini.

The jolly Tiretta offered to introduce me to a friend of a friend of his, Madame Lambertini, widow of the Pope's nephew. The curious title interested me. I went with Tiretta, and found neither widow nor Pope's niece, but an out-and-out adventuress by profession and inclination. She began an intrigue with Tiretta at once, and I did the same with a pretty girl, Mlle. de la Meure, who was there with her aunt, whom I treated at first with but scant respect; I could not conceive of any respectable young woman living under the wing of La Lambertini. They all played at cards, and the pretty niece was told off to amuse me. For a moment she left me and went to stand behind her fat aunt's chair, but was sent back to me, because, said the old lady, she brought her ill luck. That evening I prosecuted my attentions with so much fervour, that a few days afterwards Mlle. de la Meure wrote to me saying that her aunt was trying to marry her to a rich merchant of Dunkirk.

'She knows no more of him than I do, but the *courtier de mariage* speaks highly of him; what else could he do? Still, if what has passed between us has not injured me in your estimation, I propose myself to you as a wife, with seventy-five thousand francs, and as much more when my aunt dies.'

He meets Mlle. de la Meure.

This touched me, but the idea of marriage appalled me as usual. She gave me four days to think it over; they were enough to convince me that I did not love her enough. I went to dine at La Lambertini's, where I was to meet her, all the same. She came looking lovely, and in the presence of her aunt I arranged to take them all with me to see the execution of Damiens on the 28th of March. All Paris was

going, and I rushed out, took a *fiacre*, and hired a splendid window for three louis. When I came back I fell into a *tête-à-tête* with Mlle. de la Meure, and weakly promised to marry her. I bade her, however, place no obstacle in the way of the threatened visit of the Dunkirk merchant, her suitor, to Paris.

He hires a window in the Place de Grève.

On the day of the execution[1] I fetched the three ladies from their house, and as the *fiacre* was small, I took Mlle. de la Meure on my knee. The window I had chosen had two steps: the ladies were on the front one, and I and Tiretta stood behind looking over their shoulders. We stayed four hours. Every one knows about Damiens: he was a fanatic, who to gain heaven tried to kill the king. He managed to do little more than scratch the king, but he was tortured as if his crime had been fully consummated. I must say that I had to turn aside from the sight of the martyrdom of this victim of the Jesuits, and to stop my ears to keep out his piercing shrieks of agony—the poor creature was literally torn in pieces; but the sight did not affect La Lambertini and the fat aunt of Mlle. de la Meure in the least—indeed I was amused to see that Tiretta was teasing and cajoling and caressing the latter all the time. This was sheer hardness of heart, and I had to pretend to believe when they told me that the horror inspired in them by the monster's attempt had completely killed all sense of pity. After this long day we left the ladies at their house, and Tiretta and I went to dine at the Hôtel de Russie, where I scolded him for the lightness of his conduct.

When I went again to see Mlle. de la Meure, the dear good aunt came in and told me that Tiretta had made his peace with her, and that she was going to take him under her roof *en pension* for a year! To her niece she said, 'Be ready after

[1] The torture and execution of Damiens took place on the Place de la Grève, of which one side sloped away to the Seine. He was broken on the wheel, and torn in pieces by four horses. The process lasted four hours. The attitude of the two ladies was the conventional one of all Parisians at the period. Their English sisters, in their avidity for sights like public hangings, did not leave them far behind. But surely the incident of the 'fat aunt' here recorded outdoes all in cynicism and callousness.

dinner to start for La Villette,[1] where we will stay all the spring. And hist! you needn't tell my sister all about it.'

'Oh no, aunt. Do I ever tell of you?'

'Just hear her! One would think from the way she talks that this sort of thing happened every day!'

I laughed. We dined together, and then they departed all three for La Villette, and I went to spend the rest of the evening at the Italian players.

Three days later I went to stay a day or two. An actress called Quinault, and Madame Favart,[2] and the Abbé Voisenon were fellow-guests. The Dunkirk merchant was expected, but did not come till I left. I went again to La Villette to see him, and found the young lady dressed up in his honour. He was handsome and charming. We dined, we talked, but not Mlle. de la Meure. When the merchant was about to leave for Paris, the aunt begged him to come again to-morrow, and asked her niece to second the invitation. She obediently did so, and if she had not, he would have left the house without having once heard the sound of the voice of his affianced.

When he had gone:—

'Well, what do you think of your future husband?'

'Let me off answering, dear aunt, for the present, but put me next him to-morrow and make me talk, for, even if he approves my appearance, my conversation may disgust him. One must not take people in. Perhaps he won't have me when he finds how stupid I am.'

'I know you don't mean that; you think yourself clever,' said the aunt, 'and M. Casanova tells you so, I'll be bound.'

[1] La Villette, now an integral part of the town, was then a rustic retreat of the Parisians.

[2] Mlle. de Ronceray, better known by her husband's name of Favart. Maurice de Saxe fell in love with her at a performance she gave at his camp in Flanders. He was so importunate that she fled to Brussels. He then obtained a *lettre de cachet* against her husband, who escaped to Strassburg, where he lived hidden in a cellar, painting fans by the light of a candle for his livelihood. After Maurice de Saxe's death the devoted pair were reunited in Paris, and Favart's operas met with immense success.

'He knows what he is talking about,' she said.

Then we played cards, and went to bed. I had been in my room for a quarter of an hour when the door opened and my mistress came in, not in *négligée*, but dressed as she had been all the evening. It was an evil augury.

Interview with Mlle. de la Meure.

'Tell me,' she said shortly, 'if I am to agree to this marriage?'

'Do you like him?'

'I don't dislike him.'

'Then agree.'

'Very well, and good-bye. From this moment love between us ceases and friendship begins. Adieu.'

'Let our friendship date from to-morrow.'

'No, not if I die for it! If I am to be the bride of another, I will be worthy of him. I might even be happy in the days to come, who knows? Don't keep me, let me go—you know I love you.'

'Kiss me, then.'

'No.'

'But you are crying?'

'No. In God's name let me go.'

'You will only go and cry in your own room. I am in despair. Stay, and I will be your husband.'

'No, I can't consent to that—now.'

She made an immense effort and tore herself away. I could not sleep for remorse and shame.

I stayed to dinner next day, but I pretended, as I often did, to have toothache when I wished to be let alone. She never spoke to me, she never looked at me, and I know now she was right.

It was a very long dinner, and after it was over Mlle. de la Meure announced her marriage, in eight days, and her departure for Dunkirk.

I don't know why I did not fall down dead, but I went back to Paris and wrote her a passionate love-letter. She begged me, in her answer, not to write to her any more. Then I thought she must have fallen in love with the merchant, and longed to kill him. I thought I would go and see him at his

lodgings, tell him of my relations with his *fiancée*, and if this did not put him off, propose a duel. I went, with two pistols, but he was asleep, and I waited for a quarter of an hour, at the end of which he entered in a dressing-gown, and flung his arms round my neck. I was overwhelmed. Coffee was brought, and still not an offensive word could I find to say. The fit was past. It is humiliating to think that chance alone had prevented my behaving like a scoundrel.

A secret mission to Dunkirk.

One day M. de Bernis sent for me, and asked me if I felt disposed to undertake a secret commission, and if I thought I had the requirements needful.

'As far as inclination goes,' I answered, 'I am disposed to do anything to make money; and as for the aptitude, your Excellency is a better judge than I am.'

He smiled, and after dwelling for a moment or two on past recollections, told me to go and see the Abbé de la Ville, who would be more explicit than he could be.

The abbé was a cold, calm politician, who served the state well: the grateful king rewarded him with a bishopric, on the day of his death. He pronounced a dissertation on the nature of secret missions and the discretion necessary in those charged to carry them out. He then asked me if I thought I could manage to scrape acquaintance with the marine officers then at Dunkirk, and make him a circumstantial report of the commissariat, the number of sailors, ammunition, administration, police, and so forth, of eight or ten men-of-war lying there. 'As it is a secret mission,' he added, 'I can give you no letters. I can only supply you with funds and wish you *bon voyage*.'

As I was new to that kind of business, I imagined it to be much more difficult than it really was, and gave myself considerable trouble to get private introductions to the officers. My charming friend, Silvia Baletti,[1] the actress, furnished me

[1] Gianella Baletti, better known as Silvia, was born 1701, and for forty years was the idol of Parisian playgoers. Her husband, Joseph Baletti, acted under the name of Mario, and their son Louis, Casanova's friend, had also some reputation as an actor and dancer.

with several, and a passport through the Duc de Gesvres. An hour after my arrival at Dunkirk I found out Madame de P. (Mlle. de Meure), and she and her husband offered me a bed. I said I would come and dine with them sometimes. Before I had been in Dunkirk three days I was personally acquainted with all the captains stationed there. The brave fellows admitted me to their friendship, and asked me to dine on board their ships. I talked at random about the construction of vessels, and the Venetian methods of manœuvring them. The more nonsense I talked the more they seemed delighted with me; they took me down into the holds, where I put a hundred questions about freight and ballast. I drew out of them everything I wanted, and in the evening I carefully transmitted to paper all my observations, good and bad. I only slept four or five hours a day, and in fifteen days I knew all I desired to know.

I was very serious during this trip; frivolity and gambling were entirely laid aside; I devoted myself wholly to my work.

The mission costs twelve thousand francs.

This mission cost the government twelve thousand francs, and it could easily have got all the information I furnished it with without spending a sou. Any intelligent young officer could have done what I did. But the ministers in France in those days spent money which was not theirs, to enrich their creatures. They were despots, and the down-trodden people counted for nothing with them; the state was heavily in debt, and the provinces in the most deplorable condition. *A revolution was necessary*, I think, but it need not have been a bloody one, it should have been moral and patriotic; but then the nobles and the clergy were not generous and public-spirited enough to make those slight sacrifices which would have saved the king, the state, and themselves.

I have already spoken of Silvia's daughter, Manon Baletti, a charming, sprightly, and beautiful creature to whom I was sincerely attached, and who returned my affection. She was in every way suited to make me an excellent wife, and had it not been for my invincible dislike to matrimony I should have

asked her parents for her hand. I had more than once thought seriously of marrying her, but always found some plausible excuse for delay.

My devotion to her did not prevent me from being interested in the mercenary beauties who then held *le haut du pavé*, or those others who held themselves a head higher because they sang or danced, or played the parts of queens or waiting-maids every night.

Camille, actress and dancer.

Camille, actress and dancer at the Comédie Italienne, attracted me, partly, I must own, on account of the delightful little house near the Barrière Blanche, where she lived with the Comte d'Eigreville. He was the brother of the Marquis de Gamache and the Comtesse du Rumain, a handsome, amiable fellow, who loved to see his mistress's salon crowded. The Comte de la Tour d'Auvergne was one of her most assiduous admirers, a young man of good birth, who adored her, but who was not rich enough to keep her to himself. Camille had made him a present of a little waiting-maid, named Babet, a naïve, simple child about fifteen, who was delighted to share his humble lodgings in the Rue de Taranne.[1] One evening, having supped at the Barrière Blanche, De la Tour d'Auvergne, his Babet, and I returned to Paris in a small carriage. The night was dark, and I, not wishing to lose an opportunity, took her hand and gently pressed it; to my delight the pressure was returned. Growing bolder, I raised the hand to my lips and covered it with kisses, when, O horrors! a voice said: 'Greatly obliged to you, my dear Casanova, for your delicate attentions, but I fear you mistake!'

These words were followed by a peal of laughter. Fortunately for me, at that moment the carriage stopped at my door, and I escaped. The story, of course, made the tour of the town, and for days I could not show myself without being hailed

[1] The Rue de Taranne is an interesting street. It took its name from Simon de Taranne, an alderman, who had his hotel there in 1417. The Marquis de Saint Simon lived there in 1711, Diderot in the house which stood at the corner of the Rue Saint Benoit, and d'Holbach lived at No. 12.

with laughter, but as I bore the raillery good-humouredly, the affair was soon forgotten. De la Tour d'Auvergne and I became fast friends. He came to me one evening in the *foyer* of the theatre and asked me to lend him a hundred louis, which he had lost the night before at the Princess Anhalt's. I had not so much as that in hand, and I told him so, but he was so distressed that I consented to take the sum from the lottery safe.

He puts his hand into the lottery safe to oblige De la Tour d'Auvergne.

'My word of honour,' he said, 'is surely worth a hundred louis; put it in the place of the money until I redeem it on Saturday.'

Saturday came, no comte and no money. On the Monday I had to hand in my accounts, I was therefore obliged to pawn my solitaire ring to meet the amount.

I met De la Tour d'Auvergne some days later: he told me he was much distressed at not having repaid me, but that he would do so the following Saturday, '*on his word of honour*.'

'Your word of honour,' I answered, rather rashly, 'is in my safe, therefore I can't count on it, but you can pay me back when you like.'

He turned very pale.

'My word of honour is dearer to me than my life, my dear Casanova, and I will give you the hundred louis to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, behind the café at the end of the Champs Élysées. I hope you will come and fetch them, and bring your sword with you.'

'This is paying a *bon mot* too dear,' I said. 'I had rather ask your pardon, if that will put an end to the matter.'

'No,' said he. 'It is I who am in the wrong, not you; but only my sword can settle it. Will you come?'

'Of course.'

I loved this gentleman, so I supped sadly that night. We breakfasted together next morning, after which he handed me the hundred louis, and begged me to follow him to L'Étoile, the spot he had selected. We had hardly crossed swords when I made my famous thrust and wounded him in the breast, and,

A duel with De la Tour d'Auvergne.

lamb-like, he dropped his sword, and putting his hand inside his coat, drew it out stained, and said sweetly enough, 'I am satisfied.'

I looked at the point of my sword and saw it had not gone in very deep. I told him so. We embraced cordially, and I accompanied him home. We kept the duel to ourselves, no one knew of it, and eight days after we were supping with Camille.

Some time after this Camille told me he was taken ill with sciatica, and took me to see him in bed. I told him I could cure him by means of Solomon's talisman and five magic words. He laughed, but said I might do as I liked. I sent out for nitre, flowers of sulphur, and a little brush. I mixed the drugs together, and told Camille to rub his thigh while I muttered a spell. They were not to laugh, and she must rub for half an hour. Then with my mixture I painted on his limb the five-pointed star known as the sign of Solomon, or the pentacle. I then wrapped his leg up in three napkins, and told him to keep quiet for twenty-four hours.

A few days after, when I had almost forgotten the whole thing, I heard horses outside my door. I looked out and saw De la Tour d'Auvergne jump out lightly and come upstairs. He said I had cured him, and that all his friends were amazed.

'You should not have spoken of it,' said I; 'you know what Paris is; now I shall be treated as a quack.'

'Only by a few fools. But I have come to ask you something. I have an aunt who is deeply versed in all the abstract sciences, and an adept at chemistry. She is rich, and mistress of her fortune. She is dying to see you, for she says she knows you, and that you are not what you pretend to be. She has begged me to take you to dine with her, and I hope you will accept. She is the Marquise d'Urfé.'[1]

[1] There is a good deal of ambiguity about Casanova's account of this most illustrious of his victims. There is no mention of her relations with the Regent, so frequently alluded to by him, in any contemporary memoirs of that personage. Her genealogy, as given by him, is incorrect. The d'Urfé family was one of the oldest and most renowned in France. It became extinct in the person of Joseph Marie de Lascaris d'Urfé, who died in 1724. His wife, Louise de Gontaut, is the

De la Tour d'Auvergne introduces him to his aunt, Madame la Marquise d'Urfé.

I did not know the marquise, but the name of d'Urfé impressed me, for I knew the history of the famous Anne d'Urfé, who flourished at the end of the sixteenth century. This lady was the widow of his great-grandson. I thought it better to decline the invitation to dinner; I knew my supposed talent was only empirical, and had no wish to expose myself to public ridicule. I said that the count might take me to her house one day, and that we would all three dine there.

Madame d'Urfé lived on the Quai des Théatins, next door to the Hotel Bouillon. She was beautiful, although no longer young; her manners had all the easy dignity of the Regency. I saw very soon that she wished to appear learned: I realised that I should be able to please her, by making her pleased with herself. We dined at two o'clock, and during dinner the conversation was futile and trifling enough, as is the fashion of the *beau monde*. After dessert De la Tour d'Auvergne left us, to see his cousin, the Prince de Turenne, whom he had left that morning in a high fever, and after he had gone Madame d'Urfé began to talk chemistry and magic and science, as it was her mania to do. I was fatuous enough to ask her if she was acquainted with *primary matter*. She replied politely that she already possessed what is called the philosopher's stone, and

Marquise d'Urfé alluded to here. Casanova speaks of her husband's celebrated ancestor Anne d'Urfé, and his wife, Renée de Savoie. As a matter of fact Anne d'Urfé had no descendants, and Renée de Savoie was his mother. She married Jacques d'Urfé, by whom she had two sons, Honoré and Anne, both celebrated as literary men, and the latter as a soldier as well. Both brothers were in love with a lady called Diane de Chateau Morand, and though she first married Anne, his triumph was short: the marriage was declared null, and after an interval of two or three years she espoused Honoré. During this interval, however, it is to be supposed that his affection for her had cooled, as he plainly states in his papers that he married her, not for love, but because of her immense estates. She made his life a burden to him because of her dirty and disorderly habits: her rooms, and even her bed, were always full of big dogs. His celebrated novel, *The Ingenious Romance of Astrea*, is supposed to be the story of his amours with his sister-in-law: it had a most phenomenal success, and was translated into every European language, even Finnish. It was his library, which contained a number of rare books of magic, that Madame d'Urfé inherited.

was initiated in the higher mysteries. She showed me her library, which had belonged to the great d'Urfé and to Renée of Savoy, his wife. She had added a hundred thousand francs' worth of manuscripts to it. Paracelsus was her favourite author, and, according to her, he was neither man nor woman, but a hermaphrodite. He died, she said, from an overdose of the universal panacea. From the library we went to the laboratory, which positively astonished me. She showed me substance which she had kept on the fire for fifteen years, and which was to remain there another four or five: it was a powder whose operation would transmute all metals into the purest gold. She showed me a pipe through which the coal passed down and kept the fire of her furnace at the same degree of heat. The coal came down by its own weight and always in the same quantity, so that the heat never varied, even if she left it alone for three months.

Madame d'Urfé shows him her laboratory.

The calcination of mercury was child's-play to this wonderful woman.[1] She showed me some. She showed me the Diana's tree made by the famous Taliamed, whose pupil she was. He was not dead, as people pretended, for, she said, smiling, 'I often get letters from him. If the Regent had listened to him, he would be still living. Ah! the dear Regent, he was my first friend; it was he who named me Egeria, and it was he who married me to M. d'Urfé.'

She possessed a manuscript commentary by Raymond Lully, explaining Arnaud de Villeneuve's writings on Bacon and Heber who, according to her, were not dead either. This document was in an ivory casket, carefully locked up, although no one was allowed to enter her laboratory. She had an *athanor* who had been living for fifteen years. I found in one of her books the very pentacle I had drawn on her nephew's hip, surrounded by planetary signs—those of Agrippa. I told her so.

In speaking of the theory of planetary hours, I mentioned

[1] There was a great revival of interest in all things magical in the seventeenth century; the Rosicrucians, of whom little had been heard for nearly three hundred years, re-appeared, and it became a kind of fashion to be affiliated to their sect, and many of the Court ladies were bitten with the mania for dabbling in witchcraft.

the works of Artephius and Sandevoye. She told me she possessed them, but in Latin, and asked me if I would translate them for her.

'It is impossible for me to refuse you anything, madame, for a reason which I will tell you, perhaps, to-morrow.'

'Why not to-day?'

'I must first find out the name of your familiar spirit, or if you will make the sign of the order, I will tell you.'

'I dare not, and you know why.'

The sign in question was that of the Rosicrucians, and a lady like Madame d'Urfé naturally hesitated to make it to a man whom she saw for the first time.

He dines every evening with the marquise to meet her set.

It was nine at night when De la Tour d'Auvergne came back. He was not a little surprised at finding me still with his aunt. He told us that his cousin had smallpox, and that he was going to nurse him, so that for a month at least he should be invisible. After praising his devotion, Madame d'Urfé gave him a charm to hang round the Prince de Turenne's neck, and we left together. I was to dine with Madame d'Urfé and all her set, in parties of three, so as to appreciate them properly. The second day I met at her table an Irish physician of the old school, Macartney, who bored me passably. Another day the Chevalier d'Arzigny, an old man of eighty, very vain, and very ridiculous, was the guest. He was called the 'king of dandies': he had been at the court of Louis Quatorze, and was full of anecdotes of bygone times. His withered cheeks were well rouged; he wore a flowered coat, ornamented with the *pompons* that were the fashion in Madame de Sévigne's day. He had a mistress to whom he pretended to be tenderly attached, and at whose little house outside Paris he supped every evening. He was as amiable as he was decrepit; he was most scrupulously clean, and his button-hole was always adorned with a bouquet of sweet-smelling flowers, such as tuberoses, jonquilles, or Spanish jasmine. His wig was plastered with pomatum; his eyebrows were painted and perfumed, and so were his artificial ivory teeth.

Another day I dined with Charon, councillor at the High Court, where he conducted Madame d'Urfé's law-suit with her daughter, Madame du Châtelet, whom she cordially hated. The old councillor had been her lover forty years back, and considered himself bound to uphold the cause of his former mistress. In those days French magistrates pronounced in favour of their friends. They bought their practices, and sold justice, to make the balance true.

The most amusing person I met was the famous adventurer who called himself the Comte de Saint-Germain ;[1] he talked all through dinner and ate nothing. He liked to take people's breath away, and often he succeeded. He was clever, spoke all languages, and had studied music and chemistry. He was handsome, and could influence women. He gave them cosmetics which would prevent them from growing any older; to make them younger would be, of course, impossible.

He was in favour with Madame de Pompadour, and consequently with the king, for whom he had constructed a fine laboratory. The amiable monarch, whom most things wearied, liked to dabble in chemistry. This prince of swindlers calmly declared that he was three hundred years old, that he possessed the universal panacea, and could command and control nature; that he could make ten small diamonds into one fine large one without their losing weight, and so on. He was never seen to eat anything; he was nourished, he said, on a

[1] The origin of this mysterious and interesting adventurer was never determined, nor the date of his birth. Madame de Gergy knew him in Venice in 1700, when she judged him to be about forty-five. When she met him at Madame de Pompadour's, fifty years later, he was unchanged. He pretended to be possessed of an elixir which repressed the ravages of time, and a secret for taking flaws out of precious stones. Louis XV. confided a valuable diamond to him, and he doubled its worth by removing a flaw. He was immensely rich ; no one knew the source of his income ; he had no property, no banker, never gambled, and lived in magnificent style. He spoke all European languages, besides Sanskrit, Arabic, and Chinese ; was very musical, and a gifted painter. Vanloo begged him to divulge the secret of his brilliant colouring, but he refused. He left Paris, 1759, for the States of the Margrave of Anspach, where he called himself Zaraski. He died at Hesse, 1782.

certain food known only to himself. He went to the very best houses.

By this time I knew Madame d'Urfé through and through. She believed that I was an adept, hiding my personality behind an incognito. I read the manuscript she had given me without a code, and that I offered to impart to her. I did. It was mere gibberish, but she was thunderstruck. I told her that a genius had revealed it to me. From that moment she became entirely subservient to me. I became her soul's arbitrator, and sadly did I abuse my power. Yet the woman over whom I gained this extraordinary and unrighteous ascendency was really learned, really clever and logical in every point but one. I cannot, now that I am old, look back on this chapter of my life without blushing, and the frankness which I have imposed upon myself is my penance.

He puts the marquise in communication with *Paralis.*

The good lady's pet delusion was her firm belief in the possibility of holding converse with genii and elementary spirits. She would have given anything in the world to be able to do this. I put her in communication with my *Paralis* by means of my table of numbers, and when she had obtained his answer to her question, that is to say, the master word which was the key to her manuscript, which *Paralis* was naturally able to give her, I left her, carrying with me her soul, her heart, her intelligence, and the little common sense that remained to her. According to her, it depended alone on me to upset the whole world, and make or mar the happiness of France. She imagined I was immensely wealthy, and that I went under an assumed name to prevent being arrested. All these details were revealed to her by her familiar spirit during the night—that is to say, in the dreams which her exalted imagination took for realities. She did not see that had I possessed the powers with which she credited me, no government in the world could arrest me and no prison bars restrain me. Passion and infatuation are incapable of reasoning.

She told me one day, in perfect good faith, that it had been revealed to her that the accident of her sex alone stood in the

way of her communion with spirits, but that I could cause her soul to pass into the body of a male child, born of the philosophic union of a mortal with an immortal, an ordinary man and a divine woman. There was no sacrifice, she said, she was not prepared to make, if she could only be born again with the nature of a man. I answered that, as a matter of fact, I could perform that operation, but that I could not perform it on her, as it would be necessary for her to die first.

'I know,' she answered, 'and I know the kind of death I should have to suffer, but I am ready.'

'What do you imagine would be the manner of your death, madame?'

'Poison, the same poison which killed Paracelsus. I know its composition. I know *everything*. All that is wanting is the man child, born of an immortal being. All depends upon you, and I do not think your courage will fail you because of any misplaced pity for my poor, worn-out old body.'

At these words I rose and went to the window, looking on the quay, where I remained a quarter of an hour in deep thought. 'When I returned, 'You have been weeping, my friend,' she said.

I did not contradict her. I took my hat and sword and left her, sighing. Her carriage, which was always at my orders, was at the door, and I went in it for a long drive along the boulevards until theatre-time, unable to put this strange woman out of my mind.

His apology for his exploitation of the marquise.

If I had acted like an honest man, and told her that her notions were absurd, she would not have believed me; she would merely have imagined me jealous of her superior knowledge. I should have lost my hold over her without convincing her of her mistake. So I thought it wisest to let myself go. Moreover, I was flattered by the condescension of this titled lady, who moved in the best circles, and who possessed immense riches, vast estates in the country, and superb mansions in town. I knew she would refuse me nothing, and though I did not

mean to profit by her wealth, I liked to think that I could do so if I chose.

In spite of her money, and her supposed power of coining more, she was stingy, and only spent thirty thousand francs a year. She gambled on the Bourse with her savings, generally with success.

About this time my brother, who was on the high-road to fame and fortune, got married. At his wedding I met Corneman the banker, the friend of Mlle. de la Meure's husband, who liked me. He spoke of the prevalent scarcity of money, and asked me to suggest a remedy for it to the comptroller. He said there was a company of negotiators in Amsterdam who would buy royal securities at a fair price, and we could take in exchange the papers of some other Power whose credit was better than that of France, and on these it would be easy to realise. This idea seemed to me a good one, and I spoke of it to M. de Bernis, who advised me to get a letter of recommendation to the French ambassador at La Haye, and go off to Holland to see if I could discount the royal papers.

I saw the comptroller-general and the Duc de Choiseul, who approved of the scheme, and a few days later I started for Holland with the necessary credentials, and a letter of exchange drawn on Boaz, a Jewish banker at La Haye, for three thousand florins; this sum was to meet my current expenses. Madame d'Urfé confided to me sixty thousand francs' worth of stock in the Gothemberg India Company, which she could not sell in Paris, because there was no money there.

I was well received at La Haye and at Amsterdam, where the best society of the city showed me great hospitality. I was presented to the mother of the Stadtholder, who was then only twelve years old; the mother was a worthy and respectable woman, but seemed very ill; she fell asleep every minute, even while talking. She died soon after my visit to Holland, and at the *post-mortem* examination it was proved that she had dropsy of the brain, which explained her perpetual drowsiness.

Thérèse Trenti singing at the Opera House, Amsterdam.

There was much talk of a beautiful Italian actress, Madame Trenti,[1] who was playing at the opera. Imagine my surprise when I found she was none other than Thérèse Imer, for whose sake the reader will remember I had quarrelled with my first protector, the old senator Malipiero, eighteen years before! I had seen her again in 1753, and our relations had been somewhat more serious than in our childish days, after which she had gone to Bayreuth, and become the mistress of the Margrave.

She sang divinely an air beginning with these words—

'Eccoti venuta alfin, donna infelice,'[2]

words which seemed to have been written for the occasion.

I was told she was singing in all the towns in Holland, taking just what the audience chose to give her, at a collection which she made personally after the performance; that she always dressed in black, not only because she was a widow (her husband, the dancer Pompeati, committed suicide), but because of a great sorrow which she said had overtaken her.

She came down into the hall presently, followed by a little girl of five or six. As they drew near me, my heart began to beat ridiculously. I took twelve ducats[3] out of my purse, and wrapped them in paper. When she passed in front of me, I laid them on the plate without looking at her, though I saw she was gazing at me. In a moment the little girl came back and kissed my hand. I could not but recognise myself in the child, but I hid my feelings as well as I could. 'Will you have some sweets, little one?' I said, giving her my *bonbonnière.*

The little Sophie the image of her father.

'Do you know, M. Casanova,' said the lady who was with me, 'that that child and you are as like as two drops of water?'

[1] Thérèse Imer, who for some years acted under the name of Trenti, was a German by birth; at seventeen she was the mistress of the Venetian senator Malipiero, at whose house she made Casanova's acquaintance. She afterwards went to London, where she gained great notoriety as Madame Cornelys of Soho Square.

[2] '*Thou hast come then at last, unfortunate woman.*'

[3] A ducat was worth about two florins.

'A mere chance,' I said.

'Possibly, but chance has been extremely exact in this case.'

After the play I was eating oysters, when Thérèse came to me, leading her child by the hand. I rose to greet her, and she fell swooning on the sofa. When she had come back to her senses—if indeed she had ever lost them—I invited her to sup with me. We remained at table until seven o'clock next morning, recounting our adventures, fortunes, and misfortunes. Sophie, as the little one was called, slept soundly on the sofa until daybreak, when her mother, who had reserved the most interesting part of her story till the last, told me she was my child. She showed me an extract from her baptismal register; her birth coincided with the period of our acquaintance, and her likeness to me left me no room to doubt. I told Thérèse that I would adopt the child, and be a father to it; but she declared that she could not part with it.

'I have a boy who is twelve years old,' she said, 'and whom I cannot bring up suitably; will you take him instead?'

'Where is he?'

'He is at Rotterdam; I cannot say at school, for the fact is he is *pawned*.'

'Pawned?'

'Yes; for they will not give him back to me until I pay all I owe, which is eighty florins. You have already given me sixty-two; give me four more, and I shall be the happiest of mothers.'

'Here are twenty for you.'

Her gratitude was excessive. I could feel nothing for her but pity, and finally, with a mutual promise to meet at La Haye in a week's time, she bade me adieu, with a strange mixture of tenderness and temper.

At Amsterdam I was presented to a rich merchant, whose name, strange to say, was also Casanova. He told me that his family came originally from Naples, and on this we established a cousinship which was exceedingly useful to me, for he introduced me to many other merchants, and took me to

He meets M. d'O. and his daughter at Amsterdam.

the Bourse. There I met a M. d'O.,[1] who offered to take my India stock, at fifteen per cent. Finding the bargain an advantageous one, I concluded it with him. I sold out for seventy-two thousand francs, twelve thousand more than Madame d'Urfé had hoped for; I knew that this transaction would considerably add to my credit with her.

He sups with Thérèse.

As I have already said, I had given Thérèse a rendezvous at La Haye. I was to sup with her after the theatre. I found her on the fourth story of a mean-looking house. A table was placed in the middle of the room, covered with a black cloth. Two candles were burning on this sort of funeral altar, and the odd creature, with her two children, was seated behind it: she looked like Medea. I was richly clothed, and the brilliancy of my apparel contrasted strongly with the poverty of her surroundings.

The boy was small, but well formed, with an intelligent face and manner. He said he remembered having seen me at Venice; the little girl sat silently on my knee, with her arms round my neck, caressing me in the most engaging manner.

'Dear mamma,' she said, 'is not this handsome gentleman the same we saw in Amsterdam, whom every one said was my papa, because I am so like him; but my papa is dead!'

'That is true,' said I; 'but I will be your good friend if you will let me.'

We sat down to table, where we were served with a delicate supper and excellent wines.

She treats him better than she ever treated the margrave.

'I never treated the margrave better than this,' said Thérèse, 'in the little *tête-à-tête* suppers I used to give him.'

I wished to study the character of the boy, as I proposed to take him back to Paris with me, and I soon found that he was deceitful, always on his guard, composing his answers, and never speaking from the heart. Every word he uttered was said with a view to pleasing me. His mother, thinking to praise him, told me his greatest quality was secretiveness, and that he was as reserved with her as with others.

[1] M. d'O. was the rich banker Hope.

'That,' said I in a cutting tone, 'is simply abominable. You have stifled in your son the most precious gifts of nature, and instead of an angel, you have done your best to make a monster of him. I do not see how a father, no matter how tender his heart may be, can feel much affection for a son who is always tightly buttoned up.'

This sentiment seemed to astonish the mother.

'Tell me, my boy,' I continued, 'have you that confidence in me which a father has the right to expect from his son? Will you promise never to have any secrets from me?'

'I promise,' he answered, 'rather to die than to tell you a lie.'

'That is his character,' said his mother, 'I have taught him to look on lying with abhorrence.'

'So far so good, madame, but at the same time you might have taught him to be more open; it would have been more conducive to his happiness. Will you come to Paris with me too?' I added, addressing Sophie.

'Oh yes, with all my heart, but mamma must come as well; she would die without me.'

'But if I bade you go?' said Thérèse.

'I would obey, mamma; but how could I live away from you?' In saying this the child pretended to shed tears. I say pretended, for she was only repeating a lesson. It distressed me to see that this little creature also was being taught to dissemble; and I told the mother that she had taught her children to act in a marvellous manner, but that if she wanted them to become honest members of society she was on the wrong track altogether. I had a further example of this before leaving. Sophie begged me to sup with them the following day.

'I can't, my dear child,' I said; 'I have just refused your mother, and she would be offended if I granted you what I have refused her.'

'Oh no,' said the child naïvely, 'for she told me to ask you.'

I began to laugh, but her mother called her 'little stupid,' and her brother said *he* would never have said such a silly thing. The poor child was confused and trembling. I hastened to console her, promising to sup with them next day.

'On condition,' I added, 'that you give me a very simple supper, and only one bottle of Chambertin, because you are not rich.'

'Oh, but that does not matter,' she answered, 'for mamma says you will pay for everything.'

This reply made me laugh more than ever. I saw through Thérèse; I admired her—but I was in love with Mlle. d'O., with whom I practised magic in betweenwhiles.

The next day I received a letter from Madame d'Urfé. Her stock, she said, had only cost her sixty thousand francs. She did not wish to make a profit on them, and she enclosed a bill of exchange for twelve thousand francs which she begged me to accept as a mark of friendship. She went on to say that her familiar spirit had told her I should return to Paris, accompanied by a young boy who was actually the result of a philosophical union. It was a strange coincidence, though my connection with Thérèse could certainly not be called a philosophical one.

Returning home from the theatre one evening I passed a café, which seemed to be popular, judging from the number of people going and coming in and out of it. I was curious to see what this kind of place was like in Holland, so I entered with the crowd.

Good Lord! it was a smoky orgie held in a sort of cellar —a den of vice and debauchery. Two or three squeaking and discordant instruments formed the orchestra. The air was thick with the smell of tobacco, garlic, and beer. The company was composed of sailors and men of the lowest class, seated silently by, or clumsily dancing with the most hideous women. The poor sailors thought this place a paradise,

though there was not a single decent-looking girl in the lot. A big, ugly-looking fellow came up to me and told me if I liked to pay a halfpenny I could dance. I replied that I had no desire to do so, whereupon he pointed out a Venetian woman, and said the least I could do was to treat her to a drink.

He meets Lucy of Paséan.

I went up to the woman and asked her if she really came from Venice, and if so, how long was it since she had left her country.

'About eighteen years ago,' she answered.

I ordered a bottle of wine, and gave her the change from the ducat I handed the waiter. She wanted to kiss me to show her gratitude, but I prevented her.

'Would you rather be in Amsterdam,' I asked, 'or in Venice?'

'Alas! if I was in my own country I should not follow this frightful calling.'

'How old were you when you left?'

'I was fourteen, and I was happy with my father and mother, who are now perhaps dead of grief; but I was fool enough to run away with a rogue of a courier.'

'What part of Venice do you come from?'

'I did not live in Venice, but in the country, at a place called Frioul.'

Frioul!—eighteen years ago—a courier! I looked more closely at the unfortunate creature, and I recognised Lucy of Paséan! Decidedly I was in '*en pays de connaissance*'—first Thérèse, now Lucy!

He moralises on her fate.

Debauchery, far more than age, had disfigured her face and thickened her features. Lucy! the tender, the pretty, the innocent and naïve Lucy, whom I had loved so much, whom I had so sentimentally respected, had become hideous, repulsive, and vicious.

The poor creature was tossing down her drink meanwhile, without so much as looking at me, or caring to know who or what I was. I put some more money in her hand, and without

giving her time to count it I fled from the dark and dismal cavern.

I passed a horrible night! Lucy of Paséan haunted my dreams. Lucy at thirty-two years of age given up to vice, with no prospect before her but misery and infamy! I greeted the day with joy, for light brought a little peace to my remorseful soul that hated shadows.

Twelve days later I received despatches from M. de Boulogne, the comptroller-general, telling me to conclude the exchange of the twenty millions of royal securities I was charged with, on the terms which had been offered me —that is to say, eighteen millions two hundred thousand francs.

I might have made an advantageous marriage in Amsterdam, and settled down into a prosperous and wealthy merchant, for M. d'O.'s young and beautiful daughter was much attracted by me, and her father would have welcomed me as a son-in-law, but a silly desire to cut a fine figure in Paris made me throw away all these advantages. The fifteen months I had passed in 'The Leads' had not eradicated my ruling passion.

He offers to buy his own daughter for a thousand ducats.

Thérèse, whom I saw at Rotterdam, told me that she knew I had made half a million francs in Amsterdam. She said if she could leave Holland and go to London she would make her fortune. She had instructed Sophie to tell me that my good luck was due to the prayers she had addressed to Heaven for me! I laughed at the *finesse* of the mother, and the piety of the daughter, and contented myself with giving her a hundred ducats, promising her another hundred when she should write to me from London. It was easy to see that she thought my present a very modest one, but I did not add to it. She waited until I was actually stepping into my travelling carriage to beg me to give her another hundred ducats. I whispered to her that if she would give me my daughter I would make it a thousand. She reflected a moment, and then said she could not bear to part with the child.

'I know why,' I answered, and taking a watch out of my fob I gave it to Sophie.

I arrived in Paris on the 10th of February, and took superb rooms close by the Rue Montorgueil.[1]

[1] One of the few streets of Paris which retains its ancient name. It contained until within recent years many fine old houses, some dating from the thirteenth century. It is called after the *Mont Orgueilleux* because it leads to a slight acclivity. The Comte d'Artois, nephew of Louis XI., lived there, and barred the street with a gateway, which was pulled down in 1545.

CHAPTER XIX

MADEMOISELLE X. V. C.

During my voyage from La Haye to Paris, I had plenty of time to study my adopted son, and I soon saw that his mind was not as beautiful as his little person.

The side of his character which his mother had most carefully developed was discretion. This, of course, given her circumstances, was necessary enough, but the child had carried this discretion to an exaggerated degree, and had added to it dissimulation, distrust, and a false show of confidence—a fine trio to have taken root in a young soul!

My first visit was to my protector, de Bernis, whom I found in fine company. I recognised the Venetian ambassador, but he pretended not to see me.

'How long have you been in Paris?' asked M. de Bernis.

'I have just this moment arrived. My post-chaise is at the door.'

'Go to Versailles then, at once; you will find the Duc de Choiseul there and the comptroller-general. You have worked miracles! Go and be congratulated, and come back and see me afterwards. Tell the duke I have sent Voltaire a passport from the king, naming him gentleman-in-waiting in ordinary.'

He pays his respects to Madame d'Urfé.

Before going to Versailles, however, I paid my respects to Madame d'Urfé. She received me warmly, at the same time saying she had expected me: her genius had warned her of my arrival.

'Corneman told me that you had achieved financial wonders in Holland,' she said, 'but *I* know that the wonders are other

than what he imagines. I am sure that it is you yourself who have advanced the twenty millions. You were not offended at my offering you such an insignificant present as twelve thousand francs? It was only a small mark of my esteem. I shall tell my servants to refuse admittance to any one to-day. I am so happy to see you back again, I want to have you all to myself.'

I told her about the boy of twelve I had brought with me from Holland. She was delighted.

'I will take charge of him,' she said; 'I will put him to school with M. Viar, where my nephews are. What is his name? I am dying to see him. Why did you not both come here to stay?'

Her questions and answers succeeded each other so rapidly it was impossible for me to get in a word. When I could I told her I should have the honour of presenting the boy to her the next day but one, as on the morrow I must go to Versailles.

On leaving Madame d'Urfé I went to my office, where I was pleased to find that everything was in order. From there I went to the Comédie Italienne, where Silvia was playing. I found her in her dressing-room with her daughter.

'My friend,' she said, 'I know that you have had a great success in Holland. I congratulate you.'

I told her that I had worked for her daughter Manon's sake, and was pleased to see the girl blush with delight, in a most significant manner.

Mlle. X. V. C. an Englishwoman.

'I will join you at supper, and then we can talk at our ease,' I added, and leaving the dressing-room I went into the amphitheatre. In a box I saw Madame X. V. C. and her family. Madame X. V. C. was Greek, but had married an Englishman, by whom she had six children. On his deathbed he embraced the Catholic religion, but his children could not inherit his fortune of forty thousand pounds sterling, unless they declared themselves members of the Anglican Church. The family had just returned from London, where they had gone through all

the forms necessary to satisfy the English law. What will not one do for interest?

We were now in the year 1758. Five years previously I had been intimate with these people at Padua, and had fallen in love with the eldest girl, but the mother had forbidden me the house. The girl had written me a charming letter, which I have still, and which I read over sometimes now that I am old and weary, but I must own that at the time of its reception I was quite taken up with M. M. and C. C.

Mlle. X. V. C. soon recognised me, and pointed me out to her mother, who smiled at me affably and signed to me to go into their box. She received me most kindly, and told me to come and see them at the Hotel de Bretagne, Rue Saint André des Arts. They told me they were going to spend six months in Paris before returning to Venice, and Mlle. X. V. C. added, that they had heard of my exploits in Holland, and also of my escape from 'The Leads.'

'We learned,' she said, 'all the circumstances of your marvellous evasion, from M. Memmo, who wrote us a letter of sixteen pages about it. We trembled with joy and shuddered with fear on reading it.'

'And how did you know I was in Holland?'

'From M. de la Popelinière.'[1]

I had known de la Popelinière, who was a *fermier-général*, seven years before. Just as she mentioned his name he came into the box. He complimented me on what I had done, and said that if I could procure another twenty millions from the India Company he would have me made a *fermier-général* at once.

'I advise you, M. Casanova,' he said, 'to become a naturalised Frenchman, before it is known that you have made half a million francs over this affair.'

[1] He was noted for his extravagantly generous patronage of artists and writers, and as being the author of a book called *Tableau des mœurs du temps*, illustrated by twenty licentious engravings. It was too infamous even for the period of Louis XV., and was seized by order of the king. The only known example is now in the possession of Prince Galitzin.

'Half a million francs! I only wish it was true.'

'You certainly cannot have made less.'

'I assure you, sir, that the business will ruin me, if I am not paid my brokerage.'

'Of course you are quite right to talk like that; anyway every one is anxious to make your acquaintance. France is under great obligations to you, for you have sent the funds up enormously.'

He makes presents to Silvia and Manon Baletti.

After the theatre I went to Silvia's house, where I was received as one of the family. It seemed to me that it was to their constant friendship that I owed my fortune. I had presents for each member of the family. The finest of them was a pair of diamond earrings for which I had paid fifteen thousand francs. I gave them to Silvia, who immediately handed them to her daughter. Three days later I sent her a chest filled with Dutch linen, and fine Malines, and point d'Alençon lace. For the men of the family there was a golden pipe, a snuffbox in enamelled gold, and a repeater watch. Was I rich enough to make such presents? No; and I knew it, but I made them then while my pockets were full of money. for fear that later on I should not be able to do so.

He goes to Versailles to interview De Choiseul.

The next day I went to Versailles, where M. de Choiseul received me more graciously than at our first interview. It was easy to see I had grown in his estimation. He told me that if I thought I could float a loan of a hundred million florins at four per cent., he would back me up with all his interest. I answered that I would wait until I saw what reward was to be given me for what I had already done.

'But you have made two hundred thousand florins,' he said.

'Half a million francs is not a bad beginning for a fortune,' I said, 'but I can assure your Excellency that I have made nothing of the kind. I have only made my commission, which I am going to claim.'

'Well, you must explain all that to the comptroller-general.'

When I told M. de Boulogne that he owed me a hundred

thousand florins commission, he smiled ironically. 'I know,' said he, 'that you have brought back letters of exchange for a hundred thousand crowns.'

'That is true, but they have nothing to do with what I have done for you. Furthermore, I have a project for augmenting the king's revenue by twenty million francs.'

'Put your project into execution, and I promise you the king will give you a pension of a hundred thousand francs, and letters of nobility, if you choose to become a Frenchman.'

'That needs consideration,' I answered, and left M. de Boulogne to pay a visit to Madame de Pompadour, whom I found in the king's private apartments rehearsing a ballet.

When I got home, my adopted son had disappeared. I was told that a 'great lady' had come to see him, and had taken him away with her. Guessing that it could be none other than Madame d'Urfé, I went to bed with an easy mind.

I found the little man next day with the marquise, and told him he was to consider her as his queen, and to do everything she bade him. The Comte de Saint Germain dined with us, and told us of many marvellous things he had seen and done in his long life. I could hardly help laughing when he repeated a conversation he had with the fathers assembled for the Council of Trent. A few days after this he went off to Chambord, where the king had given him an apartment, and a hundred thousand francs, so that he could work quietly at the dyes which were to make the cloths fabricated in France superior to those of all other countries. Saint Germain had pleased the king by setting up for him a laboratory at Trianon, and showing him how to amuse himself by dabbling in chemistry. The king was bored everywhere except when hunting. The Parc aux Cerfs only stupefied him, for he was not a god, but only a man after all. It was the complaisant Pompadour who had introduced Saint Germain to the king, in the hope of amusing him with his experiments. She thought she had received from the adept the water of youth, and owed him a good turn in consequence. This marvellous

water did not pretend to restore youth, but to maintain the person who used it in *statu quo* for centuries. As a matter of fact the water had operated, if not on the body, at least on the mind of the Pompadour. She assured the king that she felt she was growing no older. The king himself was infatuated with the impostor. One day he showed the Duc des Deux Ponts a diamond weighing twelve carats, which he declared he had made by melting down several little diamonds.

Madame d'Urfé sent my adopted son to school at Monsieur Viar's, where she paid for his various masters, and gave him the name of the *Comte d'Aranda*, though he was born at Bayreuth, and his mother had never had anything to do with a Spaniard of that title. I did not go to see him for two or three months.

I determined that I would take a house outside Paris, and fixed on one called 'Little Poland.'[1] It was about a hundred yards outside the barrière de la Madeleine, on a little eminence behind the Duc de Grammont's garden. It had two gardens, one of which was on a level with the first story. There were three suites of rooms, stables, coach-houses, baths, a good cellar, and a fine kitchen, the whole well furnished. The owner was nicknamed the 'King of Butter,' and he always signed his name thus. Louis Quinze had bestowed this sobriquet on him because he had once stopped at his house and found the butter good. It was a pendant to the *Dinde en Val* of Henri Quatre. 'The King of Butter' let his house to me for a hundred louis a year, and supplied me with a good cook who was called 'the pearl.' He furnished me with plate and linen for six people, and all the wine I needed; the latter cheaper than I could have got it in Paris, for, being outside the gates, we had no

[1] The square formed by the junction of the Rues des Rochers, Saint Lazare, de la Pepinière and de l'Arcade covers the space once known as La petite Pologne. A collection of taverns was to be found there. The one kept by the celebrated Rampanneau stood where the barracks are now; fields stretched beyond, some of them cultivated, many of them waste. As Casanova speaks of his house as being in the country, it was probably on the edge of the fields. May one imagine him haunting the *Salle des pas perdus* at the Gare Saint Lazare?

dues to pay. In eight days my house was ready. I had a coachman, two fine carriages, five horses, a groom, and two footmen in livery. I always drove very fast—the greatest of pleasures in Paris. When I killed a horse I replaced him for two hundred pounds!

Madame d'Urfé, who came to my first dinner, was delighted with everything; she was sure that it was all in her honour, and I did not disabuse her.

One night at the opera, a black domino came up to me, and in a falsetto voice began to tell me a great deal about myself. I persuaded her to come into a box with me; she then took off her mask, and I recognised Mlle. X. V. C., the Englishwoman with a Greek mother.

'I came,' she said, 'with one of my sisters, my eldest brother, and M. Farsetti; but I slipped away from them and changed my domino, so that they have lost me altogether.'

I felt sure of her from that moment, but I thought well to temporise a little.

'I heard at Versailles, mademoiselle, that you are to marry M. de la Popelinière: is that true?'

'My mother wishes it, and the old farmer-general believes it, but I will never consent.'

'He is old, but very rich.'

'Very rich and very generous, for he would settle a million francs on me if he died without children, and his whole fortune if he had any. But I will never marry a man I do not love, when my heart is engaged elsewhere.'

'Who is the happy mortal on whom you have bestowed this treasure?'

'I am not sure that I can call him a happy mortal: it is some one in Venice. My mother knows, but she declares I should not be happy with him; she would rather I married M. Farsetti, but I detest him. I would rather marry Popelinière than he.'

'If I can help you in any way, mademoiselle, count on my devotion.'

I saw she was in great trouble, and I told her as discreetly as possible that my fortune was at her disposal, and that if needful I would risk my life in her service. She kissed me with tears in her eyes, and we parted till next day. I dined at her house. It was snowing, and I arrived there covered with snowflakes. She did not dine, but stayed in bed writing letters. She drew out of her pocket-book a sheet in my handwriting, the letter I had sent her years ago. 'Oh, that fatal *Phœnix*!' she said, 'it will very likely be the cause of my death.' '*The Phœnix*' was the happy mortal of whom I had predicted that he would receive the love she refused me.

The fatal *Phœnix.*

'I did find him,' she said, 'after six months. He gave me his heart. I gave him mine as you said I should, and now——!' She cried, and I essayed to console her.

The next day a young man brought me a letter, saying he had orders to wait for an answer.

'It is two o'clock in the morning, dear friend,' the letter ran; 'I have much need of repose, but something prevents me from sleeping. The secret which I am going to confide to you will weigh less heavily upon me when I have deposited it in your sympathetic breast. It will be a relief to me to be frank——'

The secret, when she had written it, appalled me. She was in the most terrible situation conceivable for a young unmarried woman. I asked her no questions in my answer, not even the man's name, but simply told her I would be there at eleven o'clock.

I met the unfortunate girl on the steps of her house.

'I am going to Mass,' she said; 'come with me.'

We went to the Augustinian convent, and leaving her maid in the church, we paced up and down the cloisters.

'Have you read my letter?'

'Yes, here it is. I give it back to you that you may burn it. I am proud of your confidence in me, be sure I will do my best to deserve it.'

'I know; but tell me what I am to do? I have thought of poisoning myself, and I have everything needful for that; but

I thought I would ask you first, you are my only friend. Speak!'

She stopped and put her handkerchief to her eyes, mine also were full of tears.

'I will never abandon you,' I said; 'your honour is as dear to me as your life. Try to be calm, and rest assured that I will get you out of this. And let me tell you your letter gave me great pleasure, for it proved to me that you had chosen me for your confidant. Have you told your secret to any one—your waiting-maid, or one of your sisters?'

'To no one, not even to the cause of my misfortune. I shudder when I think of what will be said, of what my mother will do when it comes to be known, and it must be known soon now.'

'Things are perhaps less desperate than you imagine.'

'Perhaps, and it is for that I wished to consult you. I want you to take me to some one who will tell me all about it. If you will make an appointment with me, we can slip away unobserved during the next ball at the opera.'

'That would be most compromising.'

'What! in this great city of Paris, where such women are to be found by the hundred! It is impossible for us to be recognised, above all if we keep our masks on.'

I had not the strength of mind to refuse her, and I made an appointment for the last ball. I was to wear a black domino, with a white Venetian mask, a rose painted on the left side of it. As soon as she saw me leave the ballroom she was to follow me, and get into the *fiacre* which would be waiting for us.

I know that I ought to have sought out the most respectable person of the kind I could lay my hands on, but, led by my evil genius, I met on my homeward way Montigny, the actress, in company with a very pretty girl whom I did not know. Curiosity induced me to follow them, and to pay a visit to Montigny without mentioning the lady's name. I asked her if she knew of a woman who would be useful to Mademoiselle X. V. C. She gave me an address in the Marais, telling

me I should find there a perfect pearl. She told me several anecdotes about this pearl, which should have sufficed to put me on my guard, but I took the address, and went next day to reconnoitre the house.

The pearl of wise women in the Marais.

On the night of the ball everything happened as we had arranged, and a quarter of an hour after leaving the opera we arrived at the house of the infamous woman Montigny had recommended to me. She was fifty years old; and received us effusively, and told us her services were entirely at our disposal.

'You must pay me fifty guineas,' she said; 'half down, to pay for the drugs I will give you, and half later.'

'If madame decides to take your remedies,' I said, 'I will come to-morrow to buy them.' I gave her two louis, and we left the house. Mademoiselle X. V. C. agreed with me that the woman was a villainous-looking creature, and was sure that if she took her drugs they would kill her.

'I have no hope,' she said, 'and no confidence, but in you.'

I encouraged her to trust in me, assuring her that her trust was justified.

All of a sudden she complained of cold.

'Have we time,' she said, 'to go and warm ourselves at your fire? I have a great desire to see your pretty house.'

This caprice of hers surprised me as much as it pleased me. I stopped our *fiacre* at the Pont-au-Change, and we walked to the Rue de la Ferronnerie,[1] where we took another one. I promised the driver six francs *pourboire*, and in a quarter of an hour we were at my door.

The servant answered my summons, and I ordered him to light a fire and give us something to eat, with a bottle of champagne.

Mlle. X. V. C. sups with him at Little Poland.

'An omelette?' I suggested.

[1] Takes its name from the *ferronniers* or ironmongers, whom Louis IX. allowed to establish themselves along the Charniers des Innocents. It was in this street that Henri IV. was assassinated by Ravaillac, at the point of its junction with the Rue Saint Honoré.

'An omelette will do capitally,' said mademoiselle; she was laughing.

I kissed her tenderly. She returned my kisses at first, but presently she pushed me away.

'Alas!' said she, 'I am not mistress of my own heart, and am far more to be pitied than you.'

Her tears were falling abundantly, her head drooped on my shoulder, my lips sought hers—but the play was over! The mere idea of forcing a woman's affections in any way has always been repugnant to me. Love is free.

After a long silence we gathered up our masks and dominoes, and returned to the opera. On the way, she told me that she would be obliged to renounce my friendship if I set such a price on it.

'Love,' said I, 'must give way to honour, and your honour and my own oblige me to remain your friend, were it only to convince you of your injustice towards me. I shall do for pure devotion what I should like to have done for love.'

We separated at the opera, where, in a moment she was lost in the crowd. She told me afterwards that she danced all night.

I went home in a very ill humour, determined to revenge myself by leaving her to her fate. But when I awoke I was still in love with her. I meant to be generous to the unfortunate creature, who without my help would surely be lost. The rôle was not an easy one to play, but I played it well.

I went to see the charming English girl daily, taking care to behave as a friend merely. She seemed pleased at the change in me, but her satisfaction may have been only assumed, for I know women well enough to be sure that, though she did not love me, she was piqued to see how lightly I had laid aside my pretensions.

I was now giving her an opiate, as she found it impossible to sleep. She begged me to double the dose, but I refused, and at the same time forbade her to be bled a third time, for I discovered that she had taken her waiting-maid into her confidence, and this latter, who had a medical student for

sweetheart, had persuaded her to let him bleed her twice. I asked her if she was generous with these people, so as to insure their discretion. She could not be, she said, as she had no money. I sent her twelve hundred francs next day, with a letter, asking her to have recourse to me in all her needs. She accepted the money, but I learned afterwards that the larger part of it went to her brother Richard, a young scoundrel, abandoned to the most vicious courses.

She grew daily more desperate, and would not leave her bed. She spoke of destroying herself so calmly and resolutely that I became seriously alarmed.

He consults Madame d'Urfé about Mlle. X. V. C.

One day when I was dining *tête-à-tête* with Madame d'Urfé, I told her the case without mentioning names, and asked her if she could help her.

'I know an infallible method,' she answered, 'the *aroph*[1] of Paracelsus, and it is not a difficult one to employ. Would you like to know what it is?' So saying, she rose and went in search of a manuscript, which she put into my hands. It was an ointment composed of many drugs, such as saffron and myrrh, mixed with virgin honey.

The remedy of Paracelsus.

The recipe and its mode of use were so laughable that I could hardly maintain my gravity, nevertheless I spent two good hours reading the amusing reveries of Paracelsus, of which Madame d'Urfé took every word for gospel; afterwards I looked to see what Boerhaave had to say about the *aroph*, and saw that he treated of it seriously.

I determined to communicate my discovery to my friend, whom I now saw daily, and for several hours, without the slightest restraint. I called on her in the morning, about ten o'clock, and found her, as usual, in bed, and weeping because the opiate I gave her produced no effect. The moment appeared favourable, I described the remedy at great length, adding that as her lover was absent she must have recourse to some friend, who could be trusted to

[1] Casanova gives the word *aroph* as coming from *aro*, aroma, and *ph*, the initial letters of *philosophorum*. He cites Boerhaave as his authority.

administer the dose as often as Paracelsus prescribed it. She burst out laughing, and for three days there was no further question of the *aroph* between us, and I began to regret having mentioned it to her. I invited her, with her mother and family, to dine with me at Little Poland. I also invited Silvia, her daughter, a musician named Magali, and the tenor la Garde, who in those days was to be met at every select reunion. Mademoiselle was delightfully gay all through dinner, which, I may say, was elegant and sumptuous enough, as I spared no expense. We did not separate until midnight, but before leaving mademoiselle found means to whisper to me to go and see her early next day, as she had something of the greatest importance to tell me. I was with her before eight o'clock. I found her very sad. La Popelinière, it seemed, was hurrying on her marriage with him, and her mother was persecuting her to the same end.

'She says,' said the girl, 'that the contract must be signed at once, and that she has ordered a tailor to come and take my measure. I dare not refuse, and at the same time I dare not comply. I am going to kill myself rather than marry, or confide in my mother.'

'Death,' said I, 'is an expedient of which there is always time to think when all others are exhausted. Why do you not confide in De la Popelinière? He is an honourable man, and will know how to help you without compromising you; besides, it will be to his interest to keep your secret.'

'How would that help me? And my mother, what of her?'

'I will undertake to make your mother listen to reason.'

'My poor friend, how little you know her! No, I must die, and death will certainly be less cruel than the other tortures with which I am threatened.'

'And the *aroph*, do you still persist in considering it as a joke?'

It was after this conversation that the poor girl gave in, and consented to take the *aroph*.

Three or four days later I found her pensive, but calm.

She told me she did not believe in the remedy, that her mother was continuing to persecute her, and that in a short time she would have either to sign the marriage-contract with the old *fermier-général* or run away, and she begged me to supply her with the necessary funds.

I was ready to help her, but I wanted if possible to save appearances, as I might have found myself with an ugly affair on my hands, had it come out either that I had abducted her, or that I had furnished her with the means to leave the kingdom. Furthermore, there had never been any question between us of uniting our destinies with an indissoluble tie such as matrimony.

A sacred concert at the Tuileries.

Things were at this pass when I went one afternoon to a sacred concert at the Tuileries. The music, I remember, was by Mondonville,[1] and the words by the Abbé de Voisenon, 'The Israelites on Mount Horeb.' It happened that I sat next to Madame du Rumain, and she asked me to go home with her afterwards. My mind was full of Mademoiselle X.V.C., and I suppose I must have been very *distrait*, as the good lady said: 'What is the matter, M. Casanova? you seem out of sorts! Are you on the eve of taking some important resolution that you are so pre-occupied? I am not curious, but if I can help you in any way tell me. I will go if necessary to Versailles to-morrow morning, you know I am great friends with all the ministers; tell me your trouble, my friend, perhaps I can help you.'

It seemed to me as though an angel were speaking. After having looked at her some time in silence, 'Yes, madame,' said I, 'I am in great trouble. I will tell you about it, but you must allow me to say first, that it is an inviolable secret, and that the honour of a certain individual depends on its being kept most rigorously. If after this you will listen to me, I promise to follow your advice, should you deign to give me any.'

[1] A celebrated violinist, musician to the king, and superintendent of the chapel of Versailles.

After this exordium I told her the whole story, even the name of the girl, and all the circumstances by which I had come to interest myself in her.

Madame du Rumain remained absorbed in thought for some minutes, then she said: 'I must leave you now, as I have to go to Madame de la Marq's to meet the Bishop of Montrouge, but I think I can help you. Come to see me the day after to-morrow at eight o'clock in the morning; I shall be alone. Do nothing until you have seen me.'

I determined to abide by her in this difficult matter. The Bishop of Montrouge, of whom she spoke, was well known to me; he was the Abbé de Voisenon, who was so nicknamed because he was often at Montrouge, an estate outside Paris belonging to the Duc de la Vallière.

Madame du Rumain has a plan.

'My dear afflicted friend,' said Madame du Rumain, when two days later I presented myself at her house, 'I think I can arrange matters for you. I have been to the convent of C——, whose abbess is an intimate friend of mine, and I have told her your secret. She will receive the young lady in her convent, and will give her a kind lay sister to take care of her. You must not say now,' she added, smiling, 'that convents are useless places. Your protégée must go there alone with a letter which I will give her for the abbess. She must receive no visitors, and no letters except such as will pass through my hands, the answers to which the abbess will send to me, and I will hand them to you. You will understand that she must correspond with no one but you, and you will hear of her through no one but me. Tell your friend what I propose, and as soon as she is ready I will give you the letter for the abbess. Tell her only to take with her what is strictly needful, and, above all, no jewels or diamonds. The abbess will go to see her from time to time in the room which will be allotted to her, and will be very kind to her, I am sure, and lend her books to read; in a word, she will be treated with all consideration. Tell her not to confide in the lay sister who nurses her, for however honest and good she may be, her secret might leak

out. After it is all over she will go to confession and make her Easter Communion; the abbess will give her a certificate of good conduct, with which she can return to her mother, who will be only too delighted to receive her after her long absence. She can allege as the motive of her retreat her dislike to the marriage which her family wished to force on her.'

He escorts Mlle. X. V. C. to the Convent.

On leaving Madame du Rumain I went at once to the Hotel de Bretagne, and made Mlle. X. V. C. acquainted with the plan, which the poor child welcomed as though an angel had suggested it. It was most important that we should not be seen leaving the house together, but I posted myself at the corner of the street, so that I could watch her when, next morning at eight o'clock, she came out of the hotel carrying a few things in a bag. She got into a *fiacre* and drove to the Place Maubert, I following her; here she dismissed it, and took another to the Port Saint Antoine, where she exchanged it for a third, which took her straight to the convent. I had promised her that I would go and see her mother next day, as though nothing had happened, and had exhorted her to be of good courage and to write and tell me everything. I was very uneasy about her, for though she was intelligent and resolute, she was very inexperienced.

He calls on her mother.

The next day was Sunday. It was with an anxious heart that I went to the Hotel de Bretagne, bearing a calm and composed exterior into the midst of distress and confusion, which I knew I should find there.

I chose the moment when the family were at table, and I walked straight into the dining-room and sat down by madame, pretending not to notice her surprise at seeing me, though her face became crimson. A moment afterwards I inquired where mademoiselle was. She turned round and looked at me fixedly, without speaking.

'Is she ill?' I said.

'I do not know,' she answered very sternly.

I waited for a few moments, and as nobody spoke, I rose and

asked if I could be of any use. I was coldly thanked; whereupon, making my bow, I withdrew.

In the ante-chamber I met Madeleine, the waiting-maid.

'Where is your young mistress?' I asked.

'Surely you know, sir,' she answered, 'better than any one else, anyway people think you do; please not to keep me, I am busy.'

I pretended to be greatly surprised, and left the hotel, glad to have finished my painful task. The reception I had met with gave me the right to pose as the offended party, and to decline to call on the family again.

The mother of Mlle. X. V. C. appeals to him to produce her daughter.

Two days later I was looking out of my window, when a *fiacre* stopped at my door, and Madame X. V. C. came up, accompanied by her friend M. Farsetti.

'I have come,' she said, 'to beg you to give me back my daughter, or at least to tell me where she is.'

'I know nothing about your daughter, madame. Do you suppose I am capable of a crime?'

'I do not accuse you of a crime, or threaten you in any way; I only ask you this as a mark of friendship. Help me to find my daughter, this very day. You were her confidant, her only friend; she passed several hours alone with you every day, you must know where she is; have pity on a disconsolate mother. No one as yet knows of her disappearance; bring her back to me, and everything shall be forgotten.'

'Madame, you distress me greatly; I pity you from the bottom of my heart, but I can only repeat I know nothing.'

The poor woman flung herself on her knees at my feet, weeping bitterly. Farsetti cried out indignantly that she should blush to kneel to a man like me.

'What do you mean by a man like me?' I said.

'We are sure that you know where she is.'

'Get out of my room this instant,' I cried, 'and wait for me in the passage, where I will come to you in a quarter of an hour.' So saying, I took him by the shoulders and sent him spinning through the door. Madame tried to calm me.

'You must be patient,' she said, 'with a man who is in love. He adores my daughter, and would marry her to-day, in spite of her light behaviour.'

'Madame, it is these aspirants to her hand who have forced your daughter to leave her home; she detests Farsetti even more than she does the De la Popelinière.'

'I promise you there shall be no further question of marriage if she comes back. You *know* you know where she is, for you gave her fifty louis; without money she could not have left; do not deny it, here is a piece of your own letter.'

She showed me a scrap of writing containing these words: 'I hope that the accompanying fifty louis will prove to you that I am ready to do anything to help you.'

As a matter of fact I had given her the sum in question for her brother; the dissipated little wretch was always in trouble.

'I do not deny that I gave your daughter the money, madame, but it was to pay the debts of your eldest son.'

'My son?'

'Yes, madame.'

'I will pay you back at once, and indeed, my dear Casanova, I believe in you. Will you help me to look for her?'

'I will, madame. I will begin my researches to-day.' And after this fine promise, and semi-reconciliation, we separated.

He goes with her to see the commissary of police.

I felt myself obliged to take my part seriously, so the next day I called on M. Chaban, the commissary of police, whom I had met several times at Silvia's house; but this man, who was an adept in his *métier*, began to laugh when I explained the object of my visit.

'Do you really want me to find the pretty young English woman?' he asked.

'Certainly, sir.'

He laughed still more loudly, and I saw that he considered my visit merely as a *ruse*. The next day Madame X. V. C. appeared and told me she was on her daughter's track. 'You must come with me,' she said, 'and help me to persuade her to return home.'

Taking me by the arm she led me downstairs, to where a *fiacre* was waiting. I was on hot coals, for I expected to hear her give the address of the convent; instead of that she told the coachman to drive to the Place Maubert, where we got out and went into a dark, dirty, and obscure alley. It seems she had discovered the first *fiacre* her daughter had engaged, which had deposited her at this place. We went into one of the houses where furnished apartments were let, and we hunted it through, from the cellar to the garret, of course without any result, after which we went back to the Hotel de Bretagne, encouraging one another, and hoping for better luck next time.

Three or four days later I received a letter from mademoiselle, full of delight at the peace and tranquillity she was enjoying. She spoke most highly of the abbess and the lay sister who waited on her. The only thing she complained of was that she was forbidden to leave her room.

The adventure, as far as regarded la Popelinière and Farsetti, had become known now in Paris, and was the talk of all the cafés. Every one insisted on connecting me with the affair, but I felt that I could afford to laugh.

De la Popelinière writes a little play on the subject of his treatment by Mlle. X. V. C.

De la Popelinière took it all very sensibly; indeed he wrote a little one-act play about it, and had it performed at his private theatre.

Mlle. X. V. C. had now been a month in the convent; her affair was beginning to be forgotten, and I thought that everything was comfortably settled. But I was mistaken.

The Abbé de Bernis, whom I went regularly to see once a week, advised me to forgo my claims to commission for what I had done in Holland, and to inform the comptroller-general of my scheme for augmenting the revenue. I owed too much to de Bernis not to follow his advice, and in good faith I told M. de Boulogne my scheme. It was that all persons, other than father and son, inheriting money or property, should be compelled to pay one year's interest on the sum-total to the state. It seemed to me that this law could be displeasing to no one, as it only postponed the

enjoyment of the inheritance for one year. The minister approved of my scheme, and having drawn it up carefully, placed it in his secret portfolio. He assured me my fortune was made. Eight days after he was dismissed, and replaced by M. de Silhouette, who received me coldly when I presented myself, and told me there would be time enough to talk of rewarding me when the law was promulgated. Two years later the law was passed, but they laughed at me when I declared myself the author of it, and asked for my recompense.

About the same time the Pope died, and was succeeded by the Venetian Rezzonico, who presented my protector, de Bernis, with a cardinal's hat. Louis Quinze bestowed it on him with his own royal hands, and two days after exiled him to Soissons. Such is the friendship of kings!

The fate of de Bernis.

M. de Bernis repaired much of the evil which Cardinal de Richelieu had done. In concert with the Prince de Kaunitz he transformed the old hatred between the houses of Austria and Bourbon into a cordial *entente*. He delivered Italy from the horrors of war, of which she was the theatre each time the two houses quarrelled. The Pope, who had been Bishop of Padua, particularly appreciated this, and as a reward created him cardinal. He was exiled from Paris for daring to tell the king he did not consider the Prince de Soubise a proper person to command his armies! As soon as the Pompadour heard this she insisted on his disgrace with the king. Every one was indignant, but she was all-powerful, and the newly made cardinal was soon forgotten. The French are like that —lively, witty and amiable, insensible to their own misfortune, or the misfortune of others, so long as there is any food for merriment.

The illustrious cardinal passed ten years in exile, far from the world, miserable in his retirement. He was never recalled to the court, and, for the matter of that, in no single instance did Louis Quinze recall a disgraced minister. When the Pope, Rezzonico, died, de Bernis went to Rome to attend the conclave, and remained there the rest of his life.

CHAPTER XX

THE POLICE OF PARIS

He visits Rousseau with Madame d'Urfé.

About this time Madame d'Urfé was seized with a desire to make the acquaintance of J. J. Rousseau, and we went to pay him a visit at Montmorency. We took him some music to copy as a pretext, but, as a matter of fact, he piqued himself on his execution, and was always paid double the sum given to any other copyist. At that time he had no other means of subsistence.

Rousseau was a plain man of sound critical judgment, distinguished neither in manners nor conversation. I should never have called him amiable. He had no style, and Madame d'Urfé pronounced him to be common. We saw the woman with whom he lived, but she hardly spoke to us, and kept her eyes cast down all the time we were in her presence. The queer philosopher and his queer *ménage* amused us vastly all the way home.

I must here set down a story about him and the Prince de Conti. The prince, who was an amiable and learned man, went to Montmorency on purpose to pass a pleasant day with the celebrated Rousseau. He found him in the park, and told him he had come to dine with him that they might spend some time together in conversation.

'Your highness will fare but ill, I fear,' replied Rousseau, 'but I will tell them to lay a place for you at table.'

Then the prince and the philosopher passed some two or three hours in walking and talking. When dinner-time came they entered the dining-room, where the table was laid for three.

'Who is going to dine with us? I thought we should be *tête-à-tête*,' said Conti.

'Our third, your Highness,' said Rousseau, 'is my other self, a being who is neither my wife, nor my mistress, nor my servant, nor my mother, nor my daughter, but something of all these combined.'

'I quite believe you, my dear friend, but I came here to dine with you, and not with your other self. I will leave you to your whole!'

So saying the prince bowed and left. Rousseau did not try to keep him.

On our return to Paris we went to the Comédie Française to see a piece called *La Fille d'Aristide*. It was hissed, and the author, Madame de Graffigny, died of grief five days after. Voisenon had helped her to write it. As a remarkable contrast to this, about the same time, the mother of Rezzonico died of joy when her son was elected Pope. Grief and joy kill more women than men, which proves that, if they are more sensitive than we, they are also weaker.

I went with Madame d'Urfé to pay a visit to my adopted son at M. Viar's school, and found him lodged like a prince, well dressed, and taken every possible care of. She had given him a pretty little horse, and he was always addressed as the Count d'Aranda. When I asked Madame d'Urfé why she allowed him to assume a name which was not his, and which might get him into trouble some day, she answered that from what the boy had said she was convinced he had a right to it.

'I have,' she said, 'a seal stamped with the arms of d'Aranda on it; he told me they were the arms of his family, and when I asked him to explain, he begged me not to question him, as his birth was a secret, and he was forbidden to speak of it to any one.'

I was astonished at the young scamp's assurance. As soon as I was alone with him, I asked him what he meant by his impertinence.

'I know it is silly,' he said; 'but it makes them respect me here.'

I pointed out the dishonesty of his conduct, but the little scamp begged me not to expose him.

'I would rather be sent back to my mother,' he said, 'than own to Madame d'Urfé that I have imposed on her, and I could not remain in this school if I had to give up the name by which I have come to be known.'

I yielded so far as to promise that for the present at any-rate I would say nothing.

A plan to stamp the pattern on Lyons silk.

For some time I had been thinking seriously of a commercial undertaking, which, if my calculations proved correct, would be extremely lucrative. The idea was to stamp on silk the beautiful designs which are painfully and minutely woven in them at Lyons, thus producing an elegant material at a much lower price to those which are made in the usual slow, painstaking manner. I was enough of a chemist to undertake the technical part of the business, and enough of a capitalist to feel sure of success, and I had found a partner versed in the ways of commerce to manage the establishment.

I spoke of it to the Prince de Conti, and he advised me to put it into execution, promising me all the assistance in his power.

The shop in the Marais.

I took a large house near the Temple for a thousand crowns a year: it contained a spacious hall for my workwomen; another large hall to be used as a shop; several rooms for my employees, and a nice apartment for myself, if I should choose to establish myself there. I divided the business into thirty shares, five were for the artist designer who was to be my manager; one to a doctor who was to live in the house with his wife and family, and attend to the shop; one for a book-keeper who had two clerks under him, and who also lodged in the house; the other allotments I kept to distribute among such of my friends as should care to be associated in the enterprise. I engaged four men servants, a woman servant, and a porter; and the director found twenty intelligent young girls who were to do

the painting in return for a weekly salary. The carpenters and locksmiths were at work from morning to night, and everything was ready in three weeks. I put into the shop three hundred pieces of taffetas, a like quantity of *gros de Tours*, and camlets of divers colours, on which the designs were to be stamped. I paid ready money for everything.

I spent about sixty thousand francs in less than a month, and had to meet a weekly expenditure of twelve hundred francs. I could easily have disposed of the other shares, but I wanted to keep them if possible, as I expected to make two hundred thousand francs profit yearly. I was not blind to the fact that this undertaking might ruin me; but a glance at my beautiful materials reassured me; they were so cheap that every one said they would become the rage. Madame d'Urfé only laughed when I talked of the shop; she was sure it was a ruse on my part, to put curious people off the track of my identity.

The sight of my twenty work-girls, all more or less pretty, and all under twenty-five, was a great pleasure to me. The best paid among them only earned twenty-five sous a day; but they all had a reputation for good behaviour, for they had been chosen by the manager's wife, a devout woman of ripe age, who had begged me to grant her this privilege. Manon Baletti did not share my satisfaction; she was anything but pleased to see me at the head of this tribe of girls, and sulked with me for weeks about it.

The establishment gave me importance in my own eyes and the eyes of others. A great deal of money passed through my hands and every one thought I was on the road to fortune, and my *amour-propre* was flattered by the dependence of so many people on myself.

Everything seemed to be going well, but the fire was smouldering which was to break out shortly and destroy all my hopes.

One day when I was walking in the Tuileries Gardens I noticed an old woman, and a man wearing a sword, who

watched me very closely; on passing them for the third or fourth time, I recognised the woman whom I had consulted about Mlle. X. V. C. The man was a Gascon called Castel-Bajac, whom I had once come across in a tavern.

He is served with a summons to appear before M. de Sartine.

The next day as I was stepping into my carriage a man came up and handed me a paper; it was a summons to appear before the commissary of police, in reply to a complaint brought against me by a woman whose very name I have forgotten.

She declared that on a certain night I had presented myself at her house accompanied by a young woman, both of us masked, and wearing dominoes; that, holding a pistol in one hand, and a roll of fifty louis in the other, I had threatened her with instant death did she not furnish me with sundry drugs and medicaments. Fear, she said, prevented her from refusing me outright, but she remained sufficiently mistress of herself to tell me that what I needed could not be ready before the following night, whereupon we left her, promising to return. She had not seen me since until she met me walking in the Tuileries; the gentleman who was with her, M. Castel-Bajac, told her my name, and she considered it her duty to denounce me at once.

The lawyer whom I consulted advised me to see the magistrate known as the 'criminal lieutenant.' This was the famous de Sartine,[1] whom the king appointed lieutenant of police a couple of years later. I found him a polished and amiable man, who, in spite of his evident sympathy for me, did not conceal from me that my case was a serious one. He asked for my full confidence, naïvely adding that if I were innocent it would do me no harm. I thanked him, and answered that I had no reserved communication to make, for the woman was absolutely unknown to me, that I had never consulted such a person, and that she was a wretch who, in

[1] Sartine was so clever as an administrator and organiser of police that most of the reigning sovereigns had recourse to him in their difficulties, but at no period were there such a number of prisoners in the Bastille under *lettres de cachet*. Necker was his bitter enemy, and obtained his dismissal in 1780. Louis XVI. gave him a pension. He died in Spain.

conjunction with a scoundrel of her own kind, worthy of her, was trying to blackmail me.

'I am willing to believe you,' he answered, 'but luck is against you, and it will be difficult for you to prove your innocence. A certain young lady disappeared three months ago, you were known to be on intimate terms with her, paid spies have been watching you ever since. The woman swears that the young woman who was with you was none other than Mlle. X. V. C.; she says you both wore black dominoes. Now it has already been proved that you were both at the opera ball, and both in black dominoes on the night in question, and that you disappeared from the ball together. A false witness (there are any amount to be had for money) may be found to swear that he saw you leave the opera and get into a *fiacre*; the driver of a *fiacre* will come forward, and say he drove you to the woman's house; remember that for the past three months her family has not been able to trace her whereabouts; it is said that she is dead. Now do you begin to see the gravity of the situation? I tell you frankly, that the absurdity of the accusation brought against you made me laugh, it is the accessories which complicate it. I see now that love and honour compel you to silence, but I have spoken without reserve, and I hope you will do the same. In two or three days, I warn you, you will be called before the court, and then you will see me in the character of a judge; I shall be just, but impartial, and severe as the law itself. Tell me all frankly, now, and I promise you the young lady's honour shall not suffer.'

The danger of his position.

I was petrified, for I fully saw the danger of my position.

'I know where she is,' I said, 'and I can assure you that she would never have left home if her mother had not tried to make her marry a man she loathed.'

'But that man is married; let her return to her mother now. When once she is with her family you will be safe—unless, indeed, the hag maintains her charge against you, which I doubt.'

'Alas, sir! it is not the charge which troubles me, there are other reasons which prevent her returning to her family. I cannot tell you more, without a certain person's permission. I will try to obtain it, if you will be good enough to see me again in two days' time.'

I was on the brink of a precipice, but I was decided to leave the kingdom rather than betray the secret of my unhappy friend. I would have given any money to hush the matter up, but it was too late. I went to Madame du Rumain, whom I found in bed.

'There is no time to lose, my dear Casanova,' said the charming woman, 'you must confide everything to M. de Sartine. I will speak to him myself, and at once.'

She wrote a note to de Sartine, asking him for an audience that afternoon, and it was arranged that I should return to her house at five o'clock to hear the result of the interview.

I saw at once, by her face, that she had been successful.

'I have told him everything,' she said. 'I have assured him that when mademoiselle has recovered she will go back to her mother, without saying a word of what has taken place. You can make your mind easy, only as the action has been brought against you, it must run its course; you will be called before the court to-morrow. I should advise you to see the registrar on some pretext or other, and to manage to make him accept a bribe.'

M. de Sartine is very friendly.

I was summoned, and I appeared. I saw M. de Sartine seated at the tribunal. He told me that the case was adjourned, and that in the meantime I must not absent myself from Paris, or get married, as all civil rights were suspended during a criminal proceeding. I assured him that I would do neither the one nor the other.

I called on the registrar, presumably to ask him if, being a foreigner, there was any fear of my being forcibly detained; and after expressing my fears on this head, I slipped three hundred louis into his hand, saying it was for the expenses of

the case, and that I would be much obliged if he would defray them for me.

Four days later I was walking on the Boulevard du Temple, when I was accosted by a Savoyard, who told me that a person who wished to see me was waiting in an alley a few yards away. I followed at his request, and there was the infamous Castel-Bajac!

'I have only two words to say to you,' he began. 'I want to tell you how you can stop the action, and save yourself a great deal of money and trouble. The old woman is certain that you are the man who called on her with a lady, some months ago, but she is sorry now she accused you of abduction. Give her a hundred louis, and she will swear to the registrar that she was mistaken, and everything will be at an end. You need not pay the money until after she has made her declaration, your word is sufficient.'

I followed him to the registrar's office in the Rue aux Ours,[1] where I deposited a quarter of the sum demanded. Two days after, the woman, in the presence of witnesses, acknowledged that she had been mistaken, and begged my pardon.

Mlle. X. V. C. restored to her family and happily married.

The same day the Comtesse du Rumain received a letter from the abbess announcing that all had gone off well. Mademoiselle, she said, would leave the convent in six weeks, furnished with a certificate of good behaviour; the abbess declared she had been four months under her protection; during this time she had never left the convent, and had received no visitors.

Shortly afterwards the old harpy was put in prison, Castel-

[1] Took its name from *Oués* (Old French) from the numerous cook-shops where roast geese and fowls were sold. At the corner of the Rue Salle au Comte there existed, up to 1780, a statue of the Virgin, before which a lamp was kept always burning. The tradition was that a soldier who had lost all his money in a neighbouring cabaret on the night of 30th June 1418 struck the statue with his sword, on which blood gushed forth from it. He was tried, and executed on the same spot. The miraculous statue was taken to the church of St. Martin, and another placed in the Rue aux Ours, before which every year on the 3rd July fireworks were let off, and a mannikin, supposed to represent the soldier, was burnt. Statue and soldier disappeared during the Revolution.

Bajac was sent to Bicêtre, and the registrar was crossed off the roll of advocates. The action against me continued, though I knew I had no cause for uneasiness, until Mlle. X. V. C. was restored to her family. She could not remain in Paris, where her story was known to all, so she left with her mother and sisters for Venice, where she married and became a great lady. Fifteen years afterwards I met her; she was then a widow, rich, and universally respected, for her rank, her intelligence, and her social virtues.

First meeting with Castel-Bajac.

The reader will see later on under what circumstances I again met Castel-Bajac. Towards the end of the year 1759, before leaving for Holland, I spent several hundreds of francs to obtain the release of the woman who had tried to blackmail me.

I was living in princely style, and might have been supposed to be happy, but no! My enormous expenses, my prodigality, and my love of pleasure and display, kept me perpetually in straitened circumstances. My business would have supplied all my wants, but the war interfered largely with all sorts of commerce. I and my undertaking could not but be affected by the poverty which was general in France. I had four hundred pieces of painted stuffs in my shop, but it was not likely I should sell them before peace was proclaimed, and peace was far distant. I spent a great deal on my house at Little Poland; but the principal cause of my ruin was the money I wasted on my work-girls: they exploited my weakness, and were extortionate in their demands; whatever the one had the other insisted on having. I refused nothing to the caprice of the passing hour, nor to that of the hour that was past.

Madame d'Urfé, who thought I was immensely wealthy, was no trouble to me; I could make her happy just by supplying her to her heart's content with magical operations. Manon Baletti was more troublesome, with her jealousy and her just reproaches. She could not understand, and no wonder, why I put off marrying her. Her mother died of consumption in my arms; ten minutes before she expired she commended her

daughter to me, and I promised sincerely to marry her, but fate, as usual, was opposed to my matrimonial projects.

Poor Silvia Baletti was one of my dearest friends. I remained three days with the family, and shared their grief from the bottom of my heart.

At the beginning of November I sold fifty thousand francs' worth of shares to a man named Garnier in the Rue du Mail; he was to have one-third of the painted silks in the shop. Three days after signing the contract, the doctor, who, the reader will remember, was also caretaker, went off in the night with the contents of the safe. I think the painter helped him. This loss was a very heavy one, for my affairs were beginning to be in a bad condition; to make matters worse Garnier summoned me to return the fifty thousand francs. I replied that the loss must be supported in common, but he declared the contract null, and went so far as to accuse me of being in connivance with the doctor. The merchant who had acted as security for the latter became bankrupt; Garnier grew impatient, laid hands on everything in the factory, and seized even my horses and carriages, and all I possessed in my house at Little Poland. Worse than this, as I was getting into a *fiacre* in the Rue Saint Denis, at eight o'clock one morning, I was arrested and carried off to Fort l'Évêque.

He is arrested in the Rue Saint Denis.

I was handed over to the gaoler, who told me that if I paid fifty thousand francs down, or could find some one to go bail for that amount, I should instantly be set at liberty.

'I can do neither the one nor the other,' I answered.

'Then you will stay in prison.'

I wrote to my lawyer, to Madame d'Urfé, to my brother, who had just got married, and to all my friends.

Manon Baletti sent me, by her brother, the diamond earrings I had brought her from Holland, for which I had paid fifteen thousand francs; Madame du Rumain sent me her lawyer, a man of rare ability, and at the same time told me that if five hundred louis would help me they were at my disposal. My brother did not answer my letter, and did not come to see me;

and my dear Madame d'Urfé sent me word that she expected me to dine with her that day. I thought she must have gone mad, for I knew she was incapable of teasing me.

Madame d'Urfé buys him out of prison.

At eleven o'clock my room was full of people, among them a poor shopkeeper named Baret, to whom I had rendered certain services, for which his pretty wife had amply repaid me. The poor fellow was in tears, and offered me everything in his shop, which touched me vastly. Finally, they announced a lady who was waiting below in a *fiacre*, but as she did not appear, I asked the doorkeeper why he did not show her up; he replied that after asking a great many questions she had gone away. From the description of the lady I guessed it to be Madame d'Urfé.

I was disagreeably affected at finding myself deprived of my liberty. The recollection of 'The Leads' was ever present to my mind, though I could not compare the present with my Venetian experience. I had thirty thousand francs in ready money, and jewels of more than double that value, but I could not bring myself to give in to what I considered an unjust demand. I was discussing the advisability of doing so with Madame du Rumain's lawyer, when the gaoler came in, and said with politeness: 'Sir, you are at liberty. A lady is waiting for you at the door in her carriage.'

I ordered le Duc, my *valet de chambre*, to see who the lady was. It was Madame d'Urfé. I made my bow all round, and after four hours' captivity left the prison in a magnificent equipage.

I thanked her in few words, telling her I was glad to be under such obligations to her, but that unfortunately it was Garnier who would profit by her generosity. She replied with a smile that he would not profit so largely, nor so easily, as he imagined. She wished me to go at once and show myself in the Tuileries and the Palais Royal, so as to convince the public that there was no truth in the rumour that I was in prison, which had spread like wildfire through Paris.

After having sauntered for some time in a careless manner up

and down the two promenades, which were then the most fashionable and the most frequented in the city, and having derived much secret amusement from the surprise depicted on several countenances, I went to see Manon and returned her her earrings. The dear girl cried with joy on seeing me, and I made her doubly happy by telling her that I had decided to give up the factory. She was convinced that my seraglio in the Rue du Temple was the only obstacle to our marriage.

My imprisonment disgusted me with Paris, and from that period dates my hatred for law proceedings of any description. I was involved in a double web of chicanery with Garnier and with my own lawyer. It was absolute torture to me to have to spend time or money on these pettifoggers.

I determined to get rid of everything I had in Paris, and to go back to Holland, to work seriously at the re-establishment of my credit. In the meantime, I would buy an annuity on two lives—my own and my wife's—with what spare capital I had. My wife was to be Manon Baletti, and this project was entirely to her taste. Unfortunately, I did not put it into execution at once.

I gave up Little Poland, and withdrew from the École Militaire the eighty thousand francs which I had had to deposit as guarantee for my lottery bureau. I did not want to leave Madame d'Urfé with an absurd lawsuit on her hands, so I compromised with Garnier for twenty-five thousand francs.

He leaves Paris.

I sold my horses, carriages, and furniture, and left Paris with a hundred thousand francs in cash, and as much again in jewels. I told Madame d'Urfé that my oracle bade me absent myself awhile. I said good-bye to Manon, swearing to come back and marry her. I travelled in a post-chaise, le Duc, my valet, preceding me on horseback. I had, besides, a good Swiss lackey who served as courier.

Le Duc was a young Spaniard, shrewd, intelligent, and unscrupulous. He served me faithfully, and I cherished him particularly because he dressed my hair more skilfully and neatly than any other servant I ever had.

He reads Helvetius on his way to Holland.

I read *De l'Esprit*, by Helvetius, all the way. I was more surprised at the stir the book had created than at the stupidity of the Parliament in condemning it. The magistracy, instigated by the clergy, had done all in its power to ruin Helvetius, who was a very worthy man, and was certainly far cleverer than his book would imply him to be. I did not find anything particularly new in the historical part, in which Helvetius deals with the manners and morals of nations. He reels off platitudes which have been repeated over and over again for centuries, and which Blaise Pascal has put far better. Helvetius formally retracted all he had written, so as to be able to remain in France. He preferred an easy life to honour and principle. His wife was greater-hearted than he, and was willing to sell their belongings and take refuge in Holland rather than submit.

I spent two days in Brussels at the Hôtel de l'Impératrice, where I saw Mlle. X. V. C. with Farsetti, but I pretended not to recognise them. From thence I went on to La Haye, where I stayed at the 'Prince of Orange.' Monsieur de Choiseul had authorised me to arrange, if possible, a loan for the French government, at five per cent., which loan I could negotiate either with some foreign state, or with a private company. He had given me his word that peace would be declared in the course of the winter; but he was deceiving me, for he knew very well that there was no chance of an end of the war. He also promised me, that in case of success, I should not this time be cheated out of the fruits of my labours. I had had a bitter lesson with M. de Boulogne, and I was determined not to undertake anything for the government unless I foresaw an immediate and palpable benefit for myself.

M. d'Affri, who was the French minister for the Low Countries, received me cordially.

'Do you know the *soi-disant* Comte de Saint Germain?' he asked. 'He says the king has charged him to raise a loan of a hundred million francs, but he has brought no letters, and I believe the man to be an impostor.'

I told him what I knew of this extraordinary individual; how the king had given him an apartment at Chambord, and how he pretended to be able to make diamonds. He agreed with me that it was a pity he did not manufacture a few for his friend, Louis Quinze, instead of running about trying to borrow money.

I saw the pretended count the next day, and he told me that though he had no doubt of being able to find the hundred million francs, he thought it more than likely that *I* should fail altogether in obtaining any money, always provided, he added, that I too had come with the intention of raising a loan. The Bourse, he said, was scandalised at various operations in the French market, and I should have much difficulty in persuading any one to listen to me.

Among the guests at the hotel was a certain Count Piccolomini and his wife, a tall, beautiful Roman, with black eyes and a startlingly white skin. An English officer named Walpole seemed dazzled by her charms, and never left her side. They played *primiera* together, and the countess cheated him in the most barefaced manner, but he only laughed and paid up, until he had lost fifty louis; then he cried quarter, and proposed that they should exchange the card-table for the theatre. I also went to the play, and on returning from it, learned that Piccolomini had left in haste, accompanied only by his valet, and taking with him scarcely any baggage. His wife came up as the hotel-keeper was telling me this, and whispered that her husband had left because he had fought a duel; at the same time she invited me to sup with her and Sir James Walpole. Another Englishman came in during supper and told Walpole that Piccolomini had been accused of cheating by one of their countrymen, that they had fought, and that the Englishman had been brought back to the hotel wounded in the arm and shoulder.

The following day I received a letter from Piccolomini, begging me to escort his wife to Amsterdam, where he would meet her. The adventure promised amusement, and I should

have accepted it had I been in the slightest degree attracted by the countess. As it was, I handed the letter over to Walpole, who offered to take my place, and the two started for Leyden the next day, *en route* for Amsterdam.

I was seated at dinner one day when two Frenchmen, who were dining at a table near me, began to talk rather loudly. One of them said, 'The famous Casanova must be in Holland by this time!'

Said the other, 'I should like to meet him, and ask him for certain explanations, which, perhaps, he would not care about giving.'

I looked at the man, and was sure I had never seen him before. I felt the blood rush to my face, but controlled myself, and asked as calmly as possible if he knew Casanova personally?

'I should think I did!' he answered insolently.

'No, sir, you do not know him, for I am Casanova.'

'By the Lord,' he answered, 'you are very much mistaken if you think you are the only Casanova in the world!'

This checkmated me for the time, but I knew if I waited I should be revenged. The Frenchman, puffed up with his easy victory, was talking about everything under the sun, and by and by, *à propos* of something which I forget now, he asked me what countryman I was?

'I am a Venetian, sir,' I answered.

'Then you must be a good friend of the French, as your republic is under the protection of France.'

Casanova's brilliant retort.

'The republic of Venice is strong enough,' I answered, 'to do without the protection of France or any other power. She has been in existence for the last thirteen centuries, and may have friends and allies, but not protectors. Though you will probably say, to excuse your ignorance, that there is more than one Venetian republic in the world!'

This turned the laugh against him, but he was not easily put down. At dessert some one spoke of the Earl of Albemarle; the English present praised him, and said had he lived,

there would not have been war between England and France. Some one spoke of Lolotte, his mistress, of whom mention has already been made in these Memoirs. I said I had met that charming person at the Duchesse de Fulvie's, and that she was in every way worthy of her fortune—the Comte d'Érouville, a soldier and well-known man of letters, had just married her.

When the Frenchman proceeded to boast of the good reception she had given him, it was more than I could stand.

'Insolent liar!' I exclaimed, making as though to throw my plate at his head.

I left the room, knowing that he would follow me, and turned my steps towards a little wood, about half a mile from the town. He came close behind me, and without a word we drew our swords. The fight did not last long; my lunge, which never failed me, made him fall back, he was wounded above the right breast; fortunately my sword was a very flat one, and the wound bled freely. I ran to his assistance, but he repulsed my help, saying that we should meet again at Amsterdam, when he would have his revenge. I did not see him, however, till five or six years later, when I met him in Warsaw. He was in needy circumstances, and I got up a subscription in his favour. His name was Varnier, and I rather think it was he who was president of the National Convention under the infamous Robespierre.

He again meets Lucy of Paséan.

At Amsterdam I met an old acquaintance, Rigerboos, who had been one of the intimate friends of Thérèse Trenti, the mother of my adopted son. She called herself Cornelis, which was the real name of Rigerboos, as I afterwards learned. He insisted that I should go sleighing with him on the Amstel. The Dutch are devoted to this pursuit, which costs a ducat an hour: I consider it tiresome. Having frozen our faces and hands, we thawed them with sillery and oysters, after which we made the round of the *musicos*, a form of entertainment as dull as the sleighing. In one of these houses Rigerboos called me by my name, loudly and clearly; an instant afterward a woman

came forward, and, standing in front of me, looked at me fixedly. The room was very badly lighted, and it was some seconds before I recognised poor Lucy, whom, as the reader will remember, I had met in a similar establishment a year before. I turned away, for the sight of her only depressed me; but she spoke softly to me, saying how glad she was to see me in good health, and I could not refuse to answer her. I called Rigerboos, and we all three went into a private room, so that Lucy might tell us her story.

She was simply hideous; it was nineteen years since I had first known her at Paséan. Nineteen years of her life passed in misery, debauchery, and humiliation had made her the abject and vile creature we saw before us. The courier l'Aigle, with whom she had left her home, had deserted her after five or six months; a ship's captain then took her to Xantes; thence she had sailed to England with a young Greek girl. After two or three years in London she came to Holland. She was now only thirty-three. While she talked to us she drank down two bottles of burgundy, it was enough to show us what her end would be.

M. d'O. and the King of France's diamond.

The reader will remember M. d'O., the rich merchant, who had bought Madame d'Urfé's India stock from me on the occasion of my former visit to Holland, and who had wished me to become his son-in-law. My inability to accept his proposition had in no wise cooled his affection for me, and on my return to Amsterdam he received me as kindly as ever. His daughter Esther was much interested in occult experiments, and I had taught her the cabbala. Her father was a firm believer, and one evening after supper, he begged us both to listen attentively while he spoke to us on a matter of great importance.

It seemed that the famous Saint Germain had been to him about the loan he was trying to raise, and that M. d'O. and his friends were on the point of handing over to him the required sum, when, warned by his daughter's oracle, d'O. had insisted on a delay. During the delay orders had been sent from

France for the French ambassador to withdraw his authorisation from Saint Germain, and the latter had decamped, leaving in M. d'O.'s hands a magnificent diamond, the finest of the French crown jewels.

'You now understand, my children,' said M. d'O., 'the nature of the question I wish to put to your oracle. I have never seen such a splendid diamond in my life. This is what I wish to ask, Shall we, that is, my partners and I, declare that the stone is in our possession, or shall we keep silence until it is claimed by the French government?'

It was decided that Esther should establish the pyramid, and trace with her own hand the four mighty initials, but when all was arranged, I took care to suggest to her the additions and the subtractions, so as to obtain the answer I wanted. She was thunderstruck when she found the following sentence: 'Silence imperative. Unless silence, general derision. Diamond of no value whatever.'

When the honest d'O. learned that his daughter's oracle had pronounced the diamond to be false, he raged and stormed, and said it was impossible. When he was calmer he implored me to appeal to the same authority, but without Esther's assistance, as he was sure she was mistaken.

Needless to say, the reply I obtained was identical with hers, and the good merchant went off post-haste to have the diamond tested, and to recommend the most absolute discretion to his associates.

We learned afterwards that Saint Germain possessed the art of making imitation diamonds which could only be distinguished from the real by their weight. We shall hear more of this celebrated impostor later on.

The infidelity of Manon Baletti.

On Christmas Day 1759, I received a packet from Manon Baletti; the packet contained my letters to her and my portrait. She wrote saying that she was about to be married to a M. Blondel, the royal architect, and a member of the Academy; and as if her infidelity were not enough to make me miserable, she added, that if I should by chance meet

her anywhere on my return to Paris, she would thank me not to speak to her, or recognise her in any way.

Twenty times did I begin a reply to this letter, and twenty times I did tear up what I had written. A thousand projects crossed each other in my imagination. I wanted to start for Paris then and there, to wreak my vengeance on Blondel, this man whom I did not even know, and who had stolen from me the woman whom I had fondly hoped to possess, and who was looked upon by all my friends as my affianced wife. I would punish her by slaying the creature she dared to prefer to me. I cursed her father, I cursed her brother; they had left me in ignorance of the gross insult which was being so perfidiously prepared for me.

Mlle. Esther d'O. comes to see him with her governess.

I passed the day and the following night in a kind of delirium. About three o'clock in the afternoon the good d'O. came to see me, to persuade me to go to La Haye with him, but seeing my condition he did not insist. I told him I was in great trouble, and he left me after many expressions of sympathy. The next day I received a visit from his daughter Esther, accompanied by her governess.

'What is the matter with you, my dear Casanova?' she asked.

'Sit down by my side, dear Esther, and I will tell you. Time, the great healer, and your agreeable conversation, will cure me; in the meanwhile, as long as you are with me, I forget my woes.'

'Dress yourself, and come and pass the day with me, I will do my best to distract you.'

'I am very weak, I have taken nothing for the last three days but a little bouillon and some chocolate.'

At these words I saw the tears gather in her beautiful eyes. She took up a pen which was on my table and wrote these words:—

'My friend, if a large sum of money can cure your trouble, or even make it less poignant, tell me; I am your doctor, and you will make me happy by accepting my offer.'

I kissed her hands.

'No, dear, generous Esther, it is not money I want; were it so I would let you help me. What I want is what no one can give me; strength of mind to conceive and carry out a plan of action.'

Esther rang for le Duc, and, with her governess, looked out herself the clothes she wished me to appear in. Le Duc dressed my hair, and Esther sent for some beef-tea for me. I began to hate Manon, instead of loving her. I believe it was my vanity, not my love, that she had wounded after all! I was sitting, my face to the fire, in the hands of le Duc, when Esther, who had been looking over my clothes, came up to me, and handing me Manon's letter, timidly asked if that was not the cause of my sorrow, and was I angry with her for looking at it?

'No, my dear,' I said; 'pity your poor friend and don't speak of it. Read them all if you like, I don't care.'

Eagerly she read them. Le Duc went away, and we were alone, for the good governess mending lace in the window-seat did not count. Esther asked if she might keep the two hundred letters that she had found, and would I show her Manon's likeness? I opened the lid of the snuff-box. I expected that, woman-like, she would find fault with Manon's looks, but no, she admired her heartily. I told her that I meant to send the portrait to Manon's future husband, but the sweet girl found means to prevent my doing anything so mean. She consulted the oracle, and saying with a smile, 'I have not tampered with it, you may be sure,' gave as its answer: '*The portrait should be sent to the lady, not to her husband; such an act would be unworthy of a gentleman.*'

Esther consults the oracle on his behalf.

I felt much better, and went to see her next day, so early that her governess had to awaken her. She looked very pretty in her batiste nightcap with its pale blue ribbon, and an Indian muslin fichu thrown lightly over her shoulders. She let me kiss her, and then I went away while she dressed, and we went down and dined with her father's secretary. Poor

man, he adored her hopelessly, and he cannot have cared to see me with her.

I confided to Esther my little plan of visiting Germany before returning to Paris. She encouraged me to do so, but I had to promise to come back to her by the end of the year. I did not behave ill to Esther, and though I did not see her again, I have nothing to reproach myself with. I was prevented by subsequent events from keeping my promise to her.

End of Casanova's second journey to Holland.

I paid into M. d'O.'s hands all the money I had, and in exchange he gave me letters of credit on a dozen German banks. Then I set off in the post-chaise I had ordered from Mardyk, with a hundred thousand Dutch florins at my disposal, and plenty of clothes and jewels. I dismissed my Swiss valet, and retained my faithful Spaniard, who travelled in the boot.

This is the end of my second journey to Holland, wherein I cannot say that I in any way advanced my fortunes.

CHAPTER XXI

THE WIFE OF THE BURGOMASTER

I ONLY stayed one day at Utrecht, and thence went on to Cologne; not without adventures, for when I was half a league from the city, five deserters rode up to my chaise, crying out, 'Your money or your life!' At Cologne.

I shouted out to the postillion that I would kill him if he did not gallop on. The highwaymen shot after the carriage, but without hurting it. I should have done as the English do when they travel, keep a lightly furnished purse to throw to robbers. My own was so well lined that I must needs risk my life to defend it.

I lodged at 'The Golden Sun' at Cologne, and the first person I met there was the Comte de Lastic, Madame d'Urfé's nephew, with whom I dined. He offered to take me to the theatre with M. de Flavacour after dinner, and to introduce me to some of the notabilities. I spent more than an hour on my toilet, as I wished to appear to the best advantage.

In the box opposite to us was a very pretty woman, who stared at me through her opera-glass. I begged de Lastic to present me, which he did with the best grace in the world. She was the wife of the burgomaster, and General Kettler of the Austrian service was never long away from her side. She received me graciously, and asked me about Paris and Brussels, where she had been educated, without paying the slightest attention to my replies. She was too much taken up in staring at my lace and jewellery.

She asked if I was making a long stay at Cologne, and I

answered indifferently, that I thought of going on to Bonn the next day. Whereupon General Kettler said: 'I am sure, sir, madame will be able to persuade you to defer your departure, and I shall be delighted, as it will give me the pleasure of your further acquaintance.' He then left the box with de Lastic, leaving me alone with the beauty.

'The count is mistaken, I think,' she said, 'in attributing such power to me.'

'He is not mistaken in your influence, madame, but he may be mistaken in supposing you would care to exercise it.'

'Well, then, we must punish him for his indiscretion—stay.'

I bent over her hand, kissing it respectfully.

'It is understood then, sir, you will stay. The general gives a ball to-morrow. I hope you will dance with me.'

'If I might dare to hope, madame, that you will dance with me only during the whole evening?'

'I promise I will dance with you until you stop for very weariness.'

'In that case you will dance with no one else.'

'Tell me where you get that delicious pomade which scents the whole air. I noticed it as soon as you came in.'

'I get it from Florence, but if you dislike it, madame, I will lay it aside.'

'On the contrary, I wish I had some like it.'

He presents the burgomaster's wife with twelve pots of Esther's pomade.

Then the general came back, and I left the box, in love and hopeful. The lucky pomade was a present from Esther, and I was using it for the first time. The parcel Esther had given me contained twenty-four pots of it in fine porcelain. I put twelve of them in an elegant casket, which I sent without a word by a commissionaire.

Every one was surprised to hear that the general had invited me to his ball, as he was exceedingly jealous. He was elderly, and anything but handsome. He did not seem to object, however, to my dancing with madame. I thought I would stay on at Cologne, and in a moment of hardihood I dared to

tell her that I would remain all through the carnival if she would promise me a rendezvous.

'And supposing I were to break my promise, what would you say?'

'I should regret it, but I should say that you had been prevented from keeping your word.'

'Stay, then,' she answered, for the second time.

The day after I went to pay her my respects, and she introduced me to her husband, a good fellow, neither young nor handsome, but obliging and amiable. Then the general's carriage drove up, and she said to me hastily: 'If General Kettler asks you if you are going to the elector's ball at Bonn, answer in the affirmative.'

I knew nothing about the elector's ball, though I found out afterwards that it was a masked ball, to which every one could go. When by and by the general did ask me, I forgot my orders, and answered that my health did not permit me to indulge in such pleasures.

'You are wise,' said he, 'one must sacrifice amusement to health.'

He goes to the elector's ball at Bonn.

On the day of the ball, towards dusk, I left Cologne in a suit of clothes which no one had seen me wear, and with a box in my post-chaise containing two dominoes. I went to an hotel at Bonn, and put on the one domino, taking the other with me in my chaise.

I soon recognised the burgomaster's wife, seated at faro with several other ladies. I put ten ducats on a card, and lost four times running. Some one then asked the general to cut the cards, and I fancied he would bring me luck. I put fifty ducats on and won, after which I won again and again until I broke the bank. Then I slipped back to my hotel, put away my money, changed my costume, and returned to the ball-room. Every one was wondering who the fortunate stranger could be, and I overheard General Kettler say it must be a Venetian who had come to Cologne a few days ago. The man he was talking to was the unlucky banker, an Italian, Count Verita.

'I know Casanova,' said the latter, 'if he is in Bonn the elector will not let him go without seeing him.'

Later on in the evening, as I wanted to dance, I was obliged to unmask, and the count came up and said: 'My dear fellow-countryman, allow me to congratulate you on having broken the bank.'

'I should congratulate myself if it were so,' said I, 'but it is not.'

Two hours later he accosted me again, laughing. 'You changed your domino in such and such an hotel,' he said, 'in such and such a room. The elector knows all, and he told me to tell you that you are not to leave to-morrow.'

'Will he have me arrested?'

'Why not, if you refuse to dine with him?'

'Tell his highness that I will obey his orders. Will you present me to him at once?'

'He has retired for the night, but come and see me to-morrow at midday.'

When the count presented me, the elector was surrounded by his courtiers, and as I had never seen him, I naturally looked out for an ecclesiastic. He noticed my embarrassment, and said, in bad Venetian, 'To-day I am wearing the costume of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order.'

I tried to kiss his hand; he prevented me, and shook mine affectionately, saying: 'I was in Venice when you were in 'The Leads,' and my nephew, the Elector of Bavaria, told me that after your escape, you stayed some time in Munich. If you had come to Cologne I should have kept you. I hope that after dinner you will tell us about your escape, and that you will remain to supper and join us at a little masquerade.'

I told him that my tale took two hours in the telling.

He was a gay, jovial, and debonair man, and seemed so healthy that no one would have supposed he was going to die the very next year.

After dinner I began, and I kept the most brilliant company interested for two hours. My readers know how dramatic

the situations were, but it is impossible to give in writing the fire and enthusiasm which I could put into it *viva voce.*

The elector's masquerade was delightful. We were all dressed as peasants: the costumes came from the elector's private wardrobe. General Kettler looked the best, but then he was naturally a rustic. Madame was ravishing. We danced nothing but German dances and country dances. There were only four or five ladies of high rank present. All the others, more or less pretty, were particular friends of the elector's, who all his life long was a lover of pretty women. Two ladies danced the *forlane*, a Venetian dance, and a very lively one. It is a *tête-à-tête* dance, and as I was the only man present who knew it, I had to dance with both of them in turn, so it nearly killed me. During the evening the burgomaster's wife told me that all the ladies of Cologne were leaving the next day, and that I could make myself exceedingly popular by inviting them to breakfast at Brühl.

'Send a note to each one, with the name of her cavalier included. Put yourself in the hands of Count Verita, who will arrange everything; let him do for you what he did two years ago for the Prince de Deux Ponts. Lose no time. You can count upon about twenty guests: but above all get your invitations delivered by nine o'clock to-morrow morning.'

I had no thought but to obey. Brühl—breakfast—twenty persons—like the Prince de Deux Ponts—letters to the ladies—Count Verita! I had it all off by heart, as though she had been repeating it to me for an hour.

'It is easy enough,' said Verita, when I consulted him, 'I will give the orders at once; but tell me how much you wish to spend.'

'As much as possible.'

'You mean as little.'

'Not at all. I want to treat my guests handsomely.'

'You must name a fixed sum.'

'Well, then, say two—three—four hundred ducats; is that enough?'

'Two hundred is ample. Deux Ponts did not spend more.'

I wrote eighteen notes before going to bed, and the next morning early they were all distributed.

A gold snuff-box set in diamonds from the elector.

The next day Verita brought me a superb gold snuff-box from the elector, with his portrait surrounded with diamonds.

The breakfast was for one o'clock, and at twelve I was at Brühl, a country house belonging to the elector, with nothing extraordinary about it except its furniture. It is a pale copy of Trianon.

The table was laid for twenty-four persons, forks and spoons in silver gilt, damask linen, superb china, and on the sideboard a collection of beautiful plate. At one end of the hall were two other tables covered with sweetmeats and the choicest wines.

I announced myself to the *chef*, who assured me I should be more than satisfied. 'The *menu* comprises twenty-four dishes,' he said, 'but you will have twenty-four dishes of English oysters, and a magnificent dessert as well.'

The feast at Brühl.

I received my guests in the doorway, asking forgiveness of each one for my temerity in inviting him or her.

There were twenty-four guests, and as I had asked only eighteen, three couples had come without invitation, but I was charmed at their evident desire to be present. I did not sit down, but served the ladies, going from one to another, and ate, standing, the delicate morsels they handed me from their own plates. The oysters were not finished until we got to the twentieth bottle of champagne, so that by the time the *déjeûner* proper began, every one was talking at once. I noticed with pleasure that not a drop of water was drunk. Champagne, tokay, rhine wine, madeira, malaga, cyprus, and alicante were the wines served, and it is impossible to mix water with any of them.

Before the dessert an enormous dish of truffles was put on the table. I suggested that we should drink maraschino with them, and the ladies took a great many glasses. The dessert was sumptuous. Among other elegant fancies served were the

portraits of all the sovereigns of Europe. We sent for the *chef* to compliment him, and he, wishing to oblige, said that all the sweetmeats were portable and would resist the warmth of the pocket. Whereupon every one helped themselves, the ladies stuffing their reticules and sacs.

The general is entertained by him.

'I wager,' said General Kettler, 'that this is a trick which the elector has played us to finish up his fête. His highness wished to remain incognito, so M. Casanova has played, and very well played, the rôle of host.'

'General,' said I, 'if the elector had honoured me with such an order, I should have obeyed, but I should have felt humiliated. His highness has bestowed a much greater favour on me,'—and I showed him the snuff-box, which was passed round the table. Then, after sitting three hours, every one rose, to be in time for the play.

On the last day of the carnival, Kettler, who now hated me cordially, invited everybody to a supper followed by a ball, but from these festivities I was carefully excluded.

Madame was furious.

'You must go, whether you are invited or not,' said she.

'Madame, how can I? I will obey you in everything but this.'

'I know all you would say,' she answered, 'but you must go. I should consider myself disgraced if you are not there.'

'If you insist, I will go, but you know that it means death for one of us, for I am not the man to put up with an affront.'

'Yes, I know, but promise me to go, or I shall not go either, and then we should never see each other again.'

I promised, and as I meant to keep my promise, I determined to be as discreet as I could, and not put myself doubly in the wrong.

He goes to General Kettler's supper uninvited.

I went to General Kettler's house after the theatre. There were only five or six people there, and I talked to a very agreeable canoness about Italian poetry, until the other guests had arrived. Madame and the general came last. Kettler did not see me, and a quarter of an hour after, supper was announced.

The canoness rose, took my arm, and we sat down to table, talking all the time of literature. When all the places were taken, one gentleman remained standing.

'There must be some mistake,' said the general, and he began to pass his guests in review. I pretended not to notice what was going on. When he came to me he exclaimed, 'Sir, I did not invite you.'

'True, general,' I answered civilly, 'but I was so sure that it was mere forgetfulness on your part, that I thought I would come and pay you my respects.'

Then I renewed my conversation with the canoness, as though nothing had happened.

There was silence for four or five minutes, then the canoness began to chatter again, and soon every one was talking gaily, except the general, who sulked. I was determined to bring him round, and watched for a favourable opportunity, which presented itself by and by.

Some one spoke of the Prince Biron, who was then in Siberia, saying that his whole merit lay in having flattered the Empress Anne.

Flattery of General Kettler.

'Pardon me,' said I, 'his merit lies in having so faithfully served the last Duke Kettler, who, but for Biron's bravery, would have lost all his men in the late war. It was Kettler who magnanimously sent him to Saint Petersburg, but Biron never solicited the duchy for himself; he recognised the rights of the younger branch of the Kettlers, who but for the caprice of the Czarina, would be reigning to-day.'

The general, whose austere mien had somewhat relaxed during my observations, now turned to me, and said graciously that he had never met a better informed man than I, adding regretfully: 'Yes, but for that caprice I should be reigning to-day.'

After this he burst out laughing, and sent me a bottle of Rhine wine, and during the rest of the supper addressed all his conversation to me. I could read madame's pleasure in her eyes.

I danced with my canoness, who was a charming woman, all night. I only danced one minuet with madame. The general, by way of winding up with an extra piece of clumsiness, asked me if I were going to leave Bonn soon. I said not till after the Grand Review. The burgomaster's wife, when next I saw her, told me that she was in a mortal fright when she heard him say he had not invited me.

'It is certain,' she added, 'that he would not have stopped at that had it not been for your tactful excuse, but had he said one word more I should have risen, offered you my hand, and we would have gone out together. M. de Castries says he should have left also, and I believe that all the ladies who were your guests at Brühl would have followed us.'

He attends Mass in the burgomaster's private chapel.

Two days after, I dined at the burgomaster's. He was an agreeable and well-educated man; he liked a quiet life, and his wife was much attached to him. He went away for a while, and madame took me over the house.

'This,' she said, 'is our room, and this is my little boudoir. These two grated windows look down into a church, which we may consider as our private chapel, for we can hear Mass from the windows; and here, you see, is a small staircase which leads to a door in the chancel.'

An idea occurs to him during the service.

The next day I attended Mass at the burgomaster's chapel, and I saw madame, demurely hooded, come through the little door, followed by her family. I was dressed in a riding-coat so as not to attract attention, and I do not think she noticed me; but what I noticed, for the devil is as busy in church as elsewhere, was the way in which the door opened on to the staircase. A mad idea came into my head, and I communicated it to madame next day at the theatre. She laughingly told me she had thought of the same thing, and that I should find further details in the first newspaper she should give me.

Two days later she handed me the Gazette, saying there was nothing in it. There was a letter folded in the pages which I read as soon as I was alone. She told me that if, on a certain

day, I could manage to hide myself in the chapel, so that the beadle should not find me when he came to lock the doors, she might come down and visit me after every one else had gone to rest.

I went the next day to the chapel to see how the land lay. I found that there was a pulpit in which I could easily hide, but it was near the sacristy door, and for that reason dangerous. There was a confessional quite close to the small door, and by sitting down on the step where the confessor puts his feet, I might perhaps escape detection. The space was very narrow, and I was not sure that I could remain there once the door was shut; but at midday, when the beadle absented himself for dinner, I tried it and found it just possible. About eight days afterwards madame told the general, in my presence, that her husband was going to Aix-la-Chapelle for three days. At the same time she looked meaningly at me.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when I crouched down in the confessional, commending myself to all the saints. As soon as I heard the beadle lock the door I left my narrow prison and sat down on a bench, and thence I saw her shadow on the grating. By and by, growing bolder, I tried the door; it opened, and I found myself on the staircase. There, seated on one of the steps, I passed five hours, which would not have been so tedious if the rats had not tormented me horribly.

At ten o'clock she came to me, candle in hand, and we supped delicately together in her boudoir.

A fortnight later I met her again. I entered the chapel at eleven o'clock in the morning, because, being neither a Sunday nor a fête-day, the door would be locked at noon, and took up my position. About one o'clock a paper fell from the grated window, and fluttered almost to my feet.

'You will be more comfortable on the stairs,' it said, 'where you will find light, books, and a little dinner. I have also put a cushion for you; rest assured the time seems longer to me than to you. May God preserve you from coughing—above all in the night, for then we should both be lost!'

I found everything on the staircase—food, wine, a spirit lamp, coffee, lemons, sugar and rum, books, and candles. I made coffee and drank punch and read for six hours, then I slept till she came and woke me. I dare say I should have met her again, but the general went to Westphalia, and she went to the country. I was about to leave Cologne shortly, but we promised to meet again the following year, a promise which we were unable to keep.

The two months and a half that I stayed in the city had not in any way affected my pocket, for though I often lost at cards, the sum I had won at Bonn defrayed all my expenses.

I left Cologne in the middle of March, and stopped at Bonn to present my respects to the elector. Count Verita gave me a letter to a canoness at Coblentz, which obliged me to make a halt at that town; but the good lady had gone to Manheim, so I missed her. To make up for this, however, I met an actress named Toscani, who was going to Stuttgart with her daughter. The mother wanted to see what the duke would think of the girl, for she had destined her for him from earliest infancy. She had just come from Paris, where the celebrated Vestris had given her dancing lessons.

La Toscani was determined that the duke should fall seriously in love with her daughter, and that he should dismiss the reigning favourite, a dancer named Gardella, the daughter of a *barcarol* at Venice. I determined to go with these two nymphs to Stuttgart, where I hoped to meet La Binetti, the daughter of the *barcarol* Romain, whom I had helped to make her *débût* at Venice. I was also to meet there the youngest Baletti, whom I was very fond of, and his wife, besides several other old friends. Altogether, I expected to pass time at Stuttgart agreeably.

The court of the Duke of Würtemberg.

The court of the Duke of Würtemberg was at that time the most brilliant in Europe. The immense subsidies which France paid him for a troop of ten thousand men enabled him to maintain himself in luxury. He had hunting equipages, magnificent stables, a French theatre, and an Italian

opera and *opéra comique*, twenty Italian dancers, any one of whom would have been considered a star at one of the big Italian theatres. The celebrated Novero was his ballet-master, and he could put on the stage as many as a hundred *figurantes*. All the dancers were pretty. The principal lady was La Gardella, the Venetian whom I had known long years ago in the house of the senator Malipiero. She was married to Michel Agata. The duke, when he tired of her, gave her a pension, and the title of Madame. The others were jealous of these honours, but the Venetian knew how to maintain her position; though she had lost the affection of her master, she was still his very good friend, gave him bad advice, and he in return accorded her in public all the respect he could have shown a royal princess.

He is forbidden to applaud in the theatre when the duke is present.

I repaired to the opera on the night of my arrival, handsomely dressed. I was ignorant of the usages of small German courts, and I applauded a solo vigorously. A minute afterwards an individual came into my box and addressed me very rudely in German. I could only reply '*Nichts verstand*,' which was all the German I knew. He went out, and an officer entered, who told me in French that as the duke was in the theatre it was forbidden for any one else to applaud.

'Very good, sir, I will come when the duke is not here, for when I am pleased I like to give expression to my pleasure.' I left, and as I was getting into my carriage the same officer came up, saying that the duke wished to speak to me. I followed him to the club, when I was ushered into the duke's presence.

'You are M. Casanova?'

'Yes, sire.'

'Where have you come from?'

'From Cologne.'

'How long do you expect to remain in Stuttgart?'

'Five or six days, if your highness permits.'

'Stay as long as you like, and you may applaud in my theatre at your good pleasure.'

'I will profit by your permission, sire.'

The duke gives him leave to applaud as he likes in the royal theatre.

After the theatre I paid my respects to La Gardella, who invited me to dine with her next day. I also saw La Binetti, one of my oldest friends, who told me I should find a place laid for me at her table every day.

Curtz, the first violin, had been my comrade in the old days, when I played the fiddle in the orchestra of Saint Samuel at Venice. He was delighted to see me, and presented me to his daughter, of whom he said, 'Here is one girl at least who is not made for the duke. He shall never have her.'

He had not the gift of prophecy, poor fellow, for the duke did fall in love with the girl, a short time afterwards, and wearied of her in due course, as he did of all the others.

The next day I breakfasted gaily with the favourite, but I had been foolish enough to tell one of the court officials that I was a relation of hers, and her mother, who was exceedingly proud of her daughter's present position, disapproved of my claim to relationship. She told me that none of her relations had ever been on the stage, so I asked her if she had heard from her sister lately. The said sister was a fat blind woman who begged her bread on one of the bridges in Venice!

I promised to return to breakfast the next day, but as I was leaving the porter came up to me and told me I was not to set foot in the house again. I then wished that I had held my tongue. I was engaged to dine with La Binetti, or I should have gone off at once. She lived with the Viennese minister, who was her lover, and the part of the house she inhabited was built on the town wall. When I left her I was courteously accosted by three officers, whose acquaintance I had made at a café the evening before. They persuaded me to go back to town with them, and we supped at a house of a suspicious character. I ate very little, and only took two little glasses of Hungarian wine. We played faro. I felt quite drunk; my head was going round, but I went on punting, and I lost fifty or sixty louis in a few minutes. The officers were distressed at my losses, and insisted on my taking

He takes the bank at faro with the three officers, loses sixty louis, and is robbed into the bargain.

the bank of a hundred louis against them. I lost, renewed the bank and lost again. My head was growing heavier and heavier. Finally, I lost over a hundred thousand francs. I was now so overcome, although I had not taken anything since supper, that I had to be carried back to my hotel in a sedan chair. My servant told me when he undressed me that I had neither of my watches on, nor my gold snuff-box.

Two days later my officers paid me a visit.

'Gentlemen,' said I, 'I have lost an amount which it is impossible for me to pay, and which I should not have lost but for the poison you put in the wine. You have furthermore robbed me of three hundred louis worth of jewels and valuables. I shall not lodge a complaint, for it is my own fault, but I shall pay you nothing.'

The spokesman of the party replied: 'We are too honest to have taken advantage of you. You were unfortunate; that any one may be. We do not wish to be hard on you, so we will content ourselves with taking your diamonds, arms, and carriage, which we will have estimated; if they do not realise the sum you owe, we will accept notes of hand for the rest, and we will remain good friends.'

'Sir,' I answered, 'I do not desire the friendship of people who have despoiled me thus, and I will not pay you in any way.'

At these words they broke out into threats.

'Gentlemen,' said I, 'I am not affected by your menaces. There are two ways in which we can settle this dispute—the law and the sword. I will fight you, one after the other, in all honour and discretion.'

They answered that they should have great pleasure in killing me, but only after I had paid them; and departed.

La Toscani's mother, who was an exceedingly intelligent woman, persuaded me to send for an advocate, who advised me to lay the whole case before the duke at once.

'It was the officers who decoyed you into the gambling-house, it was they who gave you the drugged wine, they who

stripped you of your jewels, after having caused you to lose an enormous sum of money. The matter is a hanging one, and the duke is sure to give you satisfaction, as gaming is strictly forbidden here.'

He is handed over by Caiaphas to Pilate!

I decided to appeal to the duke, and was on my way to the chateau when I was seized by the arm. It was one of my three gentlemen. I naturally drew my sword, the officers of the guard ran up. I declared that the three accomplices had laid violent hands on me, and several persons present declared that I had only acted in self-defence. I was admitted to the ducal palace, and got as far as the last ante-chamber, where I spoke to the chamberlain, and asked for an audience; he assured me that the duke would receive me, but a moment after one of the three officers came in and spoke to him in German. I had been handed over by Caiaphas to Pilate! An hour passed, then the chamberlain came and told me I could go home, the duke knew all.

I saw that I could not hope for justice, and I returned sadly to La Binetti. Her husband assured me that the Viennese minister would take me under his protection, and his wife promised to speak for me to her lover. The diplomatist came after dinner, and when he had heard my story, told me to write it out, and he would see it came to the duke's hands.

But in the evening le Duc came to tell me that an officer was in possession of my room at the hotel, that there were two soldiers posted in the street, and that I should be arrested if I returned thither.

He takes counsel with La Binetti.

La Binetti declared that I must not return to the hotel, but must stay at her house, where there was no danger of my being insulted. I sent le Duc to fetch the things I wanted for the night, and remained talking with my hostess until the Viennese minister came in. He told me that he had given my petition to the duke, but I never heard anything more of it.

After four days' peaceful abode in La Binetti's house, her lover received a notice from the Minister of State, enjoining

him to dismiss me at once, as by retaining me he was hindering the course of justice. La Binetti was furious, lost her temper, and said insulting things to her Viennese, who only laughed at her, saying that it was not his fault, he could not keep me against the will of the sovereign. I saw no one at the inn till after dinner, when a sheriff served a notice on me to appear before a notary to make my deposition. I spent two hours with this man, who wrote down in German what I told him in Latin; when he had finished he told me to sign the document. I refused to sign what I could not read; he said that I insulted him by these doubts of his good faith. I replied that I did not in the least doubt his good faith, but that my refusal was dictated by ordinary prudence.

I was awakened next morning by le Duc announcing an officer, who told me in French that I must consider myself as a prisoner, and confined to my room. He asked me politely for my sword, and I was obliged to give it him; it was mounted in beautifully wrought steel, and was a present from Madame d'Urfé, worth at least fifty louis.

One thing I was determined on, namely, that in any event I would not disclose the existence of the valuable letters of exchange in my pocket-book.

La Binetti, La Toscani, and young Baletti came to dine and sup with me, and the three officers came to see me separately, each one promising that if I would give him a certain sum he would pacify the others and get me out of my difficulties; they would any one of them have been satisfied with three or four hundred louis.

On the fifth day of my arrest the duke went to Frankfort, and I learned through La Binetti that he had promised the officers not to interfere in the affair. My lawyer told me I had better sacrifice my jewels and obtain my discharge, though La Binetti, who was a shrewd woman, did not agree with him.

'There is a cabal against you,' said the lawyer, 'supported by very influential personages; witnesses have been found to swear that you are a professional gambler, and that it was

you who enticed the others to play; that it is not true that you were drugged, or that you lost your watches and your snuff-box. These they say will be found in your trunk, when they search your effects to sell whatever they may find. If they fetch more than the amount claimed, the balance will be taken for law expenses; if less, you will be enrolled as a simple soldier in the troops of his serene highness. I have heard it said that the four louis which are given as a bonus to every recruit will be counted in your assets, and that the duke will be only too pleased to have such a fine man in his service!'

I wrote to the chief of police, giving him the titles of Monseigneur and Excellency freely, and implored his protection. I told him I had decided to sell all I had to pay my creditors, but so that my things might not be sold at a loss I entreated him to grant me a delay of four days, and to send me an honest valuer. Four hours later a respectable-looking individual, who spoke Italian, came to me, and told me my request was granted.

'Your lace alone,' he said, 'is worth twenty thousand francs, and your jewels and other valuables are worth at least a hundred thousand, but I give you my word of honour that I shall not mention this to the officers. Try to persuade them to accept half of what they claim, and in this way you can get off with part of your belongings.'

'If I can do that, sir, I promise I will give you fifty louis; here are six on account.'

'I accept them gratefully; you can count on my assistance; the whole town knows your creditors are scoundrels; the duke knows it as well as any one, but he has his reasons for wishing to ignore their swindling.'

I hoped now to save all my baggage, except the carriage. I had a difficult task before me, but at least I was not under 'The Leads,' and the thought of that kept up my courage. La Binetti told me that if I could manage to get to her house, she would have me let down from one of the windows; that there I should be outside the town, and a hundred steps from

the high-road; with a good pair of horses I could be beyond the duke's territory by daybreak.

And with La Toscani.

It was now the turn of La Toscani to make a suggestion. 'You must abandon your trunks,' she said, 'and send your other things to my house. I will get them safely to you as soon as I know your place of refuge. I will take everything away from here, under my clothes, piecemeal, and will begin this very evening.'

I promised La Binetti I would be at her house on Sunday night, if I had to slay the sentinel who was always at my door. Baletti declared he could find me a trustworthy servant to meet me on the highway with a chariot and horses. La Toscani then and there fastened two of my finest suits under her petticoats; my friends aided me so efficiently that by midnight on Saturday my trunks, my travelling-bag, and my dressing-case were all empty; my jewels I had in my pockets, and the keys of two trunks in which La Toscani had laid my clothes. The soldier who guarded me never came into my room unless I called him, and as soon as he knew I was in bed he would lock the door and go away till the next morning. He always took his supper on a little table in the ante-chamber, and I was in the habit of sending him out some dessert.

An evasion.

I arranged a dummy in my bed, dressed in a wig and a night-cap. While the sentinel was eating his supper I stole out and reached the top of the stairs where it was dark, and he could not see me. After a few minutes le Duc came out of my room with a couple of bottles of wine, which he and the soldier proceeded to discuss. When these were empty, le Duc went back into my room, and told the sentinel I was in bed and asleep. The good fellow contented himself with locking the door of the empty cage, and he and my faithful Spaniard left the house together. In the meantime, I, wrapped in my fur pelisse, with my hunting knife and pistols in my belt, got safely to La Binetti's house. We lost no time in idle words. Everything was prepared: I flung my pelisse down to Baletti, who was waiting for me, knee-deep in the mud of

the moat. La Binetti and La Toscani let me down from the window by means of a cord tied round a piece of wood, and Baletti caught me in his arms.

We waded up to our waists in water and filth, scrambled through hedges and over ditches, till we reached the high-road, to the place where the carriage was waiting for me. Baletti's servant was with the carriage, the postillion was drinking at a cabaret near. I took the servant's place on the box, and when the postillion returned I told him to drive quickly to Tübingen without stopping to change horses. We went off at a good pace, but I could not help laughing at his face when we arrived at Tübingen! Baletti's valet was young and small, I was tall and past my youth! After opening his eyes very wide, he stammered out that I was not the gentleman he had started with.

'You were drunk,' said I, giving him a louis. The poor devil had not a word to say to this reasoning, and we went on to Fürstenberg, where I was safe. There I had a good supper and went to bed. Next morning I wrote to the three scoundrels, telling them I would wait for them at Fürstenberg for three days, and fight them one after the other, and that if they did not come I would publish their cowardice. They never answered! But when le Duc turned up on horseback, with his portmanteau in front of him, he told me that all Stuttgart knew my whereabouts, and that the poltroons would try to have me assassinated. I had better, he said, get to Switzerland.

'You are afraid, my poor boy,' said I, 'but you need not be. Tell me what took place after my departure.'

Le Duc's story.

'At nine o'clock in the morning,' he said, 'the officers came. I told them you were asleep. They went to a café near by, and ordered me to fetch them when you awoke. At midday they returned and broke open the door. They politely said "good morning" to the dummy in the bed, but as it did not answer one of them went up and shook it. I roared with laughter when the wig and the stuffing rolled on the floor; one of them struck me several times with his cane. I swore

if they touched me again I would defend myself. I told them I wasn't your keeper, and if they wanted to know where you were they had better ask the sentinel. He vowed that he had locked you in, and that you must have escaped by the window. They called up a corporal, and the poor fellow was marched off to prison. The landlord, hearing the row, came in. When he saw the empty trunks he smiled, and said your post-chaise would pay *his* bill. As I answered "I don't know" to all their questions, I was clapped in jail, and told I should be kept there till I spoke. "On my honour as a Spaniard," I said, "I know nothing, and even if I did I should not tell; an honest servant cannot be expected to betray his master." Seeing they could get nothing out of me, they ordered me to be lashed and set at liberty. My back smarted a good deal, but I was glad I had done my duty and got off so lightly. The landlord sold your chaise and your trunks to the Viennese minister, who, they say, helped you to escape through the window of his mistress's house. I left town without difficulty, and here I am!'

A few hours after le Duc's arrival we took the mailcoach to Schaffhausen, and then to Zurich, where I put up at 'The Sword,'[1] an excellent hostelry.

[1] The inn of 'The Sword' still exists, 'old-fashioned, but comfortable.' Travellers may thus imagine that they are occupying the very rooms in which Casanova prosecuted his amours with the 'fair Amazon.'

CHAPTER XXII

THE INN AT ZURICH

SNUG in my comfortable room at 'The Sword,' I counted up and found I had at least a hundred thousand crowns. 'Enough,' said I, 'to keep me in comfort. I will give up my adventurous life and live in peace and tranquillity for the rest of my days.'

I went to bed, and dreamed of peace. Early in the morning I rose and walked for an hour and more through a beautiful country. I was in the midst of a vast plain surrounded by mountains, and in the distance I saw a church, with a large building adjoining it. I guessed that it was a convent.

The door of the church was open. I went in, and was amazed at the richness of the sculptured marbles, and the beauty of the altar ornaments. I heard Mass, and then I went to the sacristy where some Benedictine monks were assembled. The abbot, whom I knew by his cross, came up and asked me if I would like to visit the monastery and the church, and offered to show me over himself. There were some magnificent vestments; chasubles embroidered with gold and seed pearls, and sacred vessels set with diamonds and other precious stones. We spoke Latin, as I understood very little German. He asked me where I was staying.

The abbot of Einsiedeln.

'Nowhere,' I answered. 'I came from Zurich on foot, and my first visit was to the church.'

I don't know if I pronounced these words with a certain unction, but the abbot clasped his hands and raised his eyes to heaven as though to thank God for having touched my heart, and guided me in my pilgrimage. I was not surprised,

for I know I always look a desperate sinner. The abbot invited me to dine with him; I accepted gratefully, for one can be sure of good cheer in a monastery. I had not the least idea where I was, but I would not ask, as I wanted the abbot to believe I was a pilgrim bent on expiating my crimes. He told me that his monks fasted, but not he, as he had a dispensation from Pope Benedict.

When we were in his apartment, which was not in the least like a penitent's cell, he showed me the brief of the dispensation, which he kept framed and glazed hanging opposite the dining-table. The table was set for three persons, and the abbot told me he dined with his chancellor.

'You understand,' he said, 'that in my quality of abbot of the monastery of our Lady of Einsiedeln, I am a prince of the Holy Roman Empire.'

I breathed freely, for now I knew where I was. I had heard of Einsiedeln. The monastery was the Swiss Loretto, and was celebrated for the number of pilgrims who visited it. The prince abbot asked me many questions about myself, and offered me letters of recommendation. I thanked him, and said I was a Venetian, and that I would answer his questions more fully in a private interview. It was thus that, without premeditation on my part, I pledged myself to confess to the abbot. It was a little whim of mine!

We dined off salmon, trout, woodcock, and snipe. The abbot was greedy, and knew what he was eating, a *gourmet*, though he affected sobriety. Then he withdrew to the library, where hung the portrait of the Elector of Cologne, in his bishop's robes. I said it was like him, but not flattering, and showed my snuff-box. The library was full of huge infolio volumes; the newest of these was a century old; they all treated of theology and religious controversy. 'I suppose,' said I, 'your monks have private libraries, with books treating of physics, history, and travel?'

'No,' said he, 'my monks are worthy men, who only think of their duty and live in blissful ignorance.'

I don't know what was the matter with me that day, but it suddenly came to me that I would like to be a monk. I said nothing about that then, but what I did say was this.

He would be a monk.

'I want, reverend father,' said I, 'to make a general confession of all my sins, so that to-morrow, after having received absolution, I can go to Holy Communion.'

He led me to his cell, and, without allowing me to kneel down, said he was ready to hear what I had to say.

For three long hours the poor man listened to a series of scandalous histories, told without zest or spirit; but I was in a pious frame of mind; my airs of contrition astonished myself. The revered abbot esteemed me sincere; he told me that when, by strict attention to morality, I had placed myself once more in a state of grace, contrition would come of itself, and I was fain to believe him.

He pronounced over me the sacramental words which have the power to remit all human sins, and he advised me to pass the rest of the day in prayer. He would order supper to be served to me in my room, and next day I should receive the Communion.

I am amazed when I think of my own inconceivable docility. Alone in my cell I had visions of joining the order, and I began to think that fate or my good angel had brought me to the place where happiness awaited me, where I could for the rest of my life live sheltered from the freaks of fortune.

The one thing needful to me was a library of my own choosing. The abbot would let me buy what books I liked, if I promised to leave them to the monastery at my death. I did not fear the discord, envy, and bickering inherent in such a community, for I was ambitious of nothing which could excite jealousy. In spite of the spell I was under, I foresaw the time when I should be free of it, and shivered at the thought. 'I will ask the abbot,' I thought, 'to let me spend ten years in the novitiate before taking any vows. If I have not repented by that time I never will.'

I put all this scheme in writing, and the next day I gave it

to the abbot, when we were taking our chocolate together after Mass.

He read it, and laid it on his desk without saying a word. By and by he re-read it, and told me he would give me an answer after dinner.

He takes fifteen days to consider.

I waited with the impatience of a child who has been promised a new toy. We dined as sumptuously as the day before, and as we left the table the abbot said: 'My carriage is waiting for you at the door to take you back to Zurich. I want you to give me fifteen days in which to think over your proposition. I will take the answer to you myself. Here are two sealed letters, which I beg you to hand personally to the individuals to whom they are addressed.'

I said that I would wait for him at 'The Sword' for fifteen days, in hopes that he would grant my request. He gave me his blessing, and I departed.

As soon as my Spanish servant saw me again, he laughed.

'What are you laughing at, scoundrel?' said I.

'I am laughing because, although you have only just come into Switzerland, you have already stayed out two whole nights!'

The next day I delivered the abbot's letters; one was to a M. Orelli, the other to M. Pestalozzi. They both called on me the following afternoon, and invited me to dine. I went with them to the town concert, the only possible entertainment in Zurich, which I found very tiresome. All the men sat on one side, and all the women on the other. This arrangement, in spite of my recent conversion, displeased me mightily. Still I was so circumspect that in four days my reputation was completely established in Zurich. I was respectfully saluted in the streets. I passed three hours each morning studying German, with a somewhat singular professor, an apostate monk, who roundly abused all religious orders, including that of Einsiedeln.

I was at my window one evening about six o'clock, watching

the passers-by—it was the day before the date of the abbot's promised visit—when I saw a carriage with four horses pull up at the inn door. Four well-dressed women got out. The fourth, who wore a riding habit, impressed me with her elegance and beauty. She wore a little blue satin cap with a silver tassel, which made her look very knowing. As I leant out of the window to look at her, she raised her head as though I had called her, and looked me straight in the face for half a minute. It was too long for a modest woman, and quite long enough to set me on fire.

The four ladies from Soleure.

I rang for the butler.

'I will sup to-night in the dining-room with the rest of the company.'

'If it is to see the ladies who have just come, they have ordered supper in their own room, as they are leaving very early.'

'Where for?'

'Our Lady of Einsiedeln.'

Three of the ladies were given up to piety and good works; I could see that. The fourth could only be so out of good-fellowship, for I am clever at telling a woman's character by her face and play of feature, and I saw self-indulgence and love of amusement written on every line of hers.

I was completely at a loss what saint to invoke, when an idea occurred to me. I slipped a gold piece into the man's hand, saying: 'You must lend me your green apron, I want to wait on the ladies myself.'

He borrows the butler's green apron.

'I will go and get you a fine new apron, sir. The pretty one has already asked me who you are! I said you were an Italian nobleman; and, by the way, I have asked your Spaniard to help me to wait, for I am single-handed.'

'He must not go into the room, he might laugh. Keep him in the kitchen.'

I arranged my hair in a catogan, and put the apron on over a scarlet jacket. On looking at myself in the glass I thought I looked for once mean enough for the part. Le Duc

came to tell me when the supper was ready, and I went into the dining-room.

'Make haste!' said the ugliest old woman, 'for we have to get up before daylight.'

I placed chairs for them at the table, making eyes at the beauty the while. The butler came up, but presently whispered familiarly, 'You stay up here and wait, I'm very busy.'

I took up my position behind a chair opposite her. She was surprised; but the others never even looked at me. While they were eating the boiled beef, which came after the soup, I cut up a capon at the side-table in the most masterly manner.

'That man knows how to carve,' said my fair one. 'Have you been in this place long, my good man?'

'A few weeks only, madame.'

'You wait very well.'

'Madame is very good to say so.'

I had tucked my ruffles, which were of superb English point, inside my sleeves, but a bit of my cravat, which was of the same lace, peeped through my buttonhole. When I handed her her plate she noticed it.

'Wait, wait a minute,' she said; 'what beautiful lace you wear!'

'Yes, madame, so I have been told, but it is very old. An Italian gentleman who lodged here gave it me.'

'Have you the cuffs to match?'

She discovers him, but is discreet.

I held out my hand, and she pulled the cuff out slowly. I saw she had found me out, and was acting with discretion. But she blushed when one of her friends said: 'My dear, how curious you are; one would think you had never seen lace before.'

When supper was over the three ugly ones retired, each one into a corner of the room, to undress, while I cleared away, and my heroine began to write. Then when I had done, I remained standing by the door respectfully.

'What are you waiting for?'

'Your orders, madame.'

'I want nothing more, thank you.'

'You still wear your riding-boots, madame; do you want to go to bed with them on? If you will allow me to unlace them——'

I knelt down before her, and unfastened her boots slowly, while she continued to write.

'That will do now,' she said, 'you can go, we shall see you to-morrow night.'

'You will sup here, madame?'

'Certainly.'

I took away the boots, asking if she would like the door locked.

'No,' she said sweetly, 'put the key inside.'

Le Duc, who was waiting outside the door, took the boots from me.

'You will see, sir, she will tip you a louis to-morrow, you played your part so well. I declare, if you don't hand it over to me I will blow the gaff.'

Next morning at daylight I took the boots upstairs, and knocked at the door at the very moment their coachman came to call them. I asked them if they would like to breakfast. They laughed, and said they had just supped. My lady was nearly dressed, as I could see through the open door. She called me, and carelessly put out her little foot to be shod; the pretty cavalier airs she assumed enchanted me. She had on a pair of light green velvet breeches, and strutted about in them in manly fashion. And who minds a butler?

Towards midday the good abbot arrived, and we dined *tête-à-tête*. He congratulated me on the character I had earned at Zurich.

'Here,' he said, 'is a distich which you can put over your door—

> "*Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna, valete;*
> *Nil mihi vobiscum est, ludite nunc alios.*"'

'That is a translation,' I said, 'of two verses of Euripides,

He tells the Abbot of Einsiedeln that he has no more mind to be a monk.

but, my lord, they must do for somebody else, for I have changed my mind since yesterday.'

'I congratulate you,' said he, 'and I hope that you will be happy. I may tell you, in strict confidence, that it is easier to save one's soul in the world even than in the cloister.'

I do not believe, as my renegade monk would have persuaded me, that the abbot was a hypocrite; he spoke like an honest, intelligent man.

I thanked the abbot most respectfully, and accompanied him to his coach; he told me I could always count on his friendship, and so we parted.

As soon as he had gone I placed myself on the bridge in front of the inn, to wait for the kind angel who had come all the way from Soleure to deliver me from monkish temptation. About six o'clock I saw her coming along with her companions; I hid myself, but they stopped, and looked up at the windows of my room. I knew from this that she had not only discovered my secret, but had confided it to the others. I was much vexed. I supped alone in my apartment, to see if I could not mystify them a little. Le Duc took my place, and waited on the ladies. He told me afterwards that they asked several times where the other butler was. Le Duc had found out her name —Madame de ——, but she had not allowed him to unlace her boots, that was one comfort. They left early next morning; I was at my window to see them go off. My lady got in last, and, pretending that she wanted to find out if it was raining or no, took off her satin bonnet, and looked up. I blew her a kiss, and she replied with a smile.

I was determined to follow them to Soleure; I wrote to Madame d'Urfé, asking her to send me an introduction to M. de Chavigny, the French minister there, and to address her reply *poste restante*, Soleure. I also wrote to the Duke of Würtemberg, who never answered me; perhaps he thought my letter a little bitter in tone. I had to stop at Baden because of an accident to my carriage, and at the inn there, the landlord's daughter, a good-looking girl, asked me to waltz

with her. It was a Sunday. Suddenly her father came in, and the girl ran off.

'Sir,' said he, 'you are to pay a fine of one louis, for having danced on Sunday.'

He is fined for dancing on Sunday.

'Go to the devil, my friend; I shall not pay one *sou*.'

'You must,' said he, showing me a notice on the wall, which I could not read, as it was in German.

'I will appeal.'

'To whom, sir?'

'To the nearest magistrate.'

He left the room, and, a quarter of an hour afterwards, a servant came to tell me the magistrate was waiting for me in the next room. I thought the magistrates in Switzerland were marvellously polite, when, on entering the room, I saw my host with a wig and a cloak on.

'Sir,' he said, 'I am the judge, and I condemn you to pay not only the original louis, but six francs costs.'

'If your daughter had not invited me I should not have danced; she is as guilty as I am.'

'Quite true, sir. I will pay a louis for her,' and drawing the coin out of his pocket, he laid it on the table beside him.

I laughed, and paid the six francs.

At Soleure I found a letter from Madame d'Urfé, enclosing one from the Duc de Choiseul for the ambassador. I took a carriage, and left card and letter on his excellency, who was out, but who sent an officer in the course of the day with an invitation to dinner. I was pleased, for I intended to play an important part at Soleure; I had plenty of money, and I knew it is easy to dazzle the dullest and the brightest eyes with that blessed metal.[1]

Thirty years before, M. de Chavigny had been ambassador to Venice, and I knew many an anecdote about him,

[1] De Chavigny, Comte de Toulonjon, was born in 1688, went as envoy to Genoa and then to Hanover, whence he followed George II. to England. He afterwards went to Venice and Vienna, and to Switzerland in 1751. He died in 1771. D'Argenson says of him, 'He has done badly wherever he has been sent.'

some of which I fancied might serve me, if I brought them out discreetly. He was a fine old man, and received me well, placing me next to him at table. I seized a propitious moment, and told him he was still spoken of in terms of affection at Venice; he replied that he should never forget the years he passed in my beautiful city. We spent some time after dinner talking of such of his old friends as were known to me, by name at any rate.

He visited me at my hotel next day, and after discussing the weather, told me he was going to put some absurd questions to me, and that I must not be offended; for his part, he did not believe one word of what he had been told.

'Two ladies, who saw you leave my house yesterday, have warned me to be on my guard against you. They allege that you are neither more nor less than the butler of an hotel. Where they lodged in Zurich, they assure me that you waited on them at table; yesterday, they say, they met another of the inn servants, and it would seem as though you and he had run away together, the Lord knows why! I replied that, even had you not brought me a letter from M. de Choiseul, I should not believe it. At the same time, if there is any foundation for this story, I beg of you to tell me.'

I told him exactly what had happened, adding that I had come to Soleure only on the chance of seeing my lady again; and I added that, although he had named no names, I was convinced that it was the ugly trio who had betrayed me.

He meets the four pilgrims of Zurich.

M. de Chavigny laughed heartily, and asked me to dine with him next day, and meet the four pilgrims. When I entered the room I saw two of them in a corner, and going up to the most spiteful-looking one, who was lame, I made a low bow, and asked her if she remembered me.

'Then you actually admit that you are the butler of "The Sword"?'

'No, not exactly; but I acted the part for an hour or two, madame, when you punished me by not deigning to

address me. I hope that here I shall be more fortunate, and that you will allow me to pay you my respects.'

'It is marvellous! You played your part so well that any one would have been taken in. We shall see if you are as clever in your present rôle. Come and see me at my house.'

After this the story became public, and while it was still furnishing subject for merriment the door opened, and the beautiful Madame de ——, accompanied by her husband, came in.

'Here,' said she, presenting me to him, 'is that charming butler from Zurich!'

The worthy man thanked me for the honour I had done his wife, in waiting on her and taking her riding-boots off. I saw that she had told him all.

At dinner M. de Chavigny put me at his right hand; my two traducers were on either side of me. As I did not wish them to see through my little game, I forced myself to make them pretty speeches, though they were both of them exceedingly displeasing to me. I never even looked across the table at Madame de ——.

He plays Murray in Voltaire's *L'Écossaise.*

De Chavigny, who was anxious that I should enjoy myself at Soleure, suggested that we should act Voltaire's comedy of *L'Écossaise*, and that Madame de —— should play the heroine. He would play Montrose, and I Murray. The lame old woman was anything but pleased at this arrangement—it only left her the unsympathetic part of Lady Alton—and said spitefully, 'It is a pity there is no butler in the piece, M. Casanova would have played him to perfection.' We received our parts next day, and after dinner the ambassador invited us to remain and dance. He asked me to open the ball with the most distinguished lady present. After this I danced with several others, till the kind old man came to me and said I was to ask Madame de —— for the cotillon.

'Lord Murray must not dance it with any one but Lindane,' he said, and I saw from the twinkle in his eye that he had divined my secret.

The first time we stopped to rest I told Madame de —— that I had come to Soleure on her account only, and that it was for her sake that I had disguised myself at Zurich, and that I hoped she would let me pay her my court.

'I cannot receive you at my house, for a certain reason,' she said, 'but we shall probably meet often, if you stay here long enough. I would ask you not to show me any very marked attention in public.'

Fully satisfied with this answer, I promised I would do everything she wished, and defeat curiosity as far as possible.

This little touch of mystery added vastly to my pleasure.

I begged the cripple to give me some hints about acting, and went to her house every morning; but she was sharp enough to see that I was only using her as a tool.

She was a widow, between thirty and forty years old, with a yellow skin, a black, bright eye, and a spiteful expression. She affected a stiffness of gait to hide the inequality of her legs; she had the pretension of being a wit, and talked incessantly.

My attentions to her were, it may be imagined, of a discreet and respectful character, and one day she remarked that after my exploits as a butler she should never have supposed me to be so shy. I knew well enough what she meant, but I had no intention of prosecuting my courtship more seriously, and meant to drop the whole thing as soon as we had acted our comedy.

All Soleure came to the first performance. The lame widow was delighted with the success she obtained in her repulsive part; M. de Chavigny drew tears from all present, and it was said that he played better than the great Voltaire; as for me, I nearly fainted when in the third scene of the fifth act Lindane said to me, '*Quoi? vous! vous osez m'aimer!*' She pronounced the disdainful phrase with such energy that she got a round of applause. This gave me time to collect myself, and I replied in the same style: '*Oui! je vous adore, et je le dois.*' I put so much pathos into the words that applause broke out again.

Before we played it a second time M. de Chavigny advised us to have another rehearsal, and invited us to his country house for that purpose; we were all to return with him to sup at Soleure afterwards. Just as we were leaving he told M. de —— that he wanted to speak to him on business.

'Get into my carriage with me,' he said; 'M. Casanova will accompany madame in yours.'

Madame accepted my hand with an air of perfect indifference, but when she was on the step of the carriage she pressed it with all her might.

We were alone. Half an hour passed like a moment; we lost no time in grimaces, our lips met in a kiss, only to sever at the hotel door; we wished it had been ten leagues further on.

The pinch of hellebore.

She got out of the carriage first. I noticed her heightened colour with alarm. This unnatural flush would surely betray us to the prying eyes of her envious friends. I did not know what to do. I had in my pocket a little box containing powdered hellebore; I opened it, took a pinch myself, and offered it to her. Not knowing what it was, she helped herself liberally. When we were half-way upstairs the drug took effect; she began to sneeze violently, and continued to do so for a quarter of an hour. This fully accounted for the redness of her cheeks. She was as quick-witted as she was pretty, and when the fit had passed she said archly that her headache was better, but that another time she would be careful not to take so strong a dose of the remedy. This sample of my good fortune decided me to remain at Soleure some time longer, and I made up my mind to take a house outside the town. After the party was over I went up to the ambassador's room.

'Well,' he exclaimed, 'did you profit by the *tête-à-tête* I arranged for you?'

After this I could not do less than take him into my confidence. I told him of my plan, and though he fully approved

of it, he begged me to be careful not to compromise Madame de ——. He advised me to complain of ill-health, and to consult his doctor, whose favourite prescription, it appeared, was country air. In a few days all the town knew I was out of health, and obliged by my doctor's orders to pass some time in retirement. M. de Chavigny joked Herrenschwand, the doctor, about his new patient, saying he ought to forbid me to receive ladies at my retreat: the lame widow added that he ought to confiscate certain portraits which I kept in my dressing-case.

I had ceased to visit her; she reproached me with my inconstancy, and said I had been making game of her.

'But I know more than you think,' she said, 'and I shall be revenged, I swear.'

'You cannot be revenged,' said I, 'for I have done nothing to offend you; however, if you intend to have me assassinated, I will ask for a guard.'

'We don't assassinate people in this country,' was her agreeable answer; 'we are not Italians.'

M. de Chavigny told me that M. de —— had a favourite cousin, an officer in the French service, who had had the ill-luck to kill his adversary in a duel, for which he had been condemned to death; if, he said, I could be of use to this unfortunate man, I should earn the friendship and goodwill of my adored one's husband.

He uses Madame d'Urfé's interest at the French Court.

I spoke to M. de —— in the presence of the ambassador, and he brought me the documents relative to the affair. I wrote to the Duchesse de Grammont, begging her to speak to her father. I then wrote to my good Madame d'Urfé, telling her that the future of the sublime order of the Rose Cross depended on this Swiss officer being pardoned.

I read both letters to M. de ——; he was deeply grateful; after which I dined *tête-à-tête* with M. de Chavigny, who, by the way, showed me a letter he had just received from Voltaire, thanking him for having played Montrose in his comedy.

M. de —— found me a charming house on the Aar,

about an hour's drive from Soleure; it had a garden, a bathroom, several well-furnished rooms, everything that I needed. I at once took it for six months, on condition that I could leave at any moment. M. de Chavigny told me his major-domo would find me servants, and that anything which was lacking in my establishment I could borrow from his.

'I shall go to see you often,' he said, 'and ask you for a plate of soup, and you must keep me *au courant* of your love affair. Madame de —— is a charming woman. Does she know that I am in the secret?'

'Yes, but she is not displeased. She is sure of your discretion.'

'Thirty years ago,' said Chavigny, 'I would have courted her on my own account.'

The new housekeeper.

Next day I went to take possession of my new abode, accompanied by le Duc. A very pretty young person came to meet me, making a deep curtsy.

'Do you belong to the household, mademoiselle?'

'Yes, sir! the ambassador's major-domo has engaged me as housekeeper here.'

'Ah! forgive my surprise, and be so good as to show me my room.'

I asked her to be seated beside me on the sofa, but she excused herself, saying modestly, 'That is an honour I must not accept. I am only your servant.'

'As you will, mademoiselle, but I hope when I dine alone you will not refuse to keep me company, for I detest solitary meals.'

'I shall obey you, sir.'

'Where is your room?'

It was immediately behind mine, and I was surprised at the number and elegance of the costumes hanging on the wall, and toilet necessaries displayed on the table, the piles of fine linen, caps, shoes, and embroidered slippers.

She seemed to me too well dressed and too interesting for

a housekeeper, and I suspected it was some trick of M. de Chavigny's, for a good-looking girl of four or five and twenty was not quite the person to rule my establishment! But when I questioned her, she replied that she only knew M. de Chavigny by sight: it was Lebel who had engaged her, and had promised her forty francs a month.

'Where do you come from, and what is your name?'

'I come from Lyon. I am a widow, and my name is Dubois.'

Together we passed in review the other servants. There was a chef named Rosier, who was to be paid eighty francs a month; two footmen, and an apothecary's apprentice, who was to give me my baths, and prepare the divers medicaments for my assumed malady.

Then I went round the garden, and into the porter's lodge: he had a large family, and daughters who were not to be despised. I was delighted with my cook, my butler, my housekeeper, and even the scamp le Duc, who waited at table.

After supper I begged my too beautiful housekeeper (she had kept me company at table, and had behaved very well) to tell me her history.

The history of Madame Dubois.

'There is little to tell, sir. I was born at Lyon; from there I went with my parents to Lausanne. My father died when I was fourteen. Three years later I entered the service of Lady Montague, and some time after I married her old footman, Dubois. We went to England, where after three years of married life I lost my husband at Windsor. The English climate did not agree with me. I returned to Lausanne, and entered the service of another English lady. She became jealous of me, and imagined I wished to supplant her in the affections of the young Duke of Rosburi.[1] She dismissed me,

[1] It is probable that Casanova, who was very vague about English titles, is alluding here to James, second Earl of Rosebery, who was born in 1728; he died young, and was succeeded by Neil, third earl. Casanova, with fine impartiality, calls him sometimes *Lord*, and sometimes *Duke*.

but gave me several handsome presents. For the last two years I have been living with my mother, supporting myself by doing needlework. When Lebel asked me if I would enter the household of an Italian gentleman, I consented; it was in the hopes that you would take me on to Italy.'

'You would not have come, perhaps, had you seen me first?'

'No, certainly not, for no woman will take me into her service after I have left yours.'

'And why not, if you please?'

'Do you think, sir, that you can keep a housekeeper as young as I am, without setting people talking?'

'No, for you are too pretty, and I am not made of stone; but I do not mind, if you do not.'

'You do not mind, of course, but it is different for me. I am in a dependent position, and cannot set myself above prejudices.'

'That is to say, Madame Dubois, that you would be glad to return to Lausanne?'

'No, not now, for that would do *you* harm in people's estimation. They would think we had got on badly. I have decided to remain, and I do not think I shall repent of my decision.'

'I am glad to hear that, but I have two conditions to add to the compact, my dear Dubois: you must not be melancholy, and you must not have scruples.'

'I am never melancholy, so you need have no fear on that score; but be so good as to explain what you mean by scruples.'

'In the ordinary acceptation of the word, scruple means a superstitious inclination to see harm in what is actually quite innocent.'

'When I am doubtful about a course of action, I give it the benefit of the doubt; furthermore, I am responsible for my own actions alone.'

'Bravo! I see you have read a great deal.'

Her opinions on literature.

'It is what I enjoy most: life would be dreadful were it not for books. Do you understand English?'

'Not a word.'

'That is a pity. English books would amuse you.'

'I do not like novels.'

'Nor I; but do you imagine there is nothing else but novels to be found in English literature?'

She spoke quite tartly, and I thought it charming of her. I was not in love, but interested, the young woman argued so well. She was elegant, witty, distinguished. I was anxious to see Lebel, and question him about her.

When the cloth was removed she asked me if I put my hair in papers at night.

'That is a matter which concerns le Duc,' I answered; 'but if you like, I will give you the preference.'

She acquitted herself of the task admirably.

'I see,' said I, 'that you are going to look after me as you did Lady Montague.'

'Not altogether; and I want to ask your leave to have the concierge's daughter to sleep with me.'

'Certainly! You are very discreet, I see, my dear. You can rest assured that I shall do nothing to make you less so.'

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MALICIOUS WIDOW

A self-invited guest.

NEXT day, just as I was sitting down to dinner with my housekeeper, a carriage drove into the courtyard, and the terrible widow stepped out of it. I was vexed, but common politeness compelled me to go forward to receive her.

'I was far from expecting this honour, madame.'

'I can quite believe that. I have come to ask you to do me a service, and to invite me to dinner.'

'Pray come in; dinner is just ready, as you see. Allow me to present Madame Dubois to you.' Then turning to my charming housekeeper, I said that madame would do us the pleasure of dining with us.

Dubois did the honours beautifully, and the arrogant widow was obliged to be exceedingly civil to her. I did not say ten words during the meal, nor pay any attention to the detestable creature, but I was curious to know the nature of the service she wished me to render her. As soon as Dubois left us, she said, without any preamble, that she wanted me to give her two rooms in my house, for three weeks, or a month!

I answered that it was quite impossible.

'You cannot refuse me,' she answered; 'the whole town knows that I have come here on purpose to solicit your hospitality.'

'Well, the whole town shall know that I have refused it you, that is the long and the short of the matter. I wish to be absolutely alone here; any sort of society would inconvenience me.'

'I should not inconvenience you in the least; you need not even know that we are under the same roof. I shall not be offended if you never inquire after my health, nor will I inquire about yours; my servant will wait on me, and prepare my food in the smaller kitchen. I will only walk in the garden when I am sure you are not there. Tell me now if in decency you can refuse me?'

'If you were acquainted with the most ordinary usages of society, madame, you would not persist in asking me such a thing, after the formal refusal I have given you, and which I reiterate.'

She remained silent, but determined. I was choking with rage. I walked up and down the room, and had a mind to have her turned out as a mad woman. But I remembered that she had influential relations at Soleure, and that if I treated her discourteously, I might make an implacable enemy capable of wreaking some horrible vengeance; and that, moreover, Madame de —— might disapprove of violent measures.

'Well, madame,' I said at last, 'you can have the apartment you have solicited with so much importunity, but I warn you that one hour after you are installed in it, I shall return to Soleure.'

'I accept the apartment, and I will occupy it to-morrow. As for your threat to return to Soleure, you will not carry it out; you would make yourself the laughing-stock of the whole town.'

She rose and went off without even saluting me. I felt I had behaved like a fool. I ought to have treated the whole thing as a joke, refused to listen to her seriously, and led her back to her carriage, laughing the while. But it was too late now.

I went early next morning and told M. de Chavigny my adventure.

He had been aware of her intention to visit me, but he burst out laughing when he heard she had been successful.

'Your excellency is amused,' said I; 'but I see nothing to laugh at.'

'So it seems. But if you take my advice you will at least appear to think so. Seem totally unaware of her presence in the house; I assure you that will be the best way of punishing her. People will say she is in love with you, and that you disdain her. Go and tell this story to M. de ——, and stay and dine with them.'

Advice from M. de Chavigny.

M. de —— teased me good-humouredly over 'my conquest,' but when I told him the truth of it, he grew pale with indignation, and said that I should be quite justified in appealing to the government to have her turned out.

'I do not wish to use such drastic measures,' I replied; 'for I should not only disgrace her, but myself as well, by proving that I was not master in my own house.'

'I quite agree with you,' said madame; 'and I think you have done well in yielding to her. I will go myself and congratulate her on her success, for she spoke to me about her intentions.'

I went home to supper with Dubois, and discussed philosophy with her. She read and enjoyed Locke.

The widow arrived next morning as Dubois and I were taking our chocolate. I heard her carriage drive up, but did not move from my chair. She went to her room, accompanied only by her maid.

M. de Chavigny came at two o'clock, and we were joined later on by two Jesuit fathers, who were passing through Soleure.

M. de Chavigny was one of those men whom the French government employed as emissaries to the powers she wished to flatter and use in her own interest. M. de l'Hôpital was another; he won the heart of Elizabeth Petrovna, and his *confrère*, the Duc de Nivernois, did absolutely what he liked with the English cabinet in 1762.

De Chavigny invited me to dine with him the next day, to meet M. de Chauvelin and his wife. The dinner was very gay, and I was a good deal teased about my Zurich disguise in honour of the amorous widow, whose devotion had led her

to follow me to the country. That was the turn M. de —— gave to it.

'We will pay you a visit, M. de Casanova,' said De Chauvelin. Before I could reply, the ambassador said: 'Yes, we will, for I want him to lend me his fine rooms to give you a ball next Sunday.'

In this way the accomplished courtier stopped a proposal that was on my lips, to give the ball myself, which would have been awkward, as the ambassador alone had the right to entertain these illustrious visitors. On returning home I found a letter from the widow:—

The widow's letter.

'The ambassador has invited me to his ball on Sunday. I have answered that I am not well, but that if by then I have recovered, I will accept his invitation. It seems to me that, being in your house, I must either be introduced by you or not appear. If you do not wish to do me the pleasure of escorting me, I shall say I am ill. Forgive me for breaking the conditions agreed upon, but the case is an exceptional one.'

This is the answer I sent her:—

'Your expedient is delightful, madame. We will say you are ill. In consonance with the conditions you made yourself, I shall not have the pleasure of introducing you at the ball which his excellency is good enough to give in my rooms.'

The first persons who appeared on Sunday were M. and Madame de ——. She was very civil to Madame Dubois, and did not seem surprised that I should present my housekeeper to her. She said I must positively take her to see the widow, and I had to consent. We were received with every appearance of cordial friendship. When we had gone round the garden, Madame de —— begged me to take her to see her nurse.

'And who is your nurse, madame?' I asked.

'The wife of your concierge,' answered her husband. 'I will wait for you here.'

'Tell me,' said she, as soon as we were alone, 'are you not in love with your pretty housekeeper?'

'No, for I am only in love with you.'

The longed-for guest from Soleure.

'And I like to think it, but I can't help seeing how pretty she is.'

The excellent nurse was delighted to see Madame de ——, whom she called her child. She insisted on making us some lemonade; as soon as her back was turned our lips met, but alas! never was beverage more quickly prepared.

'Was it made beforehand, then?' cried I, as the good woman came back.

'Oh no, sir; but I am very quick at such things.'

The naïveté of the answer sent Madame de —— off into a fit of laughter. We were obliged to return to the house, where we found M. de —— and the widow *en tête-à-tête*. She offered us some fruits and preserves, and especially pressed on us a certain quince marmalade, which we both refused to touch. Madame de —— pressed my foot under the table, and when we came away she told me I had been wise not to take anything, as the widow was suspected of poisoning her husband.

The ball, the supper, the refreshments, and the guests were all delightful. I only danced one minuet with Madame de Chauvelin, and spent the rest of the evening talking to her husband. I made him a present of my translation of his little poem, 'The Seven Deadly Sins.'

At the end of the week I received a letter from Madame d'Urfé, telling me she had spent two days at Versailles on my business, and had succeeded in obtaining the pardon of the Swiss officer. She sent me a copy of the king's letter.

I told the good news to M. de Chavigny, and begged him to announce it personally to M. de ——, so as to give it more importance. He sent for the gentleman, who after expressing his gratitude, actually asked me how much he owed me.

'Nothing, sir,' said I, 'but your friendship, which I value more highly than all the gold in the world. If you wish to give me a proof of it, come and pass a few days with me, for I am desperately dull in my solitude.'

'That is a small thing to ask,' he answered. 'For more than

a year I have been moving heaven and earth to obtain what you have arrived at in fifteen days.'

De Chavigny gossips about Madame d'Urfé.

After he had left us de Chavigny made many philosophical reflections on the court of a monarch where nothing was in itself easy or difficult; what was refused one moment was granted the next, what was withheld from justice was accorded to favouritism, or mere importunity. He had known Madame d'Urfé well, and had even paid his addresses to her at the time when the regent was in love with her. It was he who had given her the nickname of Egeria, because she said she had a familiar spirit who directed her actions, and who companioned her when she was alone.

The following week, according to their promise, M. and Madame de —— came to visit me. My heart thrilled with joy when I saw the object of my affection descend from her carriage. I led my guests to their apartment. It was on the ground floor, on the opposite side to mine. The bed-chamber opened into an alcove, containing two beds, separated by a partition in which was a door of communication. The alcove opened into two small dressing-rooms, the first of which had a door leading into the garden. I had keys to all the doors, and I told my beloved that I could come to her at any hour; but a favourable occasion did not present itself till towards the end of their visit.

The widow leaves his house.

As I was leaving my room next morning I met the widow. She seemed unusually sprightly, and said, 'I must thank you, sir. I must thank you with all my heart. I have come to take leave of you, for I am going back to Soleure to-day.'

'Wait a quarter of an hour, madame; you can leave with my other guests.'

'Not a moment, not an instant. I have said good-bye to Madame de ——. Farewell, do not forget me.'

After breakfast we went for a turn in the garden, and Dubois drawing M. de —— to one side, I was able to have a few minutes' talk with his wife. She was rather downcast. I asked her if she had slept well.

'I did not go to sleep till four o'clock,' she said. 'I waited for you. What prevented you from coming?'

I was too horrified to speak. I could only look at her in stony silence. A frightful thought came to me, and chilled my very marrow. I should certainly have fallen senseless to the ground, had I not leaned against a tree. My first conjecture was that Madame de —— was seeking to mislead me, but I dismissed this as unworthy of her. I felt that she would have been wanting in delicacy had she told me, merely to shield herself, that she had waited for me in vain. I could not get rid of the horrible conviction that her place had been usurped by the infamous widow. But how had she discovered our appointment?

I was in a most unenviable state of mind. I cursed my own inconceivable weakness for having admitted the serpent into my house.

M. de —— came to me, and inquired affectionately if I were ill. 'My wife,' he said, 'is uneasy about you, and has sent me to see what is the matter.'

I answered that I was better, and we resumed our promenade in the garden. The kind Dubois managed to linger behind with M. de ——.

'I was not joking just now, dear friend,' said my adored one. 'Tell me what prevented me from seeing you last night?'

Before I could answer, my housekeeper's little maid came up bearing a letter from the widow. I put it in my pocket, saying I would read it at my leisure. Dinner was now announced, but I could not eat. I swallowed a cup of coffee.

A discussion with Madame de ——

When we were once more together in the garden, madame said to me: 'I am certain that that wicked woman inveigled you, and I greatly fear for my own reputation. This is my first intrigue, and it will be a lesson to me. I think you used to love me. Don't let me suppose that you have become my enemy. Tell me what has taken place, before you read the creature's letter.'

'Well, then, my sweet lady, I will tell you all. I was on my

way to you; as I entered the ante-room a woman seized me by the arm, and laid her hands on my lips to inspire silence. I thought that it was you, and did not speak one word.'

'But how could the monster have guessed that you were to meet me at that hour?'

'I cannot tell. One thing I know, that I am determined to stab her to her black heart, and kill myself afterwards.'

'Do you consider that in so doing you will ruin my good name, and make me the most miserable of women? Be calm, dear friend, it was not your fault. If possible, I love you all the better for it. Give me the letter, let me read it first.'

'Take it.'

She returned it to me, after having perused it twice, telling me to read it when I was alone. She and her husband returned to Soleure that evening. As soon as they had left, I hastened to my room. Here is a copy of the fiendish widow's epistle:—

'I left your house, sir, well pleased at having revenged myself on you for the marks of disdain you had heaped on me. I have unmasked you and your beautiful prude, who can no longer give herself airs of superiority towards me, or drape herself in a mantle of false virtue. You won't think her so wonderful any more, since you mistook me for her. I have done you some service in curing you of your absurd infatuation. I expect no gratitude for this. I even permit you to hate me, provided you leave me in peace. But in the future if you make yourself in any way obnoxious to me, I assure you I will publish the whole story. I have nothing to fear; I am independent, and my own mistress. I can afford to laugh at the whole world. Your beloved, on the contrary, has to maintain her reputation. If you would like to know how I outwitted you, it was very simple. It was the disposition of the rooms you gave your guests betrayed you. No one was in my secret, not even my maid. You can bury this history in silence if you like. I would advise you to do so.'

He finds out how he has been duped.

The effrontery of this miserable woman surpassed everything I had ever heard of or imagined. However, I thought the matter over seriously, and came to the conclusion that I had

best hold my tongue. I supped with my housekeeper, but felt so ashamed of myself that I did not venture to look her in the face.

He takes counsel with Dubois.

When Dubois came to bid me good morning, I noticed an air of constraint about her; and on my pressing her for the reason, she answered: 'I have something to confess. When you have heard it, you must either pardon me or send me away at once.'

'What the devil have you done? Tell me at once.'

'I have robbed you.'

'Robbed me? How? When? What? Can you return what you have taken? I did not think you capable of such a thing. I never forgive a thief or a liar.'

'Lord, sir, how hasty you are! I am sure you will forgive me when you know all. I robbed you about half an hour ago, and I will return the stolen article this very minute.'

'You are a strange creature, my dear. Well, I grant you plenary indulgence. Come, tell me what all this means?'

'Here is what I took.'

'What! the monster's letter? Have you read it?'

'That is my theft.'

'Little witch, you have committed a great crime, but I forgive you. Take this, and this, as the seal of my pardon, but be careful in future not to read my papers, or to touch them even; they contain secrets which do not concern me alone. And now, let us forget what this letter contained, and speak no more of it.'

'On the contrary, it is about this letter that I wish to speak to you. The immodest creature who wrote it has Madame de —— in her power; let us try and devise a means to checkmate her. I deserve your confidence, believe me.'

'You are right, dear friend,' said I, 'let us find a way of protecting a woman who, except for one single little trifling slip, has never deviated from the path of honour.'

'To begin with, then, can you trust le Duc?'

'My dear, he is a bit of a scoundrel and a rake, witty, audacious,

ignorant, and a most brazen liar. I am the only person who can manage him. He has one precious quality, that of blind obedience. He will do anything for me. When we are travelling and have to ford a river, he will undress, without my telling him, and swim over first, to see if I can pass in safety.'

'Why, he is a treasure. Then I have the pleasure of announcing to you, dear friend, that your beloved Madame de —— is in no danger. Sit down, and write to the impudent hussy that she is a liar; that you never left your room, and that you are going at once to make inquiries, and find out who it really was she saw. Let your letter be sent off at once—in an hour or two you will write another, or rather you will copy what I write for you.'

'My sweet Dubois, I begin to see daylight.'

He turns the tables on the malicious widow.

Here is the *billet-doux* that, by her advice, I addressed to the infernal hag:—

'The impudence of your letter consorts well with the rest of your character, and the perverse imagination which led you to pass three nights alone in an anteroom to ascertain the truth of facts existing only in your own disordered imagination. Learn, execrable female, that I did not leave my room all night. The Lord knows whom it was you saw. I shall find out, if the person really exists, and is not another creation of your satanic genius. You may thank Heaven that I did not open your letter until my guests had departed. Had I done so, I should, in my wrath, have rushed after you, and made it impossible for you to commit fresh infamies.'

Dubois thought some of the expressions a little strong, but we did not change them. Two hours after this first letter had been despatched, I wrote a second:—

'My valet has confessed that he was in the garden when he saw you enter Monsieur ——'s apartments. At first he suspected you of nefarious designs, and waited an hour for you to come out with your plunder; but as you did not

reappear, and had left the door open, he followed you, with the intention, he declares, of unmasking you. You mistook my servant for me—"by night all cats are grey"—but I must warn you that he is furious, and means to pay you a visit, and I shall not prevent him. I advise you to be gentle, patient, and generous with him, for he is resolute and revengeful—or, like the Spaniard he is, he will publish the whole affair. He will make his own conditions. I should advise you to accept them.'

Before this second letter had reached its destination I got the answer to my first. My excuse, said the widow, was a very ingenious one, but would in no wise profit me, for she was sure of her facts.

The following day I sent for le Duc. I asked him if he could ride into Soleure for me. On his answering yes, I explained the business I wanted him to transact for me. We agreed that he was to ask six hundred francs, but that if she refused to give as much. I would make up the sum. The scamp entered into the spirit of the thing, and it was easy to see by his droll remarks that he made a pretty shrewd guess at the state of affairs. When he had gone, Dubois came out laughing from behind the curtains where she was hiding. Very shortly after, a footman brought me a letter and a packet from the widow.

'Either what you say is true, or I am the victim of that fertile imagination of yours, by this time notorious throughout Europe; but in any case I must accept facts which I am not in a position to prove false. I beg you to remit to your valet the accompanying twenty-five louis. Remember that if this unsavoury joke becomes public, I can turn it in a direction little calculated to please you, and I will force a certain honest man we know of to open his eyes. For the rest, as I hope never to see you again, I am going to Lucerne to stay with my family. Be so good as to let me know if you receive this.'

I read this to my Dubois, who advised me to return the money immediately, and dictated to me the following reply:— Dubois dictates more letters.

'Our messengers crossed. I could not prevent my servant

from going to you, but I think this time you will not keep him two hours. I return the twenty-five louis, which you can give him yourself. I wish you a pleasant journey, and you can rest assured I shall avoid all occasions of meeting you. Le Duc has only spoken to me of his misadventure, and if you treat him well he will keep silent, the more so as his vanity is anything but flattered by what has happened.'

As the hours went by and le Duc did not return, I became very uneasy, although Dubois tried to quiet me by saying that the widow was probably not at home. There are some people so fortunately constituted that the mere possibility of calamity does not trouble them. I was like that until the age of thirty, and my imprisonment in 'The Leads.' Now that I am approaching my second childhood, everything looks black. Even a wedding seems a gloomy feast to me. At Prague, when Leopold the second was crowned, I said to myself, '*Nolo coronari.*'

About half-past nine my housekeeper saw le Duc in the moonlight coming along at a sharp trot. She ran behind the curtains again, for she wanted to hear everything the Spaniard said.

'I am dying of hunger, sir,' were his first words. 'I had to wait for that woman until half-past six. When she came in I was on the stairs. She told me to go away, she had nothing to say to me. "May be, madam," I answered, "but I have two words to say to you." "Follow me, then," she said. When we were alone I told her my errand. She listened patiently, and then went away for some minutes. When she returned, she handed me a packet, saying it contained twenty-five louis, which I could have, but that if I valued my life I had better keep my mouth shut. I promised I would be silent, and here I am.'

I spent the next morning writing an account of all that had passed to Madame de ——, and I sent her copies of the widow's letters, so as to set her mind at rest. I received a few lines in reply, saying that she and her husband, with M. de Chavigny, would visit me the following week.

My experience in this matter had already warned me that I could no longer hope to win Madame de ——. There are certain things which a woman cannot forgive a man. The very first *tête-à-tête* I had with her sufficed to confirm my suspicions. When I asked her if I might be allowed to cherish a hope that all was not over—

'Ah, my dear friend,' she said, 'let us think no more of that, I beg of you. I love you, and you would indeed be ungrateful if you ceased to love me; but let us stop there——'

Madame de —— bids him not to hope.

'I understand, and I am very miserable.'

'I am more miserable than you. Accursed widow! She has gone, and in a fortnight we are leaving for Bâle, where we shall stay till the end of November.'

I said, 'There is nothing for me but submission; my star has been unpropitious ever since I came to Switzerland. But at least, I have been able to shield your honour.'

'You have conquered the esteem and affection of my husband, and we shall always be good friends.'

'As you are leaving, I think I had better go first. I shall go to Italy, passing through Berne and Geneva.'

Acting on the advice of M. de Chavigny, I gave a reception and supper at Soleure before leaving, at which all the notabilities of the town were present.

He leaves Soleure.

M. Lebel brought me my bills, which I paid. I kept him to dine with us, and was pleased to see that he and Dubois seemed very good friends. Indeed, on leaving, he asked my permission to embrace her *à la française*. She did not say no. His acquaintance, she said afterwards, might be useful, as he was in a position to recommend her should she ever leave my service; though, indeed, she was now no longer my servant, but my beloved mistress. At four o'clock next morning we started on our journey.

CHAPTER XXIV

A MEMORY OF HENRIETTE

I LIVED happily at Berne with my dear Dubois, and we agreed never to part. She promised to forgive me beforehand any infidelity I might commit, always provided I took her into my confidence. That, I consider, is the type of woman with whom a man can live happily; but such happiness was not for me. After we had been in Berne about three weeks, Dubois received a letter from Soleure. It was from Lebel. She gave it me to read, and sat down in front of me so as to study my face as I read it. He asked her if she would marry him.

Lebel proposes to the housekeeper.

'I deferred my proposition,' he said, 'until I had put my affairs in order. I find I am rich enough to live at Berne, or elsewhere, without working.'

He ended by saying that anything she had would be settled on her, and that furthermore he would constitute her a dowry of a hundred thousand francs.

'Dear friend,' said I, 'you are mistress of your destiny; but if you leave me I shall be the most miserable of men.'

'I will write,' said she, 'and tell him, politely but plainly, that I love you, that I belong to you, and that therefore I cannot accept the proposal he so kindly makes me.'

'Excellent. But yet, dear heart, I own it—this letter saddens me.'

'And why, my beloved?'

'Because I have not a hundred thousand francs to offer you, now—this very moment.'

'I despise them, dearest; and were you a beggar, I should be glad to share your poverty.'

We fell into each other's arms. We were happy in our mutual love; yet somehow, I know not why, a touch of melancholy stole into our hearts. It is absurd to say that passion is augmented by depression and languor. It is not so. Laughter and lightness of heart feed love best. The next day she wrote to Lebel, telling him that, though his proposition flattered her, she loved me too much to leave me. At the same time I addressed a letter to M. de Chavigny, half sentiment, half philosophy. I did not deny that I adored the woman Lebel desired for his wife, but I added that as a man of honour I would rather die than stand in the way of her permanent happiness. Lebel did not answer Dubois, but M. de Chavigny wrote me a letter of four pages; he spoke as a philosopher and a man of the world. Were I, he said, able to assure my mistress's independence at my death, I should be justified in refusing to give her up, but I was young and had no intention of binding myself indissolubly. I ought, therefore, to consent to a union which would secure her happiness.

'Sooner or later you will both of you feel,' said he, 'that you were wrong to let this opportunity slip; your love will turn to friendship, and mutual remorse will overtake you both. Meantime, there is no hurry. Lebel can wait.'

I showed the letter to Dubois, who read it attentively.

He does not know what to say.

'What do you think of it, my dear?' I asked.

'I think the ambassador is right; he says there is no hurry. I don't myself believe that you and I shall ever be indifferent to each other, but there is no knowing?'

'Indifferent? Never!'

'Friends, then, which is worse. Yes, de Chavigny is right: remorse may come to torture us when love has dwindled away.'

'Then, adorable woman, let us get married to-morrow, and counteract our natural depravity!'

'Yes, my dear, we will marry, all in good time; but don't let us be in a hurry, lest, indeed, marriage prove the grave

of love. Let us go to Lausanne, which is a little town where you will be fêted and made much of while you are there. I must stay with my mother. The Duc of Rosburi, who used to pester me with his attentions, is there; and I am well known to all the nobility and gentry of the place, so that my presence in your hotel would give rise to scandal.'

I agreed with her in all she said. One must always be careful of appearances; so the next day she went off to Lausanne, and it was arranged I was to join her there later.

'When you leave Lausanne,' she said, 'I will join you at Geneva, and from thence we can travel about together as long as love lasts.'

He visits the great Haller.

I arranged to stay at Roche on my way to Lausanne, so that I might visit the celebrated Haller, to whom I had a letter of introduction.

He was a big man, six feet tall, and broad in proportion—a physical and intellectual Colossus. He received me with great affability, and opened his mind, answering all my questions precisely and modestly. Indeed, I think the latter attribute was rather overdone; he had a way of showing me scientific marvels, and at the same time appearing by his manner to seek instruction from me. He was a great physiologist, a great doctor, and a great anatomist, and had made numerous discoveries in microcosmy.

Some time previously, Frederick the Great had proscribed the study and use of Latin in his dominions. Haller wrote to him, saying that a sovereign who should succeed in suppressing the language of Cicero and Virgil would only raise an everlasting monument to his own ignorance. Men of letters must have one common language, and certainly of the dead languages Latin is the best, as neither Greek nor Arabic are adaptable to the genius of modern times.

In the three days I spent with this justly celebrated man we discussed every subject but religion, although I should much have liked his opinion on this point.

When I told him I was looking forward to seeing M. de

Voltaire, he said I was quite right to do so; and he added, though without bitterness—

'M. de Voltaire is a man who deserves to be known; although, contrary to the laws of physics, many people have found him greater from a distance.'

M. Haller's opinion of M. de Voltaire.

When I bade him farewell he asked me to write and tell him what I thought of the great Voltaire, and that was the beginning of our correspondence. I have twenty-two letters from Haller, the last written six months before his death.

I went straight to my friend's house when I arrived at Lausanne. I found her with her mother, but was rather surprised to see Lebel there as well. Dubois, with a cry of joy, sprang into my arms, and kissed me tenderly. I asked Lebel how the ambassador was, and how long he had been in Lausanne. He answered me very amiably and very politely that his master was well, and that he had only been a few hours in the town; that on going to pay his respects to the mother of Madame Dubois, he had been agreeably surprised to find the daughter there.

'You know,' he added, 'what I want. I must leave here to-morrow; but, as soon as you decide, write to me, and I will come and take her to Soleure, where we will be married.'

Nothing could be clearer or more straightforward than this. I said I would let Dubois do as she liked. She interrupted me, and cried that she would never leave me unless I sent her away. Lebel said he must have a more definite answer, and I told him that in ten days or so we would let him know our decision.

Meantime, I presented all my letters of introduction and was well received everywhere. It was a continual round of dinners, suppers, balls, and routs. I got tired of it, and wanted to get off to Geneva. Every one pressed letters of introduction to M. de Voltaire on me; one would have thought he was generally adored; but no, he was detested, because of his satirical humour. 'But, ladies,' said I, 'you all played in his pieces; was he not grateful, and affable to you at rehearsals?'

'No, indeed; he was for ever scolding us. Nothing was ever right: wrong pronunciations, wrong intonations, wrong inflexions, and I don't know what all! He frightened us. If one of us laughed amiss, if one of us only pretended to cry in Alzire——'

'But did he insist on real tears?'

'Certainly; he was very particular about that. I said one day that his words were not in themselves moving enough!'

'And then he laughed?'

'Much worse—he sneered.'

'And yet you all forgave him?'

'On the contrary, we packed him off. He left the house he had hired, and hid himself in the one where you will find him. He won't come to our parties now!'

'So you still invite the man you dismissed?'

'We can't do without him, he is so clever; but we wanted to give him a lesson, that was all. When you see him ask him what he thinks of us at Lausanne. He will laugh; that is his way.'

I often saw Lord Rosburi, the man who had vainly made love to Dubois. I never knew such a silent young man, yet they said he was no fool. He bowed oftener than he spoke, and when he did answer a question, in good enough French, he looked as if he wished his interlocutor at the devil. Once, when I was dining with him, I asked him some details about his own country. He answered me civilly, in five or six little sentences, blushing like a girl. But the celebrated Fox—a lad of twenty—who was there too, said something to him in English once, which actually made him laugh. Eight months later I saw the Duke again at Turin. The wife of a banker there had managed to unloose his tongue.

He meets Charles James Fox at the age of twenty.

On the tenth day of my sojourn at Lausanne came a letter from Lebel to the mother. I read it aloud to the two women. He begged her to impress on me that if I found it difficult to separate from her now, how much more so would it be later on. He in no way wished to withdraw his proposal, he said,

but he should like to be able to say he had received his wife from her mother's hands in her mother's house.

'Write to Lebel,' said Dubois bravely, 'to fetch me at once, or to give up all thoughts of me.'

Then there was a silence.

'If I tell him to think no more of you, 'tis I who must marry you, and at once.'

'No!'

So saying, she rose and left the room.

He gives up Dubois for conscience' sake.

For a quarter of an hour I turned the matter over in my mind, weighing the pros and cons—and still I felt that my love was not equal to the sacrifice. She might never have such a chance again! I took advantage of a sudden movement of generosity, and, taking my pen, wrote to Lebel that the widow Dubois, mistress of her own actions, had decided to accept his offer; that I had no right to oppose the match, and must congratulate him on a piece of good fortune, which, nevertheless, I envied him. I begged him to come at once to take her from her mother's hands.

Having signed the letter, I took it to my housekeeper.

'Read this, dear,' said I, 'and, if you approve of it, put your name beside mine.'

She read it several times, while her mother burst into tears. Then she looked at me sadly and tenderly, took the paper and signed.

As soon as the letter was despatched by a trusty messenger, I took her in my arms.

'Farewell,' I said, embracing her sadly. 'Farewell; we will not see each other again till Lebel is here.'

I went back to my inn devoured by grief. My recent act of self-abnegation acted as a stimulus to my love, and I had a violent spasm of regret which made me have to take to my bed. On the evening of the fourth day from the sending of the letter, Lebel arrived.

In the last interview we had together she put her old wedding-ring on my finger, and asked me never to part with

it. I gave her a ring and a roll of bank-notes to the value of a hundred louis. My horses were waiting at the door; she came downstairs with me, and whispered to me that Lebel had her esteem but not her heart, and away I went.

I alighted at the Hôtel des Balances at Geneva. It was the 20th of August 1760. I happened to go idly up to a window in the inn, and my eyes fell on a pane of glass on which some one had scrawled with a diamond, '*Thou too wilt forget Henriette.*'

A memory of Henriette inspires.

My hair stood on end, as the recollection of the day when Henriette wrote those words, thirteen years before, flashed into my mind. We had lodged in that very room when she left me to return to France. A thousand memories crowded on me. Sweet, noble, true Henriette, whom I had loved so dearly, where was she now? I had never heard of her. I had never tried to hear of her. Comparing myself as I was at the moment of reading these words with the old self who had written them, I was forced to admit that I had been more nearly worthy of her in the past than I was now. I could still love passionately, but some of the delicacy and power of idealisation, which alone justifies the excesses of passion, had passed from me. But it seemed to me as though the memory of Henriette gave me back something of all these; and had I known where to look for her, I should have started then and there in quest of her, in spite of the strict prohibition she had imposed on me.

After dinner I went with M. Villars-Chandieu to Voltaire's house. He was just rising from the table as we arrived, surrounded by a little court of lords and ladies, and I was formally presented.

CHAPTER XXV

VOLTAIRE

'M. de Voltaire,' said I, 'this is the proudest day of my life. I have been your pupil for twenty years, and my heart rejoices to see my master.' Conversation with Voltaire.

'Sir, honour me in the same way for another twenty years, and at the end of that time bring me my fees.'

'Most willingly, if you will promise to wait for me.'

This Voltairean sally raised a laugh, but I was not put out of countenance. I expected some such speech, and I was on the look out for my revenge.

Some one then presented to him his recently arrived Englishmen.

'English, are they?' said Voltaire; 'I wish I was.'

I thought the compliment mistaken, for the Englishmen must needs express the wish that they were French; and it is allowable surely for a man to put his own nation first when it comes to choosing.

Voltaire spoke to me again, saying that as I was Venetian, I must know Count Algarotti.

'I knew him in Padua seven years ago, and what most attracted me in him was his professed admiration of M. de Voltaire.'

'You flatter me; but surely his claim to general esteem does not rest on the fact of his admiring any particular person?'

'That is how he made his name. He constituted himself an admirer of Newton, and made it possible for ladies to talk

learnedly about light. He has not succeeded as completely as de Fontenelle in his *Plurality of Worlds*, still he has succeeded.'

'Do the Italians approve his style?'

'No, for it is full of Gallicisms.'

'But do not these French expressions embellish your language?'

'They spoil it; just as French, interlarded with Italian or German, even though M. de Voltaire himself wrote it, would be horrible.'

'You are right. The integrity of a language must be maintained. May I ask to what branch of literature you devote yourself?'

'To none; but I read enormously, and I travel to improve my knowledge of human nature.'

'That is one way of learning it; but the book is unwieldy. You would do it more easily by reading history.'

'Yes, if history did not lie. Besides, history bores one, while the world as it goes is more interesting. Horace, whom I know by heart, is my guide.'

'You are fond of poetry?'

'I am devoted to it.'

'Have you written many sonnets?'

'A dozen which I value, and two or three thousand, perhaps, which I have forgotten.'

'The Italians have a mania for the sonnet form; and yet its prescribed limits and length make it a veritable Procrustean bed; you have few good ones, and as for us we have none, but that is the fault of our language.'

'And also of the French genius, which imagines that an expanded thought necessarily loses force and brilliancy.'

'You are not of that opinion?'

'Pardon me; it is only necessary to carefully select the thought to be expressed. A *bon mot*, for instance, is not matter for a sonnet; it is only good for an epigram.'

'Who is your favourite Italian poet?'

'Ariosto; but I cannot say I love him *more* than the others, for he is the *only* one I love. All pale before Ariosto. When I read what you said of him fifteen years ago, I predicted that you would retract it all when you had read him.'

'I have read him, but when I was young, and knew your language only superficially. I was prejudiced by Italian *savants* who adored Tasso, and I unfortunately published a criticism which I thought was mine, but which was only an echo. Now I love your Ariosto.'

'O M. de Voltaire, I breathe again! But for pity's sake have the book excommunicated in which you turn that great man to ridicule.'

'Useless, for my books are all excommunicated. But I will give you a proof of my recantation.'

Voltaire recites Ariosto to him.

He then recited from memory two long extracts from the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth cantos, without missing a line; and I cried out, when he had finished, that all Italy should hear of this! Greedy of praise, he next day gave me the translation he had made of the stanza beginning—

'Quindi avvien che tra principi e signori.'[1]

Madame Denis, Voltaire's niece, asked me if I thought her uncle had chosen some of the poet's finest lines.

'Yes, madame, but not *the* finest.'

'You think, then,' said Voltaire, 'that it was his more human lines which won for him the title *Divine?*'

'Yes, certainly.'

[1] Voltaire translated the stanza as follows:—

'Les papes, les Césars, apaisant leur querelle,
Jurent sur l'Évangile une paix éternelle;
Vous les voyez l'un de l'autre ennemis;
C'était pour se tromper qu'ils s'étaient réunis;
Nul serment n'est gardé, nul accord n'est sincère.
Quand la bouche a parlé, le cœur dit le contraire.
Du ciel qu'ils attestaient ils bravaient le courroux:
L'intérêt est le Dieu qui les gouverne tous.'

'And which are those lines which you consider the best of all?'

'The thirty-six last stanzas of the twenty-third song, in which he describes how Roland went mad. Since the beginning of time, no one has described the symptoms more accurately.'

'Perhaps M. Casanova would recite them to us,' said Madame Denis.

He recites Ariosto to Voltaire.

When I had finished, tears were in all eyes; every one was sobbing. M. de Voltaire and Madame Denis fell on my neck.

'It is odd,' said Madame Denis, 'that Rome has not put the song of Roland on the Index!'

'Rome was so far from condemning it,' said Voltaire, 'that Leo the Tenth excommunicated beforehand any one who should dare to censure it. The two great families of d'Este and Médicis upheld Ariosto. Without their protection it is more than likely he would have been interdicted.'

Then some one spoke of *L'Écossaise*. Voltaire said that if I would play in it at his house, he would himself play the part of Montrose. I began to excuse myself, but he would not hear of my leaving next day.

'Did you come to talk to me, or to hear me talk?'

'To talk to you, certainly; but, above all, to have you talk to me.'

'Then stay at least three days longer. Come and dine with me every day, and we will have long discussions.'

I could not refuse, and, wishing the company good night, I withdrew.

Next morning young Fox came to see me, with the two Englishmen[1] I had seen the preceding evening. We played cards, and I lost fifty louis; after this we went round the town in a band, and dined together with Voltaire, where we saw the Duc de Villars, who had just come for the sake of consulting

[1] In 1767 Charles James Fox's travelling companions were Lord Fitzwilliam and Mr. Uxedale Price—boys both. In 1768 he travelled with Lords Kildare and Carlisle by Parma and Bologna to Florence and Rome. Casanova's dates, as usual, do not coincide.

Dr. Tronchin, who for the last ten years had been keeping him alive by artificial means. Voltaire tried to draw me out on the subject of the Venetian government, but seeing that the subject was distasteful to me, he took my arm and led me into his garden. The river ran at the end of the main walk.

'That is the Rhone,' said he, facetiously; 'the Rhone, which I am sending as a present to France!'

By and by the Duc de Villars and the famous Dr. Tronchin[1] joined us. The doctor was polished, eloquent, and a learned man, a pupil of Boerhaave, whose memory he cherished. He had neither the jargon, the charlatanism, nor the self-sufficiency generally characteristic of the faculty. His theory of medicine was based on diet, and to order a strict regimen in those days evidenced some strength of mind. I was assured, though I could hardly believe it, that he had cured a consumptive patient with the milk of an ass, having previously subjected the animal to thirty potent frictions of mercury, administered by four strong porters!

As for Villars, he was the exact opposite of Tronchin; in face and figure he looked like a woman dressed up as a man, and a seventy-year-old woman at that. He was thin and withered, his cheeks were plastered with paint, his lips covered with carmine, his eyebrows painted, his teeth were made of ivory, and his head was covered with an enormous wig strongly scented with *ambre*; in his button-hole he wore an immense bunch of flowers, which reached to his chin. He affected slow and graceful gestures, and spoke in so low a voice one could not always hear what he said. He was very polite and very affable, and affected in manners, as the mode was under the Regency. He was governor of Provence, and his back was eaten away by cancer. He would have been dead and buried

[1] Member of a Huguenot family who took refuge in Geneva at the time of Saint Bartholomew. He was sent at sixteen to England to Lord Bolingbroke, a relation of his, and was educated partly at Cambridge and partly in Holland under Boerhaave. He was the first to practise inoculation, and was consulted by all the celebrities in Europe. He died in 1781.

many a long year, in the strict order of nature, but Tronchin kept him alive by feeding his sores with slices of veal. Without this nourishment the cancer would have perished, and he would have died with it. This may be called an artificial existence!

I accompanied M. de Voltaire to his bedroom, where he changed his wig and put on another cap; he was never seen without a cap, for he was very subject to colds. I saw on his table the *Summa* of Saint Thomas and the *Secchia Rapita* of Tassoni. He opened a cupboard, and I saw about a hundred great sheaves of papers.

'There are nearly fifty thousand letters there,' said he, 'all of which I have answered.'

'Have you kept a copy of your replies?'

'It is my valet's duty to copy them.'

'I know several booksellers who would give a good deal for these treasures.'

'Yes; but beware of booksellers when you want to publish anything, especially if you are not known; they are more dangerous than the pirates of Morocco!'

'I shall have nothing to do with these gentlemen until I am old.'

'Then they will be the scourge of your old age!'

We then returned to the salon, where for two hours Voltaire displayed all the resources of his brilliant and fertile mind, delighting his audience, in spite of his caustic humour, which spared no one. Yet accompanied by his peculiarly sweet smile, his sallies lost their bitterness.

His household was maintained on a generous footing, and his table was liberally spread, which is more than one can say of poets in general. He was sixty-six years old, and had a hundred and twenty thousand francs a year. It was wrongly said that he enriched himself by cheating his publishers; on the contrary, they cheated him, with the exception of the Cramers, whose fortune he made. He cared more for fame than anything else, and would often give away his works, on condition they should be printed and circulated. During

the few days I was with him I witnessed one of those acts of generosity; he made a present of *La Princesse de Babylone*, a charming story which he wrote in three days.

He dines at *Les Délices*.

I dined at *Les Délices*, but Voltaire was absent. Madame Denis, however, more than made up for his absence. She had plenty of taste, tact, and intelligence, and hated the King of Prussia, whom she called a villain. She questioned me about my pretty housekeeper, and congratulated me on having married her off to an honest man. Although I know now she was right, I was then far from being of her opinion; the wound was too recent.

M. de Voltaire appeared about five o'clock with a letter in his hand.

'Do you know the Marquis Albergati Capacelli and the Count Paradisi?' he asked.

'I know Albergati by reputation; he is one of the forty at Bologna, where the forty are fifty!'

'Mercy, what an enigma; well, he has sent me Goldoni's plays, some Bologna sausages, the translation of my *Tancrède*, and he says he is coming to see me!'

'He won't come, he is not so foolish.'

'Foolish! what do you mean? Is it foolish to come to see *me*?'

'He knows he would be risking too much; but if he came you would see what a fool *he* is, and all illusion concerning him would be at an end.'

'And Goldoni?'

'Goldoni is the Italian Molière.'

'Why does he call himself the poet of the Duke of Parma?'

'Probably to prove that he has his weak side as well as any other man. He also calls himself a barrister, though he is none; he is the author of some good comedies, and that is all. He does not shine in society.'

'I have been told that he is poor, and would leave Venice, but that he fears to displease the managers of the theatres where his plays are acted.'

'There was some talk of giving him a pension, but the project fell through; they were afraid the moment his living was secured he would leave off writing.'

'Cumes refused to give Homer a pension, for fear that all blind men would ask one!'

We passed the day together. He thanked me effusively for the *Macaronicon* I had sent him, and presented me to a Jesuit named Adam, whispering to me, 'Not Adam, the first man!'

I was told that they played backgammon together, and when Voltaire lost he would throw dice and dice-box at the Jesuit's head. If all the members of that order were treated with as little consideration we should fairly neutralise them, but no such luck!

Conversation with Voltaire.

The next day I looked forward to spending happily with Voltaire, but I was disappointed, for the great man was in the vilest of tempers, bitter, caustic, and quarrelsome, though he knew that it was my last day. He thanked me ironically for my present of Merlin Cocci's book. 'You meant well, I am sure,' he said, 'but I can't thank you, for I have wasted four hours over it.'

I mastered myself sufficiently to reply calmly that perhaps he would come round to my way of thinking some day, and in support of this remark I quoted several examples of erroneous first impressions.

'All that is very true,' he answered, 'but as for your Merlin, I give him up. I put him on a par with the *Pucelle* of Chapelain.'

'Which every one admires, in spite of its faulty versification. Chapelain was a poet, though he wrote bad verse. I appreciate his genius.'

My frankness evidently vexed him. As for *La Pucelle* I knew that there was a disgusting poem of the same name in circulation, attributed to Voltaire, but that he disowned it. I thought that for this reason he would discontinue the argument, but on the contrary he became more emphatic, and I kept pace with him.

'Chapelain,' I said, 'at anyrate presented his subject agreeably, without shocking the modesty or the piety of his readers, and on this point my master, Crébillon, agrees with me.'

'Crébillon! much he knew about it! And by what right, may I ask, do you call him *master*?'

'He taught me French, in less than two years, and as a mark of gratitude I translated his *Rhadamiste* into Italian alexandrines. I am the first Italian who has dared to use that metre.'

'The first! I beg your pardon, that honour belongs to my friend, Pierre Jacques Martelli.'

'I am sorry to have to contradict you.'

'But I possess his works, printed at Bologna.'

'But not in alexandrines; his verses have all fourteen feet, and the alternative masculine and feminine rhyme is not observed. Nevertheless, I must own that he thought he was writing in alexandrines, and his preface made me split with laughter. Perhaps you have not read it?'

'Not read it, sir! I have a mania for prefaces; I never miss one, and Martelli proves that his verses produce on Italian ears the effect which alexandrines produce on ours.'

'That is the laughable part of it; your masculine verses have twelve feet, and the feminine ones thirteen. All Martelli's lines have fourteen feet. He must have been deaf, or had a very bad ear.'

'You follow our theory of versification uncompromisingly?'

'Yes, in spite of all difficulties.'

'And what is the effect of your innovation?'

'It has not been a success, for no one knows how to recite my verses; but I hope to recite them myself, before our literary coteries.'

'Do you remember any of your *Rhadamiste*? I should be glad to hear it!'

I recited the scene which ten years before I had recited to Crébillon. Voltaire listened with pleasure, and when I had finished he repeated some pages from his *Tancrède*, which he

had not yet published, and which was rightly considered a masterpiece.

Had we stopped there everything would have been well, but we fell to discussing Horace. He said Horace was a great writer, and had laid down precepts which would never grow old. On which I answered that he himself had violated one of these precepts, though in a masterly way.

'Which one, if you please?'

'You do not write *contentus paucis lectoribus.*'

Voltaire on Horace.

'No, but if Horace had had to fight the hydra of superstition, as I have, he also would have written for the whole world—not for a mere section of it.'

'You might, I think, spare yourself the trouble of combating what you will never succeed in destroying.'

'The work I cannot finish; others will. I shall have the credit of being the first.'

'Very good, and now suppose you do succeed in destroying superstition, with what will you replace it?'

'I like that! When I have delivered humanity from a ferocious monster that devours it, what shall I put in that monster's place, say you?'

'Superstition does not devour humanity; it is, on the contrary, necessary to its existence.'

'Necessary to its existence! That is a horrible piece of blasphemy which the future will avenge. I love mankind; I would like to see it, as I am, free and happy. Superstition and liberty cannot go hand in hand. Do you think that slavery makes for happiness?'

'What you want then is the supremacy of the people?'

'God forbid! The masses must have a king to govern them.'

'In that case then superstition is necessary, for the people would never give a mere man the right to rule them.'

'Don't speak of kings; the name implies despotism, which I hate as I hate slavery.'

'What would you have, then? If you admit one man as ruler, that man must be king.'

'I want a sovereign ruling a free people, and bound to them by reciprocal conditions, which should prevent any inclination to despotism on his part.'

Voltaire's republicanism, Casanova's royalism.

'Addison says that such a sovereign, such a chief, is impossible. I agree with Hobbes, between two evils one must choose the lesser. A nation freed from superstition would be a nation of philosophers, and philosophers do not know how to obey. There is no happiness for a people that is not crushed, kept down and held in leash.'

'Horrible! And you are of the people! If you had read me you would see that I prove Superstition to be the arch-enemy of kings.'

'If I have read you! I have read you and re-read you, especially those parts where I differ from you. Your master passion is love of humanity. This love blinds you. Love humanity, but love it as it is. Humanity is not susceptible to the benefits you wish to shower on it; they would only tend to make it more wretched and more perverse. Do not seek to destroy the beast which you say devours it; it loves the beast. Do you not remember how Don Quixote had to defend himself against the galley-slaves when he tried to set them free?'

'I am sorry you have such a bad opinion of your fellow-creatures. By the way, do you consider that you enjoy liberty in Venice?'

'Such freedom as can be enjoyed under an aristocratic government. We are not as free as the English, but we are satisfied.'

'Even when they put you in "The Leads"?'

'My imprisonment was an act of despotism, I own, but I know, too, that I abused my liberty. I sometimes think the government was right in shutting me up without the usual formalities of a trial.'

'Nevertheless you escaped!'

'I was within my rights, as the government was within its rights.'

'Admirable! but according to that no one in Venice can be free.'

'Perhaps not, but to consider oneself free is to be free.'

'There I cannot agree with you: we look at liberty from a different standpoint. The aristocracy, even members of the government, are not free in your country. For instance, they cannot even travel without permission.'

'True, but it is by virtue of a law they have imposed upon themselves. Would you say that an inhabitant of Berne is not free because of the sumptuary laws, when he is actually his own legislator?'

'Well, let the people everywhere have the privilege of making their own laws.'

Suddenly, without any transition, he asked me where I last came from.

'From Roche. I did not want to leave Switzerland without having seen Haller. In my travels I pay homage to the great men of the countries I pass through. I kept you to the last as a *bonne bouche*.'

'Were you pleased with Haller?'

'I spent three of the happiest days of my life with him.'

'I congratulate you.'

'I am glad you do him justice. I am sorry he is not so fair towards you.'

'Ah, ha! perhaps we are both of us mistaken.'

The quickness of this repartee raised a hearty laugh among the listeners.

We spoke no more of literature, and I remained silent until after Voltaire had retired, when I then left, thinking, fool that I was, that I had reduced this intellectual athlete to reason. But I cherished an enduring spite against him, and for ten years criticised everything he wrote. I am sorry for it to-day, though on re-reading my censures I think I was right on many points. I ought to have held my tongue. I ought to have reflected that but for his satirical habit, which made me hate him, I should have considered him sublime.

I spent part of that night and part of the following day writing down my conversations with Voltaire. I had matter enough to make a volume, and only give a small fragment here. The next day I left for Aix-en-Savoie.

Aix is an ugly village, but there are mineral springs there which attract a good many people towards the end of the summer. I was dining quietly and quickly, for I wanted to go on to Chambéry, when a crowd of fine people came in and sat down to the tables. From their remarks I gathered they were there for the waters.

I had finished while they were still at the first course. I approached one of the ladies, and congratulated her on the effect of the treatment. Her appearance, I said, would revive the appetite even of a man who had just dined.

'I defy you to prove it,' she answered.

Whereupon I seated myself beside her. She handed me a piece of the roast which had just been served her, which I devoured like a fasting man. I continued to eat everything she offered me, and told le Duc, who was behind my chair, to order some champagne. I offered it first to the lady and then to the other guests.

'You are possessed of some extraordinary power,' I said to her, 'for I have never in my life eaten two dinners in one day.'

'You only did it from pique; you won't eat any supper.'

'I'll wager you what you like that I will.'

A wager with La Zeroli.

'Let us wager a good supper.'

The other guests entered into the joke, and I told le Duc to tell my coachman I should not leave that evening.

'I am to order the supper,' said the lady.

'Agreed—it is only right that who pays should order. I warn you beforehand I mean to eat as much as you do, and I shall win.'

I had a large, bare, uncomfortable garret assigned me, but the host told me, with many apologies, that he had no other room vacant. As I was leaving my room a man accosted me;

bowing politely, he informed me he was my neighbour, and offered to show me the village, beginning with the springs. He was a tall, thin creature, about fifty years old, who might have been handsome once, but whose excessive politeness should have roused my suspicions. He told me the names of the people I had seen at dinner.

'I am the only one,' he said, 'who has really come here for the waters. I am consumptive, and grow thinner and thinner each day. If this place does me no good, I shall not live long.'

'Then all the others come here to amuse themselves?'

'And to gamble. They are all professional players.'

'Are they French?'

'They are Piedmontese or Savoyards. I am the only real Frenchman here. I come from Lorraine. My father, who is over eighty, is the Marquis Désarmoises. He goes on living just to spite me, for, as I married without his permission, he has disinherited me.'

'But in spite of your father's rigour, you live quite at your ease?'

'On the contrary. I have a small pension which I hand over to my wife, but I am skilled in most games, and win, on the whole, more than I lose. I am a man of honour: I don't harm any one, and I can depend on my sword! The gentleman who took the bank as you left the dining-room is the Marquis de Prié; you might have seen him at Venice, where he was ambassador. The lady you spoke to is the wife of the Chevalier Zeroli; all the others are counts, marquises, barons. They are all gamblers, as I said, and very sharp, for they are all in league. They think they have got a fine catch in you, and you had better be careful.'

He loses at faro.

We returned to the inn, where we found the company playing at different games. I lost forty sequins at faro, to Zeroli, after which supper was announced. The lady paid for the supper with the best possible grace, and we all became exceedingly lively. I ought to have left then and there, but I had not the strength of mind.

After supper the Marquis de Prié made a bank of about three hundred sequins. I laid fifty gold lisbons in front of me, and modestly announced that when I had lost them, I should go to bed. At the third deal I had broken the bank.

'I will make another bank of two hundred louis,' said the marquis.

'I would accept your challenge,' said I, 'but I have decided to leave to-morrow early.'

As I was going to bed, Désarmoises came to me and begged me to lend him three hundred francs. I was expecting as much, and I gave them to him. He thanked me effusively, and told me Madame Zeroli had pledged her word to make me stay at Aix.

I smiled, and told him my carriage was ordered for five o'clock in the morning.

'I wager you will not get off,' he answered, and left me, laughing.

At five o'clock in the morning the coachman came to tell me that one of the horses was ill. I sent le Duc to order post horses; the landlord returned with him to say it was impossible to give them me, as the Marquis de Prié had engaged them all. I told him I would dine at his house, but he must find me horses for two o'clock.

I went down to the stable, where I found my coachman weeping beside one of his horses, which lay unable to move on its litter. I believed his story and paid him handsomely, and then went off to the springs.

And here I must relate a most extraordinary and romantic adventure which befell me, and which is every word of it true.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SECOND M. M.

The Nun of Chambéry.

As I drew near the fountain I saw two nuns coming towards me. Their veils were down, but by their figures and their way of walking, I judged one to be young and the other old. So far there was nothing to be surprised at, but their habit struck me, for it was the same as that worn by my dear M. M., whom I had last seen on the 24th of July 1755, five years previous to the time at which I am now writing. This fact excited my curiosity. The nuns turned across the fields, and I doubled, so as to cut in front of them and meet them face to face. Imagine my surprise when I perceived that the younger one, who was walking ahead, and who had raised her veil, offered to my astonished eyes the living image of M. M.! I made a step towards her, when, lowering her veil, she turned to one side and took a by-path, so as to avoid me.

I took into account all M. M.'s possible reasons for this course of action, and retracing my steps, I followed her from a distance until I saw her enter a mean, little, lonely house. This was enough for me. I went back to the springs to gather what information I could.

'M. M.,' I thought, 'must have escaped from her convent. She must be mad to wear her religious habit, or perhaps she has had a dispensation from Rome to come here for the waters, which would account for her habit, and for the nun who is with her. Perhaps the waters are only a pretext. She may be in trouble, in which case I will do what I can for her. I will show her that I am worthy of her love.'

At the springs I met the doctor, who told me the waters of Aix were the best thing in the world for me. I asked him if he was attending the pretty nun I had just seen.

'She is taking the waters,' he said, 'but she speaks to no one. She stays with a peasant woman some little way out in the country.'

I went back to the cottage, where it seemed as though the god of love himself had been my messenger, and flown before me, for, as I drew near, the peasant woman came out.

'Sir,' she said, without waiting for me to speak, 'the young nun begs you to come back this evening at nine o'clock, when the lay sister will be asleep, and she can speak to you freely.'

My heart leapt with joy. I gave the woman a louis, and promised I would be there precisely at nine.

The moon was shining brightly as I went for the third time that day to the cottage. I had taken my pistols with me, and wore my sword, for I had not quite laid aside suspicion. About twenty paces from the house I was met by the peasant woman, who told me the nun could not come downstairs. I must get in through the window by a ladder. As there was no light in the room, I hesitated, but a voice which I thought I recognised cried out: 'Come up, do not be afraid.'

They mutually mistake each other.

The window was not very high above the ground, and in another moment I had clasped the nun in my arms, and thinking I clasped my dear M. M., I covered her face with kisses. 'Why,' I asked in Venetian, 'are you in the dark? Tell me how you came here, my heart? Quick, quick, I am longing to know what has brought you to Aix?'

The voice which answered was not that of M. M. It resembled hers, but yet it was not hers, and the words I heard were even more puzzling.

'I understand hardly any Venetian,' it said, 'and you do not need a light to tell me what M. de Coudert has decided to do for me in my present most painful position.'

'You surprise me, madame. I do not know M. de Coudert.

What! you are not a Venetian? You are not the nun I saw this morning?'

'I have made some mistake. Yes, I am the nun you saw this morning, but I am a Frenchwoman. In the name of God, sir, I implore you be discreet, do not betray me! Go away, I must have nothing to say to you! Speak low, for if the lay sister wakes I shall be lost.'

'Madame, I am discretion itself. The cause of the mistake lies in your extraordinary resemblance to a nun of your order who was, and always will be, most dear to me. This is why I followed you. I beg you to pardon the effusiveness of my greeting.'

'You astonished, but did not offend me. Ah, why am I *not* the nun in whom you are interested? I am on the brink of a precipice.'

'If money, madame, is of any use to you, I shall be honoured by your accepting ten louis.'

'Thank you; it is not money I need. Allow me to return you the louis you sent me this morning.'

'Madame, I implore you not to think I could be so wanting in respect to you. I gave the louis to the peasant woman for herself. But you excite my curiosity; will you tell me what the sorrow is that money cannot redress?'

'Perhaps God has sent you to assist me—perhaps after all you can give me some advice?'

'I am entirely at your service, and will listen to you with the greatest interest. Let us sit down.'

'Alas! there is no seat here but the bed.'

'We will stand then—but go on.'

The story of the second M. M.

'I come from Grenoble. My relations forced me to take the veil at Chambéry. Two years after my profession M. de Coudert made my acquaintance. I received him in the convent garden at night. After a while I found myself in a terrible position. M. de Coudert bribed a doctor to say I should die if I did not go to Aix; the waters here, he declared, were the only remedy for the illness from which I was supposed to

be suffering. A princess, a friend of M. de Coudert, was let into the secret; she obtained permission for me from the Bishop of Chambéry to absent myself for three months from the convent. But the three months have almost expired, and yet I cannot make up my mind to go back as I am. The lay sister, whom the abbess has charged to take care of me, is the sourest of creatures; she has orders not to let me speak to a soul, and to prevent me from showing myself in public more than is absolutely necessary. I raised my veil this morning so that you should see if I was the person you were looking for, and fortunately she did not notice it, otherwise she would have made me suffer for my indiscretion. She wants us to return to the convent in three days, for she thinks my dropsy is incurable. She would not allow me to speak alone to the doctor, whom I might have won over to my side by confiding in him. I am only twenty-one, yet I long for death as a relief.'

'Dry your eyes, my dear sister, and tell me how did you propose to arrange matters without the lay sister's knowing the truth?'

The story of the second M. M. continued.

'The woman with whom we are lodging is an angel of goodness; I took her into my confidence, and she promised that when the time came she would give the sister a sleeping draught, which would keep her quiet until all danger of discovery was past. She has already procured the drug from Annecy; indeed, it is thanks to a small dose of it that we are able to meet to-night. The sister is fast asleep in her room, which is under this.'

'Then why was I not admitted through the door?'

'Because of the landlady's brother, who is inquisitive.'

'What made you think I came from de Coudert?'

'I wrote to him some days ago, and told him of my distress. I painted my misery in such vivid colours that I am sure he will find means of helping me. Drowning men catch at straws. And when I saw you I jumped to the conclusion that you were a friend of his sent by him to save me.'

'Are you sure he received your letter?'

'The landlady posted it at Annecy.'

'You ought to have written to the princess.'

'I did not dare.'

'I will go and see her myself; I will go and see Coudert. I will go to the bishop if needs be to obtain a prolongation of your stay here, for you cannot return to the convent in the state you are in. You must decide for yourself though, for I can do nothing without your consent. Will you trust yourself to me? I will bring you some clothes to-morrow in which you can disguise yourself, and I will take you to Italy; and as long as I live I swear to take care of you.'

Her only answer was a fit of violent sobbing, that went straight to my heart.

I took her hand, and told her I would return the following night. I gave the peasant woman another louis, saying, that at my next visit, I should prefer to enter by the door and not by the window, adding that she must on the same occasion administer a second dose of opium to the lay sister.

I went to bed well pleased with my evening's adventure, and congratulating myself on the performance of a good action for its own sake. As soon as I was convinced that it was not my own dear M. M. who had received my ardent embraces, I felt ashamed of having been so effusive. I left without even kissing my new friend's hand.

After dinner at the inn, it was now my turn to take the bank against the company. A smile of satisfaction passed over the assembled faces when I installed myself with a pile of gold and silver before me, about a thousand louis in all.

'Gentlemen,' I said, 'I warn you that at eight o'clock precisely I leave off play.'

Some one suggested that, perhaps, the bank would not hold out so long as that, but I ignored this, and begging Désarmoises to act as croupier, I began to deal slowly. There were eighteen or twenty punters against me, all professional gamblers; at each deal I called for a fresh pack.

He plays with the English friend of Fox.

By five o'clock I had lost considerably, when we heard a carriage stop at the door; it was three Englishmen who had come from Geneva, and were changing horses, before going on to Chambéry. They came into the room a moment after, and I recognised Mr. Fox and his two friends, whom I had met at Berne a fortnight before. My croupier asked them to join us, and they began by playing ten louis at a time on two or three cards, double or quits. They swept up the stakes every time, so that my bank was seriously endangered. I put a bold face on it, however, and even encouraged them to go on. At the third deal the Englishmen lost, and just then the landlord came to tell them their horses were harnessed.

While I was shuffling a new pack of cards, the youngest Englishman drew a paper from his pocket-book; it was a letter of credit.

'Will you let me stake the value of this letter on one card,' he said, 'without your knowing what its value is?'

'Yes, provided you tell me on whom it is drawn, and that the sum does not exceed what I have in my bank.'

He looked at the gold in front of me.

'My letter is not as valuable as your bank; it is drawn on sight on Zappata of Turin.'

I acquiesced. He cut and laid the letter on an ace; his two friends went shares in the stake.

I drew, and drew again and again, but no ace. I had only a dozen cards left in my hand.

'Sir,' said I, with the greatest calmness, 'you are at liberty to withdraw now if you like.'

'No—go on.'

I drew again—no ace! I had only eight cards left.

'My lord,' I said, 'two to one the ace is here; I tell you again that you can withdraw if you like.'

'No; you are too generous—go on.'

I drew and I won! I put the bill in my pocket without looking at it, at which the Englishman laughed, shook hands, and went off; while I enjoyed the effect of the bold game I had

played on the others. In a minute or two young Fox came back, and drawing me aside, asked me, laughing, to lend him fifty louis to continue his journey. I gave them to him with pleasure; he paid me back three years afterwards in London.

Every one was dying to know the value of the letter of credit, but I did not satisfy their curiosity; it was for eight thousand francs, Italian money.

These Englishmen had brought me luck, for after this fortune favoured me; and I left at eight o'clock having cleaned out everybody, except three ladies who had won a few louis. I had won over a thousand louis. I gave twenty-five to Désarmoises, and he jumped for joy. I then locked up my money, put my pistols in my pocket, and went off to my rendezvous. The good peasant let me in, telling me that all was safe, and that she had not needed to renew the dose of opium, for the lay sister was still asleep. At this, I must own, I felt frightened.

Upstairs I saw the poor nun, with her veil down, sitting on a sack stuffed with straw, which the peasant woman had set along the wall as a sofa; a candle stuck in a bottle lighted up the gloomy hole of a room she was in.

'What have you decided to do, madame?' I asked.

The crime of the nun of Chambéry.

'Nothing, for something awful has happened. The lay sister has been sleeping for twenty-four hours!'

'You must send for a doctor at once. She might die in convulsions, or from a fit of apoplexy, this very night!'

'We thought of sending for a doctor, but did not dare, for whatever happens he will say we poisoned her.'

'Good heavens, I am so sorry for you! But as a matter of fact, I fear it is too late to help her. It is no use calling a doctor. All things considered, it is better to bow to the laws of Providence and let her die. Death is natural at her age. The harm is done now, and there is no remedy.'

'We must at any rate think of her soul, and send for a priest.'

'What would be the use of a priest, since she is unconscious. Her soul is in no danger. An ignorant priest would do more harm than good, either from stupidity or malice. Time enough to call a priest when she no longer breathes. You must say she died suddenly. You must cry a good deal. Give him plenty to drink, and he will only think of calming your grief, without troubling himself about the dead.'

'But must we let her die?'

'We must leave her to nature.'

'If she dies I will send an express to the abbess, who will send me another lay sister.'

'Yes; and in that way you will gain ten days at the least. Do not distress yourself, madame; we must submit ourselves to the will of God. Let the landlady come up, and I will tell her how to behave in these delicate circumstances. The honour, perhaps the life, of all three of us depends on her.'

The country woman appeared. I impressed on her the necessity of prudence. She took me well enough, and recognised her own danger. She promised not to send for a priest until she was sure the sister was dead. I forced her to take ten louis, which I told her to expend in any way that might be useful to us in our difficult position.

Seeing that she was likely to grow rich by my generosity, she knelt and kissed my hands, and, with tears, promised to obey me.

The nun wept bitterly, and accused herself of the lay sister's murder. She saw hell yawning before her feet! I tried to quiet her, but her grief only became more violent, and at last she fell fainting behind the straw sofa.

I called the country woman, and, remembering the famous powder which had served my turn so well with Madame de ——, I pushed a good pinch of it into her nostrils. Then the country woman came with vinegar. 'Rub her forehead,' I said. We undid her coif and veil, her long black hair streamed out; she opened her big black eyes, and there and then I fell violently in love with her. The woman, seeing her out of

danger, left us, and I took her in my arms and kissed her passionately.

'Please let me put my veil on again,' she said, 'or else I shall be put under the ban of the Church.'

I laughed, and kissed her the more.

'You may laugh, but I tell you that the abbess has threatened to excommunicate me if I even let myself be seen by a man.'

'Do not be afraid of her, my beautiful one; she is powerless.'

Then seeing that she was weak and exhausted, I summoned the peasant woman, and recommending her to her care, I bade them good night, promising to return next evening.

I could not have abandoned an unfortunate creature who depended on me; but there was no merit in my devotion now, for I was head over ears in love with this new, black-eyed M. M.

I was determined to do anything and everything, rather than let her return to the convent in the state in which she then was. It was as if God had thrown me in her way. It was He who had sent La Zeroli to keep me from leaving Aix. It was He who had willed I should gain all that money. I have always chosen to trace the finger of God in all that happened to me. Yet cheap philosophers have accused me of atheistic tendencies!

No one dared challenge me to play that evening, and I slipped off unnoticed, after enjoining le Duc not to leave my room for a moment while I was away.

He pacifies the conscience of the nun of Chambéry.

I found my nun in bed, with two candles burning on the table by her.

'Are you ill, madame?'

'I have been ill, but thank God I am better now. Our Blessed Lady has heard my prayers, and helped me in my trouble; but tell me, are you a man or an angel? I am afraid I love you more than it is permissible to love any human being.'

'If you could know how happy you make me in saying so! But how is the lay sister?'

'She still breathes, but we have lost all hope of her recovery. Her face is strangely disfigured. I fear me, we have committed a great crime, and God will punish me for it.'

'No, my dear, God will forgive you, for you meant no harm. You must worship the Divine will, which does everything for the best.'

Though I spoke cheerfully, I was very anxious to have done with this exceedingly risky affair. I knew we were not out of the wood yet, nor should be until the poor lay sister was dead and buried.

The next evening, when I went at dusk to the cottage, my nun told me the sister was dead, and was to be buried next day.

'To-morrow,' she said, 'is the day on which we were to return to the convent. I have written to the abbess, and I suppose she will send me another sister, unless she tells me to put myself in the care of my landlady.'

'What did the priest say?'

'That the lay sister died of cerebral lethargy, which brought on an apoplectic stroke. I would like to ask him to say fifteen masses for her, if you will allow me.'

'With pleasure. They shall be the reward of his convenient ignorance.'

The burial of the lay sister.

The landlady told me that the dead woman was an awful sight to see, and that she was having her watched by two women, who kept her sprinkled with holy water lest that witches, in the shape of cats, should come and tear her limb from limb. I told her she was perfectly right, and then asked her where she had bought the laudanum.

'It was sold me by a respectable woman, whom I have known for years,' she said.

'And when you went to the foundling hospital, were you recognised?'

'No, no one saw me do what I had to do. And now, kind sir, you must know that the poor sister's funeral will only cost six francs, and will be paid for out of two louis which were

found on the dead woman. The rest will go to pay for masses, so perhaps she will be forgiven for having so much money in her possession in spite of her vow of poverty.'

'What! do you mean to say she might not have two beggarly louis?'

'Certainly not,' interposed my nun; 'we may have nothing but what the abbess gives us.'

'How much are you allowed here?'

'Ten sols, Italian money, a day. But since you came I have lived like a princess, as you will see at supper; for though my good landlady knows that whatever is left over of the money you gave is for her, she spends it on me lavishly.'

'She knows she will not lose by it, my dear!' So saying I gave the woman another ten louis, telling her to spare no expense in making the invalid comfortable.

The good woman declared I had given her a fortune, and that she would buy cows with it.

Now that it was all over, I expressed my astonishment that the lover of my nun should have left her in such embarrassment. She replied that she feared he had not received her letter.

'That is possible. But tell me about him. Is he rich? Is he handsome?'

The nun describes her lover.

'Rich, yes; handsome, no. He is very ugly, humpbacked, and at least fifty years old.'

'How could you fall in love with such an object?'

'I never loved him, but he aroused my pity. He threatened to kill himself, and I believed him. I promised to meet him in the garden at night, meaning to beg him to leave me in peace. He wept, he flung himself on his knees; and at last I gave way, on condition that he would not kill himself, and that he would never ask me to meet him again.'

'And did he not?'

'Yes, often, but I never consented; and my confessor made me promise not to meet him, on pain of refusing me absolution.'

I was deeply moved, and remained silent for at least a quarter of an hour, absorbed in thought. I saw clearly that the misfortunes of this interesting woman arose from her candour, and perfect innocence, and misdirected compassion. She was pious, but more from habit than conviction. She abhorred sin, because she had to purge herself of it by confession, under pain of eternal damnation, and she did not wish to be damned. She had plenty of good common sense, though very little mental activity, but that was because she had never been called upon to exercise it, and was ignorant as only a nun can be.

The landlady now brought in our supper, and laid the cloth on a little table. Everything was new—linen, plates, glasses, knives, and forks. The wine was good, and the cooking delicious, for everything was simple. Game, meat, fish, cream, cheese, and fresh fruit. I spent an hour and a half on these good things, chatting with my nun, while I drank a couple of bottles of wine. The landlady promised that such should be my daily entertainment.

Two days later there came a letter from the abbess, in which she said she would send two lay sisters to fetch my nun, and that she was probably well enough to make the return voyage on foot, and save money which could be put to better use. As the bishop was absent, and it was necessary to obtain his permission for the sisters to leave the convent, it would be eight or ten days before they could start, and in the meantime she was not, under pain of excommunication, to leave her room, or to speak to any one but her landlady.

After reading this, I asked her if she would prefer me to discontinue my visits, as I did not wish her to do violence to her conscience for my sake.

'The abbess,' she answered, 'is very free with her orders and her excommunications; as for the latter, I hope God will not confirm them. I enjoy your visits, and I should be miserable if they were to cease. But I wish you would tell me, if you can, whom it was you took me for when you first saw me.'

'Madam, I will tell you. I can do so without indiscretion, now that I know you share my conviction that all flesh is weak, or rather strong, stronger sometimes than the spirit, and that it subdues all, even reason, to its dominion. I will tell you a love-story which extended over two years, the heroine of which was the most beautiful and intelligent nun in Italy. Had she met with the same misfortune which befell you, I should have taken her to Rome and thrown myself at the feet of the Holy Father, who would have dispensed her from her vows, and my dear M. M. would to-day be my wife.'

'Great God! My name is M. M.! Is it true that I am so like her?'

He shows the portrait of the first M. M. to the second. Her naïve comment.

'Judge for yourself,' said I, drawing the portait of M. M. in her nun's habit from my pocket-book.

'Yes, though our eyes are different, it is my face, my dress, and it is to this likeness that I owe all my present happiness; but, God be praised, you do not love me in the same passionate way that you loved her.'

'I will show you another picture I have of her'; and I gave her the one in which M. M., having discarded her religious costume, appeared as Venus.

'How pretty she is! Was it to please you that the painter gave her such long hair?'

'No; Italian nuns are not obliged to cut it off, only to hide it.'

'We have the same privilege; but you won't like my hair, it is black.'

She took off her cap, and let her thick ebony tresses fall on her white shoulders.

'You are more beautiful than your sister M. M.,' I said.

She blushed and hastily replaced her cap, gathering round her shoulders her coarse linen camisole, the rude texture of which horrified me; but when I expressed my grief at seeing her lovely skin covered with such an unworthy material, she laughed, saying she was accustomed to it, it was such as all the sisters wore. She laid her head on my shoulder; but

suddenly, when I was making her the prettiest speeches, she turned her head away and closed her beautiful eyes and slept. It was a real sleep—the claret she had drunk had made her heavy. She spoke at hazard in her dreams, and I answered her without awakening her.

It was broad daylight when I returned to my inn, and after having my head dressed, I repaired to the fountain, where I met the taciturn Duke of Rosburi, with his tutor, Mr. Smith, and two other compatriots, just arrived from Geneva. He came up to me, saying, 'How do you do?' and walked away without adding another word.

In the evening I found my mistress in tears. The landlady's nephew had arrived that morning from Chambéry, where he had heard from a lay sister of his acquaintance in the convent that the other lay sisters were to leave for Aix the next day.

'But the abbess said in her letter they would not start for at least ten days!'

'She has thought better of it, no doubt.'

'How unlucky we are! Come, make up your mind, follow me to Rome, where I will procure a dispensation for you; you shall be my wife, and I will do all I can to make your life happy.'

'No—no—my dear friend, I have lived my life; let me go back to the tomb.'

After supper I asked the peasant woman if she could count on the discretion of her nephew, and if so, to send him at once to Chambéry to find out if the lay sisters had started, in which case he was to manage to get back to us two hours at least before their arrival. I sent now to le Duc, to shut up my bedroom, and to tell every one I was ill, at the same time warning him I should not be back for ten days at least. I meant to spend every moment with my beloved. I shall never forget the long hours passed in that little cottage! There was something about it mysterious and solemn. Every kiss that I gave her might be the last!

The good woman served us our meals in the garret, which we were afraid to leave even to go downstairs. And at last the messenger came: it was four o'clock in the afternoon; at six, at the latest, he said, the lay sisters would be there.

The second M. M. returns to her convent.

We parted: I cut off a lock of her hair, swearing I would wear it always against my heart. I forced her to accept a rouleau of fifty louis, promising that if she had no occasion to spend them she should return them to me in less than two years, for I would visit her in her prison before that time expired.

At break of day I was on my road to Chambéry. About half a league from Aix I saw my angel coming along, walking very slowly. As the two lay sisters approached me they begged for alms in the name of God. I gave them a louis and they passed on. My poor saint never raised her eyes!

I returned to the inn, where I ordered le Duc to get me a carriage at once, and hastily throwing my clothes into my trunks, I left without saying good-bye to a single soul.

'Double pay if you go as fast as I wish,' I cried to the postillion, and we started off at a hand-gallop.

CHAPTER XXVII

MADEMOISELLE DE ROMAN

I STOPPED to change horses at Chambéry, and from there went on to Grenoble, where I intended to stay at least a week. At the *poste-restante* I found several letters, among others one from Madame d'Urfé inclosing an introduction to an officer named Valenglard, quartered at Grenoble, and who, she said, would introduce me to the best people. I called at once on this gentleman, and he promised to do all he could to render my stay at Grenoble agreeable. I told him I found the inn uncomfortable, and that I wished he would find me a more convenient lodging.

The inn at Grenoble.

'I think I might get you rooms in a house just outside the town,' he said; 'the concierge is a good cook, too; shall we go and see?'

I liked the house, and I took an apartment in it, consisting of three rooms. I ordered supper for two, telling the concierge I was very particular and not sparing of my money. I sent for my carriage, and in an hour I was installed.

M. Valenglard took me to the theatre after dinner. He wanted to introduce me, but I begged him to wait until I had observed the ladies more closely.

My vanity was excessive in those days! I considered all the women of Europe as forming part of one vast seraglio destined for my pleasure! While at the theatre my eyes were attracted by a tall dark girl, exceedingly simply dressed, who looked at me once and then obstinately withdrew her eyes from me. It was enough to pique me. I told the baron I should like to know her.

'She is of good family,' he said, 'but poor. I will introduce you to her aunt when we leave the theatre.'

He did so. The aunt was civil, and after the usual interchange of compliments, the baron and I returned to my house to supper.

The two daughters of the concierge-cook, as pretty girls as one would wish to see, waited on us. Valenglard grumbled when he saw more than fifteen entrées put on the table.

'The man is making fun of us!'

'On the contrary, he has guessed what I like. Do you not find the food excellent?'

'Certainly—but——'

'Don't be afraid. I like to live extravagantly.'

We had exquisite wines; some ratafia at dessert which was better than the Turkish *visnat* I had drunk seventeen years before at Yusouf-Ali's. When my host came up after supper I told him he was worthy of being head cook to Louis Quinze.

'Go on as you have begun, but let us have ices every day; put two more candelabra on the table. I think those are *tallow* candles, if I mistake not! I am a Venetian, sir, and accustomed to *wax*.'

I gave the baron my letter of credit on Zappata, endorsing it with the name of Seingalt, by which Madame d'Urfé had introduced me. Then I took him in my carriage, and was agreeably surprised to find, on returning, that the concierge's daughters were sitting up for me. Le Duc knew I could well dispense with his services when there were pretty girls in the house! They took off my boots, dressed my hair, and brought me my dressing-gown, after which they bade me good night.

At eight o'clock one of the girls brought me my chocolate, saying le Duc was unwell.

'I must go and see the poor fellow. What are you called, my dear?'

'Rose, sir, and my sister is Manon.'

The latter came in at that moment with my shirt, the lace

of which she had been ironing. She told me shyly that she was accustomed to dress her father's hair.

'I am glad to hear it; you can dress mine until my servant is better.'

'And I,' said Rose, laughing, 'will shave you.'

They were delightfully serious about it. Manon arranged my hair, and Rose shaved me admirably. But Rose refused to kiss the cheek she had made so smooth, so I said I would not let her do it any more. Then she complied.

When my toilet was finished, I went up to see le Duc. I found the scoundrel in a smart dressing-gown, sitting up in bed, with a rosy face that betokened anything but illness.

'What is the matter with you?' I asked.

'Nothing, sir; I am having a good rest. I had a fancy to be ill yesterday, and so here I am.'

'What possessed you to have such a fancy?'

'The sight of the three pretty girls. By the by, they are keeping me waiting a long time for my broth; I shall have to get angry and scold them for neglecting me, I fear.'

'Le Duc, you are a rascal.'

'Must I get well then, sir?'

'Have done with this nonsense; it wearies me.'

Just then the door opened, and a third young woman, whom I had not yet seen, and who was better looking even than the others, came in with the broth.

'I will have my dinner in bed,' said my Spaniard.

'It shall be brought up to you,' answered the girl, and left the room without looking at either of us.

'That girl has the airs of a princess,' said le Duc; 'but she doesn't take *me* in. Isn't she pretty, sir?'

'You are an insolent ape. Get up at once: you will wait upon me, and after that you will dine downstairs; and let me have no more of this. Do you hear?'

The fellow grinned, and I could not help laughing myself; he was an impertinent creature, but brave as a lion and faithful as a dog.

After dinner I went with Valenglard to call on Madame

He composes a horoscope for Mlle. de Roman.

Morin, the aunt of the pretty brunette. We found her surrounded by her seven children. The eldest daughter, who was neither handsome nor ugly, was twelve years old that day, she told me. For want of something to say, I asked if she had ever had her horoscope cast. She said No, and while we were discussing the science of astrology the niece came in.

Mlle. Roman-Coupier was then about seventeen, her hair and eyes jet black, her complexion was pale, her eyebrows well marked, her mouth small, and her teeth white and regular. She was gay, unpretentious, and good-humoured. Her behaviour was so natural, and at the same time so reserved, that I had some difficulty in taking her measure. I invited them all to dine and sup with me next day, and returned to my house building castles in the air.

Rose told me that as soon as my back was turned le Duc had sent for a carriage, and had gone off in it, dressed like a lord, with a sword at his side. He had some visits to pay, he said.

As soon as I was alone I began to compose the horoscope I had promised Madame Morin. I wrote eight pages of quackery, laying particular stress on what had already happened to the child. I had gathered a few notions about her past in my conversation with her parents, and I arranged these adroitly, guessing the rest.

At midday my guests arrived, and at one o'clock we sat down to table. It was a most sumptuous dinner. Le Duc, dressed like a king's chamberlain, stood behind my chair, and the three girls waited. After dinner I produced the horoscope. Madame Morin and her husband were delighted, and we discussed the past, present, and future of the wonderful child, till I was heartily sick of her; but I had my reward when we all went into the garden and I was free to devote myself to the pretty niece. A cold wind coming down from the Alps drove us all indoors. Before leaving she gave me a scrap of paper, on which was written the year, day, and hour of her birth. I guessed that she wanted me to cast her horoscope, and I told her aunt that in two days it would be ready; if they would then do me the honour of supping with me I would have

it ready; and that I would invite some people to meet them, and after supper we would dance a cotillon. Madame Morin asked permission to bring two ladies with their daughters. I begged her to invite their cavaliers too. I ordered supper for a large party, and took pains with my little fête.

Madame Morin came early with her daughters and niece. The latter wore her everyday dress, but she would have looked well in anything. She asked me if I had remembered her horoscope, and I took her hand and said she should have it to-morrow. I kissed her, but she bade me desist, without her serenity being ruffled for a moment.

The portrait of M. M.

The ladies went into my bedroom and examined my jewels and knick-knacks. Madame Morin picked up something, and carried it to the window to see it better. It was the portrait of my nun. I ran to her, and begged her not to look at it.

'It is like some one I know,' she said.

I felt myself turn pale with apprehension.

'Madame,' I said, 'it is the portrait of a Venetian whom I once loved very dearly. She was a nun, and her initials were M. M.'

'And I have a niece whose initials are M. M., and who is a nun of that very order; she is in a convent at Chambéry. I will add that she was taking the waters at Aix while you were there!'

'I wish I had seen her.'

'If you go back to Chambéry you can pay her a visit. Say that you come from me.'

'Madame, I promise, but not until I return from Italy, and I will not show her that portrait, for it would shock her; and I will keep it more carefully locked up in future.'

The good lady did not suspect the truth, and I breathed more freely.

At eight o'clock all my guests were assembled, and I opened the ball with a lady M. de Valenglard assigned to me; but all the *contredanses* I danced with Mlle. Roman, whose simple attire fascinated me.

The supper, which was composed of all the delicacies of the

season, was well served; but what delighted the ladies most was the enormous quantity of wax candles with which the dining-room was decorated.

The destiny of Mlle. Roman-Coupier.

When the last carriage had rolled away, I sat down to work at the horoscope I had promised Mlle. Roman. It told her that fortune awaited her in Paris, where she would be beloved by the king, but that he must see her before her eighteenth birthday, for after that age her destiny would be changed. To invest my prediction with an appearance of veracity, I gave a list of all the most important things which had befallen her up till then, and which I had heard either from herself or from her aunt; the rest I compiled from a calendar and a treatise on astrology. The uncle and M. Morin were immensely struck by it, and I was in hopes they would ask me to escort her to Paris. I am not sure that I was not already calculating the profits which would accrue to me from the enterprise!

The king would fall in love with her at first sight, of that I was convinced; and though at that very moment I should have been jealous of any man, king or commoner, whom she favoured, I knew I should not mind passing her on after a given time.

What gave a really sacred colour to my prophecy was the prediction that a son should be born of her union with Louis who would bring glory and honour to France.

It is impossible to describe the excitement and effervescence of my four friends as they read, re-read, and discussed the marvellous horoscope. Mlle. Roman took it all quite seriously, assuming that she had no say in the matter. She listened anxiously, but said never a word. Morin, observing my gravity, dared not laugh; De Valenglard was excited, and fervently credulous. Madame Morin looked on it as something supernatural, and kept repeating that her niece was certainly more worthy than the fanatical Maintenon of becoming first the mistress, and then the wife of a monarch.

'La Maintenon,' she said, 'would never have been anybody if she had not left America and come to France. If my niece does not go to Paris, the horoscope cannot be accused of untruthfulness. She must go, but how? The journey seems

impossible. I may be no judge, but it seems to me my niece has more chance of winning the affection of a king than Maintenon had. She is young, and a good girl; Maintenon was past her prime, and before she turned pious she had certainly not kept both her legs in one stocking! Still it will all end in smoke; there are too many difficulties in the way.'

'No,' said Valenglard, with a comic gravity; 'no, it will not end in smoke; one must accomplish one's destiny.'

'But,' said the aunt, 'it says that the king must see her before she is eighteen, and she is nearly that now. What are we to do? Where are the hundred louis to come from? The journey will cost quite that. And when she gets to Paris, is she to go to the king and say, "Here I am, sire." And with whom is she to travel? Not with me! If she could once get there, she could go to her Aunt Varnier's, who lives in the Rue Richelieu, and knows everybody in Paris.'

'If you go to Paris,' said I to Mlle. Roman, 'you must not speak of the horoscope to your aunt or any one.'

'I won't speak of it to any one, but I shall never go to Paris, and I shall never see the king. It is all a beautiful dream.' She wishes to fulfil it.

I took a rouleau of fifty doubloons out of my pocket, and putting them in her hand, told her they were bonbons.

'They are gold!' cried the aunt. 'The money-changer will give you a hundred and fifty louis for them.'

'You must keep them, mademoiselle, and promise to pay them back when you are rich.'

I was sure she would refuse my present, but I admired the way in which she controlled herself, and kept back her tears. We went out into the garden, and I led her away from the others.

'Tell me,' she said, 'are not you teasing me?'

'No, it is serious, but everything depends upon *if*. *If* you do not go to Paris, none of it will come true.'

'You must feel very sure of it, or you would not risk your money. Why should you offer me such a large sum?'

'For the pleasure of furthering your happiness, and in the hope that you will let me love you.'

'If you love me, I have no need of the King of France. It is not he who can make me happy. If you only knew what I really want——!'

'What do you want?'

'A kind husband to take care of me. Suppose when the king sees me he thinks I am not pretty, but ugly, what then? Besides, if you love me as you say you do, why do you trouble about the king?'

'Because I cannot offer you the position you deserve.'

After this I dared stay no longer with her, and I determined not to push the matter further.

Madame Morin, coming up at that moment, told me she could not allow her niece to take the money; if it was truly her niece's destiny to go to Paris, it could be managed some other way.

'Madame,' said I, 'I am not in a position to make you such propositions as I could wish, and as I do not want to stand in your niece's light, I have decided to leave here to-morrow.'

He leaves Grenoble.

Without fatuity on my part, I think she really cared for me; but it had to be, and I kissed her mother and her and bade them both a sad good-bye.

CHAPTER XXVIII

INTERVIEWS WITH THE POPE

I VISITED Avignon, Marseilles, Nice, and stopped some time at Genoa. Thence I went to Pisa, where I made the acquaintance of an Englishman, who sold me his travelling carriage, and introduced me to Corilla, the celebrated poetess. She was good enough to improvise for me on several subjects which I suggested. She charmed me, not so much by her grace and beauty, as by the pretty things she said in the prettiest way.

I lodged in Florence at the Carrajo, in an apartment overlooking the Arno. I bought a carriage, and hired a footman and a coachman, whom I put in Signor de Bragadin's livery, red and blue.

He meets Teresa Lanti, whom he abandoned at Rimini.

Then I cashed a letter of credit, made a toilet, and went to the opera, where I took a stall so as to examine the actresses at my ease. Imagine my surprise when, in the leading singer, I recognised Teresa! Teresa, whom I had known and loved in 1744, when she was travelling disguised as a boy with her pretended mother and brothers, and whom I should certainly have married, had I not been arrested at Pesaro.

I had not seen her for seventeen years, and I had not answered her last letter; but she was as beautiful as ever. Presently, at the end of a song, she looked at me, and never took her eyes off me again. As she left the stage she made a sign to me with her fan. I left my seat, my heart beating wildly; at the back of the stage I saw my Teresa standing,

on the top of a small staircase, telling a porter to let me pass. We faced each other silently for a moment. At last I took her hand and laid it on my heart.

'See!' I said. 'Feel what I feel!'

She answered: 'When I first saw you I thought I should faint. Unfortunately I am engaged to supper to-night, but I shall not be able to sleep for thinking of you afterwards. Come and see me to-morrow morning at eight o'clock. Where do you live? what name do you go under? how long have you been here? how long are you going to stay? are you married? O cursed supper! Go—go, my friend, they are calling me. Farewell, till to-morrow.'

When I returned to my place I remembered she had told me neither her name nor her address. A well-dressed young man was sitting next to me, and I asked him if he could tell who the actress was who was playing *Mandane*.

'You have not been in Florence long, sir,' he answered.

'I have only just arrived.'

'Then your ignorance is excusable. Well, sir, her name is the same as mine, for she is my wife, and I am Cirillo Palesi, at your service.'

I bowed. I did not like to ask where he lived, for fear he should think me impertinent. Teresa married to this handsome young man! And I had addressed myself to him of all people in the world! On leaving the opera I questioned one of the servants, and learned from him that she had only been married ten months, and that her husband had neither fortune nor profession; 'but,' he added, 'she is rich enough for both, rich and most perfectly respectable, so there is nothing to be done there!'

A visit to Teresa.

At break of day I was at the door of the first woman I had ever loved. An old servant came and asked if I was M. Casanova. Madame had told her she expected me.

Presently the young husband appeared in a dressing-gown and nightcap, and politely announced that his wife would be down in a moment; then looking at me fixedly, he said—

'But surely it was you who asked me my wife's name yesterday evening.'

'Quite so, sir; I had not seen her for many years, and did not know she was married. By good luck I addressed myself to her husband. The friendship I feel for her I shall be glad to extend to you, if you will allow me.'

Then in came Teresa. We fell into each other's arms, like two lovers who had been long parted. She told her husband to sit down, and drawing me on to the sofa, cried freely; so did I. When we were calmer, our eyes fell on the poor husband, whom we had forgotten, and who was the picture of comic astonishment. We both burst out laughing, and Teresa, who knew how to manage this puppet, said—

'My dear Palesi, you see before you the man who was a father, and more than a father, to me. To this generous friend I owe everything. O happy hour, for which I have longed for ten years!'

At the name of father, his eyes grew rounder; for Teresa, though perfectly well preserved, was only two years younger than I.

'Yes, sir,' said I, 'your Teresa is my daughter, my sister, my cherished friend. She is an angel, a treasure, and your wife.' Then addressing myself to her: 'I did not answer your last letter because——'

'I know. You were in love with a nun. You were shut up in "The Leads." I heard at Vienna of your marvellous escape. I heard of you in Paris and Holland. It is only lately that I have lost trace of you. When I tell you everything that has happened to me in the last ten years, you will be amused. However, I am happy now. This is my dear Palesi, a Roman, whom I married a short time ago. We love each other dearly, and I hope you will be his friend as you are mine.'

At these words I embraced Palesi. He was awkward, for he did not know what to make of this man who had been father, brother, friend, and perhaps lover of his wife, all in one.

He recovered himself sufficiently to ask me if I would take

a cup of chocolate with them, and when I accepted, he left the room to prepare it himself.

As soon as we were alone, she flung herself into my arms.

'O my dear love, you who made my heart beat for the first time, hold me, hold me to your heart! To-morrow we will be brother and sister, but for to-day let us be lovers only. You must know that I am still in love with my husband, and never mean to deceive him. But I must acquit the debt I owed to you, my first love. Then we will forget everything, except that I am married, and that we are fast friends. You look sad?'

'I find you bound, while I am free. I have come too late. But your will shall be law to me. Only tell me what you wish me to do. I must not speak of the past before your husband, I suppose?'

Her adventures.

'No, he knows nothing of my affairs, beyond what every one knows, that I made my fortune at Naples, where I am supposed to have gone at the age of ten years. It is an innocent deception which does no one any harm. I tell people I am twenty-four; do I look much older?'

'Not a bit, though I know you are thirty-two.'

'You mean thirty-one, for I was fourteen when I knew you.'

'I seem to think you were fifteen.'

'Well, so be it, between ourselves; but tell me, I beg you, can I pass for twenty-four?'

'You look even younger than that.'

'Now tell me, my dear Casanova, do you want money? I am in a position to return you what you gave me, and with interest. Everything I have is settled on me. I have fifty thousand ducats at Naples, and an equal sum in diamonds. Tell me quickly, for the chocolate will be here in a minute.'

I was about to fling myself again into her arms, when the chocolate came. Her husband appeared, followed by a maid, bearing three cups on a silver-gilt tray.

While we were drinking it, Palesi descanted, wittily enough, on his surprise when he recognised the man who had made him

get up so early as the same person who had accosted him at the theatre the night before, and asked him his wife's name. He was too well bred to ask questions as to how, when, and where I had known his wife.

Palesi was only about twenty-three years old. He was fair-haired: much too pretty for a man. He was so gay and entertaining I could not dislike him, even had I desired to do so.

At ten o'clock all the other actors and actresses came in for rehearsal. Teresa received them graciously, and I could see she enjoyed great consideration among them. Two of the actresses remained to dinner, one named Redegonde, and a *figurante* called Corticelli, who was very pretty; but I was too full of Teresa to pay much attention to either.

The Abbé Gama.

After dinner, a little stout abbé, a veritable Tartufe, came in, bowed to Teresa in the Portuguese fashion, and sat down by her. It was the Abbé Gama, whom I had known at Rome. He recognised me and embraced me. He gave me news of old friends, and I was listening with interest, when an unexpected apparition absorbed all my attention. A boy of fifteen or sixteen entered the room, and after saluting the company, kissed Teresa. I was the only one who did not know him, but I was not the only one who looked surprised. Teresa intrepidly presented him to me, saying—

'This is my brother.'

This brother of hers was my living image, if anything a little fairer than I. I knew at once who he was. Nature could not have been more indiscreet.

It seemed to me she might have arranged our meeting without so many witnesses. I tried to catch her eye, but she avoided my glance. The boy was staring at me so hard, he could not listen to what she was saying. People's glances wandered from my face to his. Anybody with eyes in their head must be aware of the youth's parentage.

He spoke the Neapolitan dialect perfectly, but he also spoke Italian, and talked well. His manners were excellent. His mother said that music was his passion.

'You shall hear him on the harpsichord,' she said, 'for though he is eight years younger than I am, he plays far better.'

Women are much cleverer than we are at wriggling out of difficult places.

When we were alone, I congratulated Teresa on her good-looking brother.

'He is yours, and the joy of my life. The Duke of Castropignano brought him up. It was he, if you remember, who took me away from Rimini. When the child was born he was sent to Sorrento, where the duke had him baptized by the name of Cæsar Philip Lanti. He stayed at Sorrento till he was nine. He has always looked upon me as his sister, but I used to hope that we should meet again, you and I, and that then you would not refuse to acknowledge him, and marry his mother.'

'And now you have put it out of my power to do so.'

'Alas, yes! fate has ordered it otherwise. When the duke died I left Naples, well off, as you know. Your son possesses a capital of twenty thousand ducats, and if I have no children by Palesi, he will inherit all I have.'

She led me into her bedroom, and opening a coffer showed me some diamonds, and other jewels of value, besides a quantity of fine silver plate.

Césarino.

'Give Césarino to me,' said I. 'I will show him the world.'

'Ah no! Ask me for everything else, but leave me my son. Do you know, I never kiss him for fear I may forget and betray myself. What do you think people will say in Venice when they see Casanova rejuvenated by twenty years?'

'Are you going to take him to Venice for the *Ascenza*?'

'Yes; and you, where are you going?'

'To Rome, and to Naples, to see the Duke of Mantalonia.'

That day was among the happiest of my life, and God knows I have had many happy ones. Césarino won my heart. He was mischievous, lively, charming, as only a Neapolitan can be. He sat down to the harpsichord, and sang Neapolitan

songs which made us die with laughing. Teresa had only eyes for him and for me, but from time to time she caressed her husband, saying—

'There is no happiness except in the company of those one loves best.'

I invited all my friends in Florence to dine with me, and had ordered a sumptuous dinner at my inn. La Corticelli, the pretty *figurante* I have already mentioned, accompanied by her mother and brother, were the first to arrive. The old woman told me that she never allowed her daughter to dine with strangers unless her brother and she were included in the invitation.

'You can take her away then at once,' said I, 'or you can accept this ducat, and go and dine with your son wherever you choose, for I don't want either him or you.'

She took the ducat and went away, saying suavely that she was sure she was leaving her daughter in good hands.

The daughter made such amusing comments on her mother's behaviour directly her back was turned, that I took to her then and there. She was only thirteen, and so slight that she did not look more than ten. She was well made, lively, quick, and extraordinarily fair for an Italian.

Another of my guests was the actress Redegonde, from Parma. She was really the sister of my footman, and it was comical to see the gravity with which the tall fellow stood behind his sister's chair.

He visits Sir Horace Mann at Florence.

I called for Abbé Gama, and we went together to Marshal Botta's to dine. Here I met the English resident, the Chevalier Mann, the idol of Florence. He was very rich and, though English, very amiable, intelligent, and a lover of the arts. I paid him a visit at his house, and saw his beautiful gardens, furniture, pictures, and choice books.

On my return I found a letter from De Valenglard of Grenoble. He said that the pretty Mlle. Roman, determined to verify my prophecy, was now actually in Paris with her aunt.

About this time a Russian named Iwanoff wrote to me

from Pistoia asking me to cash a draft for him in Florence, which city, for certain reasons, he was afraid to visit. He had no money, he said, and could not leave his hotel till he had paid. Scenting trouble, I took a post-chaise and drove out to Pistoia. I advised him to give the bill to his landlord to take to Florence and change at the banker's, Signor Sasso-Sassi.

Imagine my surprise on receiving a visit from the banker a few days later. The bill, it seems, was false. The landlord had been obliged to reimburse the money; he declared he never would have had anything to do with it but for me, and that I must refund him two hundred crowns.

Naturally I refused. The following day I was summoned by the head of the police to appear before him. He was exceedingly polite, but decreed that I must pay the two hundred crowns, as the landlord had agreed to cash it on my recommendation.

He is sent out of Florence.

The upshot of this was, that I was to leave Florence in three days, and Tuscany in six. I could appeal to the Grand Duke, and if he pronounced in my favour, should be allowed to return, but not otherwise.

I wrote on a piece of paper :—

'I bow to your iniquitous decision, but the matter will not end here.'

I said good-bye to Teresa with a heartiness that must have given her poor husband a headache, and left the next day, and in thirty-six hours was in Rome.

Interview with Cardinal Passionei.

Among my letters of introduction was one for Cardinal Passionei. When I presented it, his eminence expressed a wish to hear, from my own lips, the story of my escape from prison.

'The story is a long one, monseigneur,' I answered, as usual.

'So much the better. I am told you are an excellent *raconteur*.'

'But must I sit on the floor while I tell it, monseigneur?'

'Certainly not, your clothes are too good.'

One of his servants brought me a stool without arms or a back. This put me so out of temper that I told my story quickly and badly, in a little quarter of an hour.

'You write better than you speak,' was the cardinal's comment.

'I can only speak well when I am comfortable.'

'And are you not comfortable here?'

'No, monseigneur; no man, and above all, no learned man, could put me out of countenance, but your stool——!'

'You like your ease?'

'Indeed I do!'

'Look, here is my funeral speech on Prince Eugène; I make you a present of it. I hope you will not find my Latin faulty. The Holy Father will give you an audience to-morrow at ten o'clock.'

This was, of course, equivalent to a dismissal.

I determined to make him, the cardinal, a handsome present. I possessed a copy of the *Pandectarum liber unicus*, which had been given me at Berne, and which I did not know what to do with. It was in folio, in perfect condition, beautifully printed and bound. The cardinal would value the book, as he was a collector. This was a fair exchange for his funeral oration, and I hoped that the next time he would give me something better than a stool to sit upon.

First interview with the Pope.

I had known his Holiness the Pope while he was only Bishop of Padua, and after having kissed the sacred cross on his sacred slipper, he laid his hand on my shoulder, and reminded me that I used to always leave his assemblies as soon as he began to say the Rosary.

'Most Holy Father, I have far worse sins than that to reproach myself with, and that is why I have come to prostrate myself at your feet and beg for absolution.'

He gave me his blessing, and asked what he could do for me in Rome.

'Intercede for me that I may return to Venice in safety.'

'We will speak to the ambassador, and let you know what he says. Do you often go to see Cardinal Passionei?'

'I have been to him three times. He gave me his funeral oration on Prince Eugène, and I sent him the *Pandectes* as a mark of my gratitude.'

'He will send Winckelmann to offer you a price for it.'

'That would be treating me as a bookseller. I won't have it.'

'Then he will return you the volume. We know his ways.'

'If his eminence returns me the volume, I shall return him his oration.'

At this his Holiness began to laugh, and hold his sides.

'We should like to know the end of this, without others being informed of our innocent curiosity.'

After he had said this, an elaborate blessing, full of unction, gave me to understand that the audience was over.

As I left the palace I was accosted by an old abbé, who asked if I were not Signor Casanova, who had escaped from 'The Leads.' I replied that I was he.

'Heaven be praised,' said he, 'that I see you in good health.'

'To whom have I the honour of speaking?'

'Don't you know me? I am Momolo, the Venetian boatman, and many a time have I taken you in my gondola.'

'You have become a priest since then?'

'Not at all, but the cassock is everybody's uniform here. I am principal *scopatore* (sweeper) of our Holy Father the Pope.'

'I congratulate you, but you must not mind my laughing.'

'Laugh away. My wife and daughter laugh each time they see me in my habit and cape. Come and see us; here is our address, behind the Trinità dei Monti.'

The Abbé Winckelmann called on me, told me I had entirely won the good graces of the cardinal by my present, for the book was a rare one, and in better condition than the copy in the Vatican library, adding—

'The cardinal wishes me to ask what he owes you for it.'

'Nothing; I am not a bookseller. The volume was given to me, and I can only part with it on the same terms.'

'He will return it.'

'He is at liberty to do so if he chooses, but if he does, I shall return his oration. I will accept nothing from a person who refuses a present from me.'

The next day, back came my book. I immediately sent the cardinal his sermon, with a note, saying I had found it a masterpiece, though I had only had time to glance through it.

A supper with the Holy Sweeper.

In the evening I went with my brother John to see Momolo, the *scopatore santissimo*. He had an elderly wife, four daughters, the eldest of whom was twenty-four, and two sons, all desperately ugly. Though the poor man was only paid two hundred Roman crowns a year, he insisted on our staying to supper.

'On condition,' said I, 'that you will let me send to my house for six flagons of Orvieto wine.'

I despatched a note to my secretary Costa, and he by and by appeared with the wine and a glazed ham.

I saw the girls admired Costa, so I asked if he might make one of the party. Costa went into the kitchen and helped mother Momolo to fry the polenta.

A large table was covered with a clean cloth, and we sat down to two enormous dishes of polenta, and a huge saucepan full of pork cutlets. We had just begun when some one knocked at the door.

The four girls made a face.

'It is Maria and her mother,' one of them said. 'Who asked them to come, I wonder? They might have stayed at home.'

'They are always poking their noses in,' said another.

'My children,' said the good old father, 'they are hungry, and they shall share what we have.'

Good old Momolo rose from table and opened the door to the two guests. A very pretty girl came in, followed by her mother. Both seemed ashamed of their importunity, and said timidly they would not have taken the liberty of coming had they known there were strangers there.

The good Momolo told them they had done quite right, and placed chairs for them between my brother and myself. I looked at Maria and saw that she was charming.

Mariuccia.

Every one began to eat; the polenta was excellent, the cutlets delicious, the ham perfect. In less than an hour the table was cleared. We began to talk about the lottery; the girls had all a small share in some number. Mariuccia said if she had anything to risk she would put it on number twenty-seven.

'Here are forty crowns,' said I to Momolo; 'put twenty on twenty-seven in five parts, which I will present to the young ladies, and put twenty on one part, which I will keep for myself.'

I shook hands on leaving with my pretty neighbour, and from that moment I knew what would happen.

My brother told me on the way home that, unless I was as rich as Crœsus, I must be quite mad. I said I was neither one nor the other, but that Mariuccia was lovely, and he agreed.

I supped with the painter Mengs next day. He had a sister living with him, who was violently in love with my brother. She was good and full of talent, but very ugly, so he did not reciprocate. Mengs' wife was pretty, a good mother, and devoted to her husband, though he was anything but amiable. He was obstinate and cruel, and when he dined at home, never left the table sober. Away from home he drank nothing but water. His wife posed for all his nude figures. When I asked her once how she could undertake such hard work, she answered that her confessor had imposed it on her as a duty; 'for,' he said, 'if your husband had another woman as model, who knows what might happen, and the sin would lie at your door.'

The next day I went again to pay my court to the Pope.

'The Venetian ambassador tells me,' he said, 'that you must present yourself to the secretary of the Tribunal if you want to return to your country.'

'Holy Father, I am prepared to do so, if your Holiness will

give me a letter of recommendation. I dare not risk being shut up a second time.'

'You have a very handsome coat on. You did not put it on to say your prayers in.'

'True, Holy Father, nor to go to a ball in either.'

'We have heard the story of your exchange of books with Cardinal Passionei. Own that you pampered your own self-love, somewhat!'

'Yes, and I also humbled a greater arrogance than my own.'

He laughed, and I begged him to allow me to present the *Pandectes* to the Vatican library. A benediction was my only answer, but in papal language this means, 'Rise, this favour is granted you.'

'We will send you,' he said, 'a mark of our particular affection.' Then another benediction told me I was dismissed.

I was curious to know what form the mark of particular affection would take, and fearful lest it should prove to be a blessed rosary, which I should not have known what to do with.

While we were at dinner that day Costa brought in the winning numbers of the lottery; twenty-seven had come out fifth, and a prizewinner.

I went to tell Monolo the good news, but found all the girls looking gloomy, for I had presented my ticket to Mariuccia, and she had consequently won five times as much as they had. They cheered up, however, and we supped again on polenta and pork. On leaving the house I managed to ask Mariuccia if she could not give me a moment's interview. She told me to meet her next morning at eight o'clock outside the Trinità dei Monti.

Mariuccia was tall, as white as a white rose leaf, with blue veins that showed here and there. She had ash-coloured hair and blue eyes. She was only eighteen.

She had told me not to speak to her in the street, so I followed her till she came to an immense building that was falling to ruin. Up and up she went, till she reached the

He meets Mariuccia among the ruins of Rome.

top of a staircase, which seemed built out into the air; here she sat down and I beside her, and made her a declaration of love.

'Tell me what I can do for you,' said I, 'for I want above all things to make you happy.'

'Take me out of the misery in which I live with my mother, a good woman, but so devout as to make my life a burden to me. She doesn't like me to wash myself, because I have to touch my body with my own hand, and also because cleanliness makes me more pleasing to men. If you had given me the money I won in the lottery as a present, she would have made me refuse it. There is a young man, a hairdresser, who has seen me at Momolo's. He says if I had a dowry of four hundred crowns he would marry me and open a shop. I told him I was poor, that I had only a hundred crowns, which my confessor keeps for me; but now I have two hundred, and you can give me two hundred more. Take the money to my confessor, who is a good man, and will not tell my mother.'

'I will take them to him to-day, but to-morrow you must come and see me and hear how I have prospered. I will tell you this evening where I live.'

I left the hovel of a palace where we were as the clock struck nine. I was shivering with cold, and had only one idea in my head—to take an apartment somewhere where I could receive her without its being known. In a small narrow street, inhabited entirely by poor people, I found a room which was tolerably clean. I paid the woman of the house three months in advance, and gave her money to buy furniture, and, above all, fuel. I ordered her to light a big fire and keep it burning whether I was there or not.

I then went off to the priest. He was a French monk, about sixty years old.

'Reverend Father,' said I, 'I met at the house of Momolo, the *scopatore santissimo*, a young girl named Maria, whose confessor you are, with whom I fell in love. I offered her money. She told me that, instead of trying to ruin her, I should

do far better if I helped her to marry an honest fellow who would make her happy. I told her I would give her mother two hundred crowns for her. She begged me not to do so, as her mother would believe the money was the price of her sin. She asked me to bring it to you instead. Here it is; will you take charge of it? I shall go to Naples the day after to-morrow, and I hope when I come back I shall find her married.'

Mariuccia is disposed of.

The honest priest took the money, telling me he had known Maria for five years.

'She is as innocent and pure as a dove,' he said. 'Her mother is a saint, and as soon as I have made some inquiries about the young man, I will arrange the marriage, and no one shall know of it.'

At eight o'clock next morning I met Maria at the church, and she followed me to my lodgings. She was shy, and confused, and humble. I soon reassured her, and told her that her marriage was a settled thing. She left me, thanked me with all her heart for what I had done for her, and begged me to believe that, though she was poor, and I generous, she nevertheless loved me for my own sake.

While I was at table that day a messenger from the Holy Father was announced. He remitted to me the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur, with the diploma and patent sealed with the great pontifical seal; therein my quality of doctor of civil law declared me *protonotaire apostolique extra urbem.*

I had nothing to pay for my diploma, whereas Mengs had given twenty-five Roman crowns for his. I hung my cross on a wide crimson ribbon over my shoulder. I was silly and vain enough to buy a cross set with rubies and diamonds, but I never dared to wear this one at Rome. When I went to thank the Pope, I wore the plain cross modestly at my button-hole.

Five years later, when I was in Warsaw, Czartoryski, the Russian prince palatine, asked me why I sported that miserable thing. 'It is a rag,' he said, 'which only charlatans wear.'

The Popes know this, yet they continue to give this decoration to ambassadors, who hand it on to their valets.

Momolo's second daughter had fallen in love with my secretary Costa. I told him that, if on my return from Naples I found the marriage arranged, I would defray the expenses of the wedding.

He loved the girl, but he did not marry her then, for he thought I had designs on her; he was a rare fool, though there are plenty like him. He married her the following year, after he had robbed me; but I will speak of that later.

Journey to Naples.

The next day I went off in my fine carriage with the Abbé Alfani, who was willing to act as my secretary, preceded by le Duc on horseback, and arrived at Naples to find the whole population in a commotion, for Vesuvius was all but in eruption. At the last station but one the postmaster insisted on reading me his father's will. The good man had died during the outbreak of 1754, and he said that God was reserving a still severer punishment for the wicked city, and that this punishment would fall during the winter of 1761. I calmly went on my way and paid my respects to the Duke of Matalonia, whom I had known in Paris. He came forward to meet me, embraced me, and presented me to his wife. She was a daughter of the Duke of Bovino's. I told him I had come to Naples on purpose to see him. 'Then,' he said, 'you must be my guest'; and before I could reply, 'Go,' said he to a servant, 'fetch Signor Casanova's luggage from the hotel, and if he has a private carriage, put it in the coach-house here.' He added, 'Do you know that I have a son?' The child was sent for, and I duly admired him, saying how like he was to the duke. A monk, who was sitting at the right hand of the duchess, remarked that the boy was not in the least like the duke. He had hardly pronounced the words when the duchess turned quickly round and boxed his ears. The monk received his correction with a good grace. I kept the whole table in a roar with my witticisms, and in half an hour was a favourite with every one except the duchess, who cut the ground from under my feet whenever she could. She was beautiful but too haughty, and could be deaf, dumb, and

The Duke of Matalonia.

blind when she wished. For two days I tried to make her speak, and then gave it up in despair.

Next day the duke took me with him to pay my court to the king. I wore a coat of rose-coloured velvet, embroidered with gold spangles, and the signal honour of kissing a little nine-year-old hand covered with chilblains was mine.

On my return to Rome I sent Costa to inform Momolo that I meant to sup at his house, and that I had ordered a good supper for twelve people. I knew I should meet Mariuccia then, for Momolo had noticed that I delighted in her company.

The carnival in Rome in 1760.

The carnival was just beginning. I hired a superb landau for the week. This make of carriage is much favoured by the Romans, who love to be drawn up and down the Corso, from eight in the evening till midnight, during the eight days the festival lasts.

Carnival time has been a period of licensed madness for centuries. The races are the oddest part of the entertainment. Barbary horses gallop riderless through the streets to Trajan's column. The carriages are drawn up in close file on each side, and the footways are crowded with masks and sightseers of all classes. As soon as the *barberi* have passed, the carriages circulate slowly, and the masks, afoot or on horseback, press into the middle of the roadway. People pelt each other with real or imitation sweetmeats; pamphlets and lampoons, satirical allusions, fly from mouth to mouth. The greatest licence reigns, for this mob is composed of all that is most exquisite and all that is most abject in Rome. At the stroke of midnight the cannon of the fort of Saint Angelo announces the retreat, and in five minutes not a carriage or a mask is to be seen. The crowd has trooped off to fill the theatres and the opera, to see the rope-dancers and the marionettes. The restaurants and cafés are not forgotten, for during these eight days all Rome eats, drinks, and rejoices.

Momolo and his family received me with cries of joy, and after I had been with them a few minutes Maria came in,

followed by her saintly mother, who told me I must not be surprised to see her daughter so gorgeously dressed, for she was going to be married in three or four days. Of course I congratulated her, and asked who was the happy man.

'A young man who is going to open a hairdresser's shop. Worthy Father Saint-Barnaby arranged the marriage; he has made up Maria's dowry of four hundred crowns from a fund he has at his disposal.'

In the course of the evening I told the girls that Costa would take them to the races the following day in my landau, and that they might choose themselves some dress from the costumier, for which I would pay.

'And what about Maria?' one of them asked.

'Signorina Maria is going to be married. She must not be seen in public without her future spouse.'

The cunning Mariuccia pretended to be vexed at this speech, which her mother loudly applauded.

The next morning at seven o'clock I was at our usual trysting-place. Maria followed me, and we were alone in our little humble room that Love glorified for us. In the course of the interview she told me she was to be married on the following Monday.

'When shall we see each other again, my angel?'

'On Sunday, the eve of my wedding-day. We can be together for a long time,' she said, and went away smiling.

On my way home I met a carriage drawn by four horses, going at a great rate. A young man, who was inside, called out my name, and bade the coachman stop.

Lord Lismore and his mother.

I recognised Lord Talon.[1] I had known him in Paris. He was the son of the Countess of Lismore. This lady was separated from her husband, and lived with Monseigneur de Saint-Albin,[2] one of the bastards of Philip of Orléans, Regent

[1] There is no such English or Irish title.

[2] Son of the Regent and the actress La Florence. His father, however, did not own him till towards the end of his regency. The child was brought up by Coche, the Regent's *valet de chambre*. He took holy orders, and was made Archbishop of Cambray.

of France, and the unworthy successor of the great Fénelon in the archbishopric of Cambrai.

Lord Talon was a man of the most unbridled passions, and given over to every form of vice. I knew that his fortune was not equal to his title, and was astonished to see him in such a turn-out, and wearing the blue ribbon. He told me he was going to dine with the Pretender, but that he would sup at home, where he invited me to join him.

I was pleased to see the poet Poinsinet there,[1] a tiny little man, ugly, lively, and amusing, of some dramatic talent.

'What are you doing in Rome?' said I, 'and where is Lord Talon?'

'In the next room; but he is not Lord Talon any longer. His father is dead, and he is the Earl of Lismore. You know he is attached to the Pretender's suite. I left Paris with him, glad enough to get to Rome without its costing me anything.'

'Then he is rich now?'

'Not yet, but he will be, for his father has left an immense fortune. It is true that all his estates have been confiscated, but they will be restored to him.'

'Then he is only rich in prospect. But how has he become a knight of the Order of the King of France?'

'You are joking. What he wears is the blue ribbon of the Order of Saint Michael, of which the late Elector of Cologne was Grand Master. My lord, who is an accomplished violinist, was at Bonn, and played a concerto of Tartini's to the elector, who conferred the ribbon on him as a mark of his satisfaction.'

The orgy at Lord Lismore's.

We found my lord in the supper-room with a numerous company: seven or eight women, all handsome; three or four men who were to play women's parts in the Roman theatres; and five or six abbés, more impudent and immodest than the girls themselves. These girls were not, strictly speaking,

[1] Poinsinet obtained a certain reputation for his plays, but a greater one for his *naïveté* and innocence. He was the favourite butt and dupe of all the practical jokers of his time. Thackeray thought fit to devote many pages to him in his *Paris Sketch Book.*

courtesans. They were *dilettanti* in music, painting, and obscene philosophy. I was, I say, a mere novice among them.

'Where are you going, Prince?' asked Lismore of a good-looking man who was making for the door.

'I am not very well, my lord. I must get out in the air.'

'Who is that prince?' I asked of Poinsinet.

'The Prince of Chimay. He is a sub-deacon; but as his family is nearly extinct, he is soliciting permission to marry.'

We sat down, twenty-four, and it is a fact that we emptied a hundred bottles of wine. Every one was drunk, except myself and Poinsinet; the latter only drank water. And then began an orgy such as I had never dreamt of. No pen could describe it; only the most debauched imagination could conceive it. The only effect the scene produced on me was a deep sense of disgust and degradation. Fortunately, for myself as well as others, they did not try to drag me into their antics. My life was in danger, for I should certainly have drawn my sword had Lismore, who was furiously drunk, attempted to treat me as he did poor Poinsinet. I left the house, glad to have escaped so easily; and though I promised to respond to any future invitation, I was firmly resolved never to cross the threshold again.

Lismore came to see me next day, and we went to the Villa Medici together. I congratulated him on having come into his fortune, but he laughed, and said he had not fifty piastres in the world; his father had left nothing but debts, and he himself owed three or four thousand crowns.

'I am surprised that the people here trust you.'

'They trust me because they know I have drawn a bill of exchange on Paris for two hundred thousand francs. In four or five days the bill will come back protested, but I shall be off before then.'

'If you are sure that it will be protested, you had better leave to-day. As it is for an important sum, they may anticipate its arrival by an express.'

'I have just one faint hope,' he explained. 'I wrote to my

mother that if she cannot pay the money into the bank on which I have drawn the bill, I am a lost man. You know she is very much attached to me.'

'Yes, but I also know she is far from rich.'

'M. de Saint-Albin is, though, and *entre nous* I believe he is my father. In the meanwhile my creditors are quiet enough. Those people you saw at my house last night would give me all they have if I asked them, but I won't abuse their confidence. The only person I shall cheat is a Jew, who wants me to pay him three thousand sequins for this ring, which is only worth a thousand.'

'He will follow you wherever you go.'

'I defy him to.'

The ring was a solitaire straw-coloured diamond of nine or ten carats. Lismore left me, begging me to keep his counsel. This extravagant rattle-pate in no way excited my pity. I looked on him as a man doomed to expiate the punishment he was laying up for himself, unless indeed he had the courage to blow out his brains.

At Momolo's I saw the affianced husband of my pretty Mariuccia. He was talking to Tecla, Momolo's daughter, telling her that she was the one he preferred, only that she had not been able to help him to start the shop, so he thanked Providence that he had come across Maria.

On Sunday at seven I met Maria alone for the last time. Everything was arranged for the wedding, she told me, and Father Saint-Barnaby had given her twenty piastres for a present.

'I know I shall be happy,' she said; 'my betrothed adores me. But I am glad you did not accept his invitation to the dinner; people would have talked.'

'Tell me,' said I, 'have you confessed everything?'

'Not yet; and besides, I don't think I can have offended God, since I acted throughout from the purest of motives.'

'You are an angel. Promise to christen your first child after me.'

She promised, and we parted swearing everlasting friendship.

Before leaving Rome I went to pay my homage to the Holy Father on Monday evening when all the town was at the races.

He received me most graciously, expressing surprise that I should have absented myself from the carnival at its height. I told him that the greatest pleasure for me, or for any other Christian, was to present my respects to Christ's Vicar on earth. He bowed his head with proud humility, but I could see he was pleased. He kept me an hour, talking of Venice, Padua, and Paris. I gathered that the dear good man would have liked to become personally acquainted with those cities. I renewed my petition for his apostolic protection to enable me to return to my native country.

'My son,' he answered, 'commend yourself to God; His grace will work more than my prayers.'

Then giving me his blessing, he wished me *bon voyage*, and I saw the Head of the Church did not count much on his own powers of intercession.

On Shrove Tuesday I went on the Corso, riding a fine horse, and handsomely disguised as a Punchinello. I had an enormous basket of sweetmeats in front of me, and two sacks of *dragées*, which I showered on all the pretty women. I was invited to sup at Momolo's, and there I was to see Maria for the last time. She came as a bride, and I fancied, but perhaps it was only fancy, that her husband was more reserved with me than formerly. Maria managed to have a moment's conversation with me alone, and spoke most highly of her husband. He was all that was gentle, loving, and kind, she said, and she meant to make him happy. I drew from my pocket a fine gold watch, which I gave to the hairdresser; then placing on his wife's finger a ring, worth at least six hundred francs, I wished them both health and happiness.

Last meeting with Mariuccia.

As I was dressing next morning I received a note from Lord Lismore, begging an interview.

He showed me a letter from his mother. In it she told him that the banker, Paris de Monmartel, had informed her that a bill had been drawn on him for two hundred thousand francs by her son, and he begged her to deposit the money. She had replied that she would let him know in three or four days whether she could do so or not, but she warned Lismore she had only asked for this delay so as to give him time to get to some place of safety, as it was absolutely impossible for her to meet the bill.

Lord Lismore's distress.

'You must disappear at once,' said I.

'Help me to do so; buy this ring of me. You would not know it is not mine if I had not told you.'

I took the ring to a jeweller.

'I know this stone,' he said, 'it is worth ten thousand Roman crowns.'

At four o'clock I took Lismore five hundred crowns in gold, and fifteen hundred in notes on a banker in Amsterdam.

'I will ride away as soon as it is dark,' he said. 'I will take nothing with me but a small portmanteau containing a few necessaries, and my dear blue ribbon.'

Ten days after I had the diamond re-set at Bologna.

The disappearance of Lord Lismore made a sensation. The English tailor was ruined, the Jew who owned the ring was in despair, all the crazy fellow's servants were turned out of doors almost naked, for the tailor had seized their liveries.

Poor little Poinsinet came to me in a terrible state; he had only one shirt and a riding-coat over it, the landlord had taken everything else.

'I haven't a sou in the world,' said the poor votary of the Muses. 'I haven't another shirt to my back, and I know no one. I feel like jumping into the Tiber.'

I soothed his grief by offering to take him with me to Florence. I warned him I should leave him there. He said he had friends there, and his spirits rose so at my proposition that ten minutes after it was made he was writing verses at my table, where he remained busy till we left. My brother

John gave me a beautiful onyx: it was a cameo representing Venus at the bath. It was a veritable antique; with the aid of a magnifying glass I could read the name of the sculptor, Sostratus, who flourished twenty-three centuries ago. Two years later I sold it in London to Dr. Marti, who gave me three hundred pounds for it. He presented it to the British Museum, where no doubt it is at this moment.

Return to Florence.

We arrived, after two days' travelling, at Florence. I at once went to see Sir Horace Mann, the English resident, but I read consternation not pleasure on his face, when I told him my affair with the police was still unsettled. He told me I was foolish to return to Florence, and that he should be seriously compromised if I stayed at his house. I told him I was merely passing through, and returned to my hotel. I had not been there an hour, when a police agent came, and told me the auditor wished to see me next morning.

Sir Horace Mann is not pleased to see him.

I determined to leave rather than obey, and gave orders for my carriage to be ready at daybreak. I called on my dear Teresa, but she was at Pisa; La Corticelli, however, was at home, and welcomed me with kisses, and all sorts of Bolognese antics. She knew how to make me laugh, but I never cared for her seriously. A sudden fancy seized me. I told La Corticelli to come back to the inn with me; there I ordered a post-chaise and horses, and without more ado we set off for Bologna, leaving instructions for le Duc and Costa to follow in my carriage, and to bring Corticelli's mother and brother along with them.

CHAPTER XXIX

TO BOLOGNA, MODENA, PARMA, TURIN, AND CHAMBÉRY

He runs away with La Corticelli.

La Corticelli was wrapped in a warm quilted mantilla, but the madman who was carrying her off had not even a cloak, and it was piercingly cold, and we were going in the teeth of the wind in an open chaise.

But I would not stop anywhere along the road for fear we should be overtaken, and obliged to go back. Whenever the postillion showed signs of slackening his pace, I promised him additional pay, which made him whip up as though the devil had been behind him. I thought at times he should be blown over the Apennines. I was chilled to the very marrow. The postillions thought I was a prince running off with an heiress; we heard them discussing it while they were changing horses. This amused La Corticelli so much, that she was in fits of laughter all the way. In five hours we covered forty miles; we had left Florence at eight o'clock, and one hour after midnight we arrived at a post-house belonging to the Pope. I had no more cause to fear. Every one was asleep, but we made such a noise at the door that in a few minutes we had the landlord and the servants out of bed. They lighted a fire, but said there was nothing to eat in the house. I told the host I would rummage the larder myself if he did not find me something, and he went off grumbling, to return with eggs, butter, macaroni, and ham. We made an excellent supper, and eat like wolves, and drank chianti and monte pulciano;

then we were shown into a room, containing a bed big enough for six.

At Bologna.

We slept till one in the afternoon, and as we were sitting down to dinner my carriage drew up. Behind it was a two-horse *calèche*, containing an old woman and a young man.

'Here's mamma,' cried La Corticelli, 'now we shall have some fun.'

In came the Signora Laura, like a whirlwind.

'I had prepared supper for you, as you had ordered,' she said, 'six bottles of wine, which you will have the goodness to pay for, for I am a poor woman. I waited, and waited in vain; I was in despair. At midnight I sent my son to the inn; imagine my distress when I heard that you had gone, but no one knew where. Not one wink did I sleep all night, I did nothing but cry. In the morning I went to the justice of the peace, and told him you had eloped with my daughter, and I begged him to send after you and arrest you, but the brute only laughed at me. "Why did you let her go out alone?" he said. "She is in good hands, and you know all about him!" I found your valet, who told me you had gone to Bologna. I came after you as quickly as I could, and here I am; now let me tell you, sir, that this is beyond a joke.'

I believe that the woman, mercenary hypocrite as she was, had been really alarmed, so I soothed her as well as I could, and promised to pay her expenses and give her a present over and above, and after a while she quieted down. She finally went back to Florence, leaving her daughter in my care.

I spent eight days at Bologna with La Corticelli. When mid-Lent came I bade her farewell; she had an engagement as second dancer at Prague. I promised to fetch her thence, and take her to Paris with her mother; and I went on to Modena, where I arrived the evening of my departure from Bologna, and one of those sudden caprices, to which I have always been subject, decided me to make a stay of at least a few days there.

I went to visit next day a picture-gallery, and when I came

back I found an official waiting to see me. He brought me an order from the government to go on at once, or at most only to remain one night longer in Modena. I sent for my landlord, and made the official repeat the intimation in his presence.

He is ill received at Modena.

'Now go,' said I. I questioned my host, and he said the man was in the police sent by the *borgello*.

'Is the *borgello* governor of Modena?'

'The nobility know him; they even dine with him, for he is the manager of the opera, and they like to be in his good books. You had better go and see him, you will find him quite amiable.'

Instead of going to see the scoundrel, however, I called on my old friend, the Abbé Testa-Grossa, whom I had known in Vienna in 1753. He was a man of humble birth, but much intellect; he was old enough to rest on his laurels. The Duc de Modena had covered him with honours. He received me most kindly, but shook his head as soon as he heard of my adventure.

'You must leave the town,' he said, 'for this man may put a still greater slight on you.'

'I will go, but will you kindly explain to me this extraordinary proceeding.'

'The *borgello*,' he answered, 'has probably seen your name on the list of arrivals and departures, which is submitted to him every evening. He remembered that you had the hardihood to escape from "The Leads," and as he disapproves of such a proceeding, he determined to rid Modena of such a bad example.'

'I accept the explanation, but tell me, do you not blush to call yourself a subject of the Duke of Modena? What a disgraceful state of affairs, and how contrary to morality!'

He agreed with me, and we parted.

As I was getting into my carriage next morning, a sturdy-looking fellow, from twenty-five to thirty years of age, came up, and politely asked me for a moment's private conversation.

'If you will stay three days at Parma,' he said, 'and give

me your word of honour to pay me fifty sequins when I give you proof positive that the *borgello* is dead, I will shoot him for you before he is twenty-four hours older.'

'Thank you, but I think we must let the animal die a natural death. Here is a crown to drink to my health.'

I am thankful now that I refused his offer, but I must own that had I felt sure he was not laying a trap for me, I should have promised him the fifty sequins. It was prudence alone which kept me from committing a crime.

He flies to Parma.

I went to Parma next day, and put up at the Hôtel de la Poste, under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt, a name which I still bear. A man is perfectly free to adopt any name he likes, so long as it does not belong to any one else. I had used the name for some two years, but generally joined to my own family name.

At Parma I dismissed my valet Costa, but to my sorrow took him back a week later; his father was a poor violin-player, as I had been myself, and had a numerous family to support. My Spaniard, le Duc, was delighted when I sent Costa away, and correspondingly grieved when I re-engaged him.

'He is not a rake,' he said, 'and is sober, and avoids bad company; but I believe he is a thief, and the more dangerous because he pretends to be scrupulously honest in trifles. Remember what I say, sir, when he robs you; he is only waiting for a chance to make a big haul. I am different. I am a bit of a scoundrel, as you know, but honest in the main.'

He was more sharp-sighted than I was, for six months after Costa stole fifty thousand crowns from me. Twenty-three years passed before I saw him again; he was then valet to Count Hardegg, and I was sorely tempted to have him hanged. I proved to him that I could easily do so, but he begged me with tears and prayers to have pity on him. When I asked him what he had done with the money and jewels he took from me, he told me he had lost all in a gambling-house which he had set up; the year he left me he married Momolo's daughter, and deserted her and her child.

At Turin I found the Abbé Gama, and we lodged in the same house. He told me that in the month of May I should be furnished with letters of credit, and sent on a political mission to Augsburg, where the ministers of the belligerent Powers would be in conference. The idea of this mission pleased me mightily, and I assured him I should be ready.

He goes to Turin.

Turin is the city above all others where the fair sex is most charming, and where the police are the most in the way. The town is small and densely populated, and full of spies.

Désarmoises, whom I had known at Aix, was in Turin, and naturally constituted himself my guide. One very pretty girl attracted my attention. When I asked him who she was, he said: 'That is the famous Lia, a Jewess of invincible virtue; the most fascinating men in Turin have laid siege to her in vain. Her father is a well-known horse-dealer, and it is not difficult to gain entry to his house; but there is nothing to be done.'

The Jewess Lia.

The more difficult the enterprise, the more I longed to undertake it.

I went with Désarmoises to the horse-dealer's, and asked him if he had a good saddle-horse. While he was talking his daughter appeared; she was about twenty-two, tall and slim, with superb black hair, and a complexion of lilies and roses. Absorbed in the contemplation of her charms, I did not even see the horse which was brought up for my inspection, nevertheless I pretended to examine it very closely. I had it trotted, and then galloped up and down; finally, I told the dealer I would come next day and try it myself. It was a fine dapple-grey, and worth about a hundred sequins.

'He is very quiet,' said Lia; 'and if I were rich I would not sell him.'

'You have ridden him then, mademoiselle? I should like to see you mount him to-morrow.'

The following morning I found her attired in the dress of a postillion, and we went for a long ride together. On our return I told her that I would buy the horse, but only to make her a present of it. She thanked me modestly for my present,

and begged me to repeat my offer in her father's presence. Old Moses found the bargain to his liking; and after having taken my money, and given me a receipt for it, invited me to breakfast with them next day.

After breakfast, Moses, who was as avaricious as the rest of his nation, offered to sell me a phaeton and pair.

'You had better show them to the gentleman,' said Lia.

Without a word Moses left the room.

'I will look at them,' I said, 'but I shall not buy them, for I have no use for them.'

'You can take the lady you love for a drive.'

'That would be you, then; but perhaps you would not dare to come.'

'Why not, in the country?'

'Very well, Lia, I will look at them.'

'You can have them for four hundred sequins, if you buy them now,' said Moses; 'but after Easter the price will be five hundred.'

Lia got in, and I took my place beside her. I told her I would buy them, but only on condition she would accept them, and give me her love in return.

'You are frank,' she said, 'so am I. I am a respectable girl, and not to be bought.'

'All women are to be bought, my dear Lia, only their price varies; with some it is a matter of time and attention; but I am in a hurry, so I offer presents and gold.' I promised her father I would think the matter over, and give him an answer in a day or two. It was easy to see that Lia took me for a spendthrift, a dupe, but I had no intention of spending money, unless I was sure of its equivalent.

Lia dupes him.

I remained away for nearly a week, then the wily Jewess, meeting me in Turin, beguiled me back to her home. She laid her traps so well that I parted with three hundred and eighty sequins, and became the possessor of the carriage, without having obtained the smallest favour in return. I was so cross with her, that I swore I would never see her again, and sold

phaeton and horses to the Chevalier de Brézé for thirty sequins less than I gave for them.

About this time I became acquainted with a Madame R., a fashionable milliner and dressmaker, who had several pretty girls in her employ. Following her advice, I hired a small furnished house outside the city, where for some time I amused myself very well indeed; but the cursed Jewess, coming into the shop one day, I fell again under her spell, and bought all the lace, gloves, and silk on which she cast covetous eyes. She accepted my presents graciously, and invited me to accompany her to a Jewish wedding. As Jews are not allowed to show themselves in the streets of Turin during Holy Week, I invited Moses and his daughter to spend that period with me, and entertained them most lavishly. The old man had a ring he wanted to sell me for six hundred sequins, but I was too sharp for him, and told him I would talk about it with Lia, when he was busy with his affairs. He went off, leaving us alone in the house, and this time the bargain was satisfactorily concluded. Lia evidently expected me to present her with the ring, but I preferred to see it on my own finger.

He is summoned to appear before the head of the police at Turin.

On Easter Monday morning, I was summoned to appear before the head of the police.

This functionary I found seated at a long table, with about twenty other persons standing round him. He was a man of some sixty years or so, of most sovereign ugliness, his enormous nose half eaten away by an ulcer, and covered with black plaster. He had a wide coarse mouth, and little cat's eyes, surmounted by thick white eyebrows. This disgusting individual addressed me.

'You are the Chevalier de Seingalt?'

'That is my name. In what can I be of service to you?'

'I have sent for you to inform you that you must leave Turin within three days.'

'And as I do not admit your right to give the order, I reply that I shall stay as long as I please.'

'I shall have you turned out of the town by force.'

'Good. I shall not resist, but I advise you to think twice. One cannot, with impunity, turn any man out in a well-governed city when he is not breaking the law in any way, and when he has a hundred thousand francs deposit at his banker.'

'May be, but you have three days' time to pack up your baggage and withdraw your money from the bank. You had better obey; it is the king's command.'

'As you mention his majesty's name, I shall appeal at once to him, and feel sure he will deny all knowledge of your unjust proceedings.'

'You reason well, but you will have to obey.'

'Yes, I reason well, no thanks to you, and I shall not obey.'

With these words I turned on my heel, and left the room. I was furious, but after an instant's reflection, I went off to the Chevalier Raiberti and told him the whole story. He advised me to address myself to the Chevalier Osorio, minister of foreign affairs, who was a Sicilian, and a man of intelligence. He received me very well, and promised to speak to the king for me. The upshot was, I received permission to remain in Turin as long as was necessary for me to finish my business.

'But,' I objected to Signor Osorio, 'I have no business here, beyond amusing myself and spending my money, while waiting for instructions from the Portuguese Court, for I am to represent his Most Christian Majesty at the Congress of Augsburg.'

'Do you really believe the Congress will take place?'

'Can any one doubt it?'

'Some people think it will end in smoke. However, I am glad to have been of use to you, and shall like to hear how the head of the police likes your victory.'

This functionary received me with an impassable face.

'I am told,' he said, 'by Chevalier Osorio, that you have business which will keep you here some time; be so good as to tell me how many days will be necessary for you to arrange your affairs.'

'I cannot say, I am waiting for instructions from Portugal; nevertheless, I think I shall be able to leave for Paris in about a month. If that is not long enough, I shall have the honour of informing you.'

I remained in Turin until the middle of May, having received through Gama a letter for Lord Stormont, who was to represent England at the Augsburg Congress. It was with this nobleman that I was to act in regard to my mission.

As I wanted to see Madame d'Urfé before going to Germany, I wrote to her for a letter of introduction to M. de Rochebaron, of Lyons, at the same time informing her of my plans.

He visits Madame Morin at Grenoble.

And as I intended to pass through Chambéry on my way to Paris, I wrote to Madame Morin, reminding her of her promise to introduce me to the convent where her niece, my charming M. M. number two, was incarcerated. She replied that she was at my disposition any day I would send a carriage for her. She arrived, and was preceded by le Duc, who announced their coming with much cracking of his whip.

The first piece of news she gave me was that Mlle. Roman[1] had become the favourite of Louis Quinze, that she lived in a beautiful house at Passy, and that she expected

[1] Needless to say, contemporary accounts of this lady make no mention of Casanova as the occasion of her introduction to the King of France. It happened quite otherwise. Anne, who according to her birth certificate, dated 20th June 1737, was the daughter of J. J. Roman-Couppier and Madeleine Armand, his wife, was the mother of the only child Louis XV. ever recognised. She was handsome, but, according to Madame Campan, 'colossal in size,' and the king appeared quite small by her side. She would not submit to the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and a house was given her in the Grande Rue at Passy. Her son was born in 1762. The register of Saint Pierre de Chaillot calls him 'Bourbon, fils de Louis de Bourbon et de demoiselle Anne Couppier de Roman, dame de Meilly-Coulouge' (this from an estate the king had given her). There was great consternation at this quasi-royal recognition. For more than five years she enjoyed exceptional favour, and used to go to Versailles in a chariot drawn by six horses, but she became *exigeante*, and the king determined to be rid of both. The boy was taken away and educated without the secret of his birth being revealed to him. A sister of Mlle. Roman's, who had been established in Paris for years, and who had acquired a most unsavoury reputation there (probably the aunt of the *Memoirs*) found a husband for her in the person of Gabriel de Svian, Marquis de Cavanac, a broken-down nobleman. The king at first refused to

soon to present the king with a pledge of their love. She was therefore on the high-road to become Queen of France, as my oracle had predicted.

'At Grenoble,' said Madame Morin, 'everybody talks of you and your wonderful gift of prophecy; if you were to come again, you would have all the world at your feet. Every one believes in astrology, and M. de Valenglard is triumphant; he has bet a hundred louis to fifty that my niece will have a son.'

'He will win the wager, rest assured.'

'Are you certain?'

'Why should the horoscope be wrong in the end, when it has proved so correct in the beginning? I am going to Paris, and I hope you will give me a letter to Madame Varnier, which will procure me the pleasure of seeing your niece.'

'You shall have it to-morrow.'

After dinner we went to the convent. The second M. M. came down to the parlour, much surprised at the unexpected visit of her aunt; but it taxed all her presence of mind not to betray herself. Her aunt presented me, and she said quite naturally that she had seen me several times at Aix, while she was drinking the waters, but that probably I should not recognise her, as she always kept her veil down. I admired her quickness, and she seemed more beautiful than ever. We

sign the marriage contract, but eventually yielded, though he would not receive the bride. On the accession of Louis XVI. Madame de Cavanac produced her son's certificate of birth and baptism, and from this time the boy was treated almost as a prince of the blood. He was sent to the seminary of Saint Magloire, and received the tonsure from the hands of the Archbishop of Paris. He was known as the Abbé de Signy, and when about twenty-five years of age was sent to join Cardinal de Bernis in Rome. Arsène Houssaye says de Signy had a son and that the Abbé de Borie, who was curé of Saint Philippe du Roule, and died in 1870, was his grandson. De Signy was neglected by his royal relatives, and died of smallpox in 1787, in almost destitute circumstances. La Roman, when she became Madame de Cavanac, became exceedingly dissipated, and, after a terrible scandal, divorced her husband, whom, although he was not the offending party, a *lettre de cachet* exiled within forty-six leagues of Paris. Madame de Cavanac, after wandering over France and Spain, died at Versailles in 1808, ruined and forgotten.

passed an hour talking of Grenoble and her friends there, then she left us to fetch one of her pupils, to whom she was much attached, and whom she wished to introduce to her aunt.

I seized this opportunity to tell Madame Morin that I was astonished at the likeness between her and my friend at Venice, and I begged her to let me breakfast next day with her niece, and to present to her from me twelve pounds of excellent chocolate which I had brought from Geneva.

'You had better give it to her yourself,' she answered, 'for though she is a nun, she is also a woman; a present is always more acceptable to us from the hand of a man than from the hand of a woman.'

M. M. returned with the superior, two other nuns, and the young pupil, a pretty girl from Lyons.

I was obliged to play the humbug with these good ladies. Madame Morin said I wished to offer them some particularly good chocolate I had, and they invited me to breakfast with them the following day.

Chocolate, the biscuits, and preserves were served very daintily and coquettishly. I asked M. M. if it would be possible for me to give a dinner for twelve people in the convent, six on one side of the grating and six on the other. She said she thought it could be managed, and this half-sacred, half-profane meal was fixed for the next day.

He dines with the second M. M. in her convent.

We went to the convent at eleven o'clock, and at the stroke of noon dinner was announced. The table was covered with a dazzlingly white cloth, and ornamented with little vases of artificial flowers, each one of which was perfumed according to its nature. The cruel grating was even slighter than I had dared to hope, and I had M. M. on my left hand; le Duc and Costa waited on one side, and lay sisters on the other. The abundance of the dishes, the excellence of the wines, and the joyous and, it must be owned, slightly equivocal character of the conversation, engaged us for more than three hours.

After coffee we went into another parlour, where we stayed until nightfall; we then took our leave after many and long

farewells, pressing of hands, and assurances of kind remembrance. I told M. M. in a loud voice that I hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her again, as I meant to stay in Chambéry after her aunt had gone back to Grenoble.

I only allowed twenty-four hours to elapse before returning to the convent, and this time M. M. came alone to the grating. After thanking me for the fête I had contrived for her pleasure, she said that the sight of me had awakened old memories, and she feared my coming would trouble her newly acquired peace.

'I am ready, my love, to climb the walls of your convent garden.'

'Alas! it is impossible; believe me, you are already watched. They are convinced that we knew each other at Aix; let us forget everything, dear friend, and spare ourselves the torment of vain desires.'

'Give me your hand.'

'No, no, all is over between us. I still love you, I shall always love you, but I shall not be at rest till I know you are gone; your going will be the best proof of your affection.'

'It is horrible! You are in perfect health, you are more beautiful than ever, you are young and eager; I cannot understand how, with a temperament like yours, you can resign yourself to a life of abnegation.'

If I had not known M. M. at Aix her piety would have surprised me, but that was her character. She was passionate, but she loved God as a generous Father, and believed that He had forgiven her for yielding to temptation, and was determined to sin no more.

I returned to my inn, somewhat sad at heart, for I saw that she would have nothing more to do with me, and that all was over between us.

Through Chambéry and Lyons to Paris.

From Chambéry I went to Lyons, and from there to Paris, when I stopped at the Hôtel du Saint Esprit, situated in the street of that name. Before going to her I wrote to Madame d'Urfé, and sent the letter by Costa; he was a good-looking

fellow, and spoke French vilely, so I was sure she would take him for some supernatural being. He brought me back word that she was expecting me to dinner next day, with the greatest impatience.

'Tell me, how did she receive you, and what did you do when she read my letters?'

'She looked at me through a looking-glass, saying words I did not understand; then she walked three times round the room, burning incense on a hot plate; then she marched up to me and looked at me smiling, and told me to wait for her answer in the ante-chamber.'

Madame d'Urfé and the son of Madame Cornelys.

In the morning I went to my dear Madame d'Urfé, who received me with open arms. The young d'Aranda, she said, was well; she would have him to dine with us next day.

I assured her that the operation by means of which she would be born again in the form of a man could be performed as soon as *Quérilinte*, who was one of the three chiefs of the Rose Cross, was freed from the dungeons of the Inquisition in Lisbon.

'That is why,' I said, 'I have to go to Augsburg next month. There is, as no doubt you know, to be a congress there, and I am to represent his Most Christian Majesty the King of Portugal. This is only a pretext; I have letters to Lord Stormont, who is the plenipotentiary of the King of England, and he will use his influence to have the adept set at liberty. I shall require a good letter of credit, madame, and a lot of watches and snuff-boxes, so as to be able to make handsome presents, for we shall have to deal with profane powers.'

'I will see to all that, dear friend; but you need not hurry, the congress will not assemble till September.'

'It will never assemble, madame, believe me. If after all it should take place, I shall be obliged to go to Lisbon. In any case, I promise you we will meet again this winter. I must spend at least fifteen days in Paris now, to demolish a little plan of Saint Germain's.'

'Saint Germain! he dare not show himself in Paris.'

'I know he is here at this very moment, but in hiding.'

This was a mere guess, but a lucky one.

Madame d'Urfé complimented me on the charming girl I had sent up from Grenoble, meaning Mlle. Roman.

'The king adores her,' she said, 'and she will soon make him a father. I went to see her at Passy, with the Duchesse de Lauraguais.'

'Her son will be the saviour of France, and thirty years hence there will be extraordinary happenings, but unfortunately I cannot be more explicit until after your transformation. Did she mention me to you?'

'No, but you can easily see her at her aunt's, Madame Varnier.'

He drives in the Bois with Madame d'Urfé.

About four o'clock we went for a drive in the Bois de Boulogne. When we were near 'Madrid' we alighted and walked in the wood.

She pointed out a certain tree to me.

'Eighteen years ago to-day,' she said, 'I fell asleep on the very spot where we now are. During my sleep the divine *Horosmadis* came down from the sun and kept me company. When I opened my eyes I saw him mounting up to heaven. He removed his daughter from my care ten years ago, doubtless to punish me for having so far forgotten myself and him as to allow a mortal to succeed him in my esteem. My divine child *Triasis* resembled her father.'

'Are you sure that he was not M. d'Urfé?'

'No; M. d'Urfé never forgave me for my relations with *Anaël*.'

'*Anaël* is the spirit of Venus; did he squint?'

'Badly; how did you know that? And do you know also that he, *Anaël*, left me because of my unworthiness? I was unfaithful to him with an Arab.'

'The Arab was sent you by the genius of Mercury, who hates *Anaël*; but do not be disturbed, all this has rendered you the more apt for the grand transformation.'

We were walking towards the carriage, when all of a sudden Saint Germain stood before us! He turned back hastily at sight of us, and disappeared among the trees.

'Did you see him?' I asked. 'He is working against us, but we are stronger than he.'

'I am thunderstruck! I shall go first thing to-morrow to Versailles, and tell the Duc de Choiseul. I wonder what he will say.'

The next day I called on Madame Varnier, who showed me a letter from her niece containing these words: 'I am dying to meet the Chevalier de Seingalt again, it will be one of the happiest moments of my life. Arrange for him to be at your house the day after to-morrow at ten in the morning. If this is impossible let me know.'

Madame d'Urfé told me that de Choiseul, on hearing of our meeting with Saint Germain, only laughed, and said: 'I am not surprised, as he passed the night in my library.'

The Duc de Choiseul was a man of ability—a man of the world. He could keep state secrets, but no others. He was naturally expansive, and in this respect differed from most diplomatists, who think they must make mysteries out of trifles. He had made as if to disgrace Saint Germain in France, so as to be able to keep him in London as a spy; but Lord Halifax was not deceived, the ruse was too transparent.

He visits Mlle. Roman-Couppier.

I had been waiting at Madame Varnier's a quarter of an hour when the beautiful brunette came to me. There was something impressive in her *embonpoint*, it imposed respect; but she was no more arrogant than she had been at Grenoble, when she was poor and pure.

'People think I am happy,' she said, 'and envy me, but how can one be happy when one has lost one's self-respect? I only laugh now with my lips, not with my heart. At Grenoble, when I was so poor as to be almost in want, I laughed unconstrainedly. I have diamonds, laces, a superb house, carriages and horses, a fine garden, servants to wait on me, and a companion, who despises me perhaps. I am treated

like a princess, and the court ladies come and visit me on a familiar footing, yet not a day passes without my being subjected to some mortification or other.'

'How mortified?'

'I am continually solicited for favours, which I have to refuse, pleading my complete want of influence. I dare not ask anything from the king.'

'But why? Are you afraid of him?'

Her story.

'No, but in my lover I always see my sovereign. Ah! simplicity, not luxury, is the secret of happiness. I love the king, and I am in daily terror of offending him. I always feel that he is doing too much for me, therefore I cannot ask anything for others.'

'But I am sure the king would be glad to prove his love for you by granting favours to those in whom you are interested.

'Perhaps, but I cannot get over my timidity. I have a hundred louis a month pin-money. I give it all away in alms and presents, and I have to be economical to make it last. I know that the king only cares for me because I never tease or importune him.'

'And you love him?'

'How can I help it: he is kind, gentle, handsome, gay, and tender—what can a woman want more? He is always asking me if I am pleased with my furniture, my wardrobe, my domestics, my garden, if there is anything I want changed. I thank him, and tell him everything is perfect; then I see he is pleased, and so I am.'

'Does he ever speak of his child?'

'He tells me to take every possible care of my health, and I flatter myself that he will recognise my son as a prince of the blood-royal; the queen being dead, he ought to do so in all conscience.'

'He will do so.'

'Ah! how I shall love my son! I know it will be a boy, but I don't say so to any one. If I told the king about the

horoscope I am sure he would want to know you, but I dread gossip.'

'And so do I, dear friend; keep silence on that point, and let nothing interfere with the happiness which I am thankful I procured for you.'

She wept, and she went out, kissing me, and calling me her best friend. When I was alone with Madame Varnier, I said that instead of casting Mlle. Roman's horoscope, I should have done better to marry her.

'She would have been happier, I fancy. You did not take into account her timidity and her want of ambition.'

'I assure you, madame, I did not speculate on her courage or her ambition. I lost sight of my own happiness in thinking of hers; but it is too late now to look back.'

My brother Francis, the painter, who was married and settled in Paris, had invited me to sup with him and Madame Vanloo after the opera. When I arrived she greeted me demonstratively.

'You will meet Madame Blondel and her husband,' she said.

Madame Blondel was my old sweetheart, Manon Baletti.

'Does she know I am here?'

'No, it is a little surprise I have prepared for her.'

'I am glad you did not include me in the surprise; we will meet again, madame, but for the present I must bid you adieu, as I will never willingly meet Madame Blondel.'

Madame Vanloo afterwards told me Manon had begged her to thank me for my discretion, but that her husband had expressed regret at not meeting me.

News of Manon Baletti.

'They are a strange couple,' said Madame Vanloo. 'He lives at the Louvre, and she and her baby have an apartment in the Rue-Neuve-des-petits-Champs; he sups with her every evening; he treats her like a mistress, so as to maintain the first warmth of their love. He says that he never had a mistress who was worthy of being his wife, so he considers himself lucky in having found a wife worthy of being his mistress.'

The pretty haberdasher of the Rue des Prouvaires, to whom I had been so much attached, had left Paris. A certain M. de Langlade had run away with her, and her husband was living in misery. Camille was ill, Coraline had become the Marquise de la Marche, and daughter-in-law of the Prince de Conti. She had a son whom I met twenty years later, bearing the cross of Malta and the name of the Chevalier de Montréal. Many other young persons whom I had known had disappeared into the provinces, there to figure as worthy widows.

Such was Paris in my day: women, intrigues, and principles went out of fashion as rapidly as coats and gowns.

AVENTUROS

PORTRAIT OF CASANOVA BY THE PRINCE DE LIGNE[1]

He would be a very fine man if he was not ugly. He is tall, built like a Hercules, but with an almost African complexion; his eyes are bright, truthful-looking, and intelligent, but they indicate an uneasy susceptibility and a revengeful ferocity; it would seem easier to make him angry than to make him laugh. He seldom laughs, though he makes others do so. He has a way of saying things which reminds one of Harlequin and Figaro.

He knows everything, excepting the things which he prides himself on knowing—such as dancing, the rules of the French language, good taste, and the ways of high society. In the same way, it is only his comedies which are not comic, his philosophical works in which there is no philosophy, all the others are full of it, and of depth, character, piquancy, and originality. He is a mine of science and learning, but wearies one with quotations from Homer and Horace.

His witty sallies have a flavour of Attic salt. He is sensitive and grateful; but when he is displeased, is grumbling, bitter, and altogether detestable. No sum which one could give him would atone for a little joke at his expense. His style is like that of old prefaces—long, diffuse, and heavy—but if he has anything to tell—his adventures, for instance—he tells them so amusingly and dramatically that one is quite carried away. He beats *Gil Blas* or the *Diable Boiteux* in interest. He believes in nothing except what is least worthy of credence, being superstitious on many points. Fortunately, he is high-minded and delicate, for when he says, 'I have sworn to God,' or 'God so wills it,' there is nothing can stop him. He wants everything, and covets everything, and after having possessed everything, he knows how to do without everything.

[1] See de Ligne's *Mémoires et Mélanges historiques et littéraires*, Paris, 1828, vol. iv. p. 291.

His head is always running on women and little girls, and in his head they have to remain, which makes him furious. He rages against the fair sex, against himself, against Heaven, against Nature, but, above all, against the year 1725. He makes up for this failure of power, as well as he can, by eating, and drinking enormously. As he can no longer be a god in the gardens or a satyr in the forests, he will be a wolf at table: he lets nothing pass him, begins gaily and finishes sadly, grieving that he cannot begin all over again.

If he sometimes uses his superior intelligence to get the better of foolish men or women, it is, he says, to make those around him happy. In the midst of the disorders of a stormy youth, and a most adventurous and somewhat equivocal career, he could show a strong sense of delicacy, honour, and courage. He is proud because he is nothing. If he had been a landowner, a financier, or a great nobleman, he would have been more easy-going; as it is, no one must contradict him, and no one must laugh at him; every one must read his books and listen to his stories. You must never tell him that you have heard an anecdote before; listen to it as though for the first time. Do not forget to salute him respectfully, or you will make an enemy for life. His prodigious imagination, the vivacity which is his birthright, his travels, the many parts he has played, his courage in the absence of all moral and physical support, make up an extraordinary personality, good to know, and worthy of the consideration and friendship of the small number of people of whom he condescends to ask it.

EXTRACTS FROM THE 'MEMOIRS OF THE PRINCE DE LIGNE'

FRAGMENTS RELATING TO CASANOVA

CASANOVA was a man of high character, intelligence, and knowledge, who had seen the world. In his *Memoirs* he writes himself down an adventurer, the son of an unknown father, and a third-rate Venetian actress. I have drawn his portrait in my works, and called him *Aventuros*.

The merit of his *Memoirs* lies precisely in their cynicism, but it is this very cynicism which will prevent their ever being given to the world, though they are full of dramatic turns, of comedy, vivacity, philosophy, of original, sublime, and inimitable things.

I will try and set down here what I remember of the things he told me.

When he returned from his ridiculous expedition to Constantinople, he met his two brothers, likewise come back from travelling in foreign lands.

'What have you learned?' he asked them.

'Directly they opened their mouths,' he said to me afterwards, 'I saw that one would turn out a fool and the other a maniac: the fool, however, developed a genius for painting, and became the most celebrated painter of battlepieces of his time, and took the place of Lebrun, van der Meulen, and Bourguignon. His prophecy as regards the other, who died at Dresden, was more accurate.

One day he saw his mother on the boards, and made up his mind that she was a detestably bad actress. He went up to her dressing-room, embraced her (he had not seen her for years, and she did not know what had become of him), and there and then persuaded her to abandon the theatre.

'You will get along very well,' he told her, 'for one of the little women I loved when I was fifteen has married a procurator, and I share his wealth and his pleasures; the child has not forgotten her first sweetheart.'

Epigrams, ballads, sarcasms, indiscretions, criticisms of the direction of his beloved republic of Venice, Casanova treats us to them all—love, jealousy, imprudence, rope-ladders, bribed boatmen, adventures of every sort. He plays the great lord in a grey lustrine coat embroidered with flowers, with a large Spanish lace collar, and a hat with a feather, a yellow waistcoat, and crimson silk breeches, as he is represented on the frontispiece of his work on his escape from 'The Leads.'

This book is worth reading. The style is odd, and somewhat barbarous, but lively and interesting, and bearing the stamp of truth on every word. A great number of Venetians have assured me of the truth of the story.

Some time after his flight from prison the fancy seized him to add the name of *Seingalt* to his own; it would give him, he said, more the appearance of a gentleman, and he would be beholden to no sovereign in Europe for it.

After having wandered about the world for seventeen years, he determined to try his fortune in Russia. 'Who knows,' said he, 'I shall perhaps obtain some situation at the Court of the Great Catherine—librarian, secretary, diplomatic agent, tutor to some young nobleman, or lover to the Empress! There are two or three French hairdressers and an Italian pastry-cook filling such employment at Petersburg. I am worth as much, or more, than they.'

At the close of one of the long Northern days that have no night, Catherine was walking with some of her ladies in the summer gardens, when she saw an extraordinary-looking man examining the statuary with a mocking air. She guessed at once that it was the man whose name had been made known to her through the reports of her police.

'That statue does not please you, sir?'

'No, madame; it is out of proportion.'

'It is a nymph.'

'It does not look like one, madame! Where are the usual attributes?'

'Are you not the brother of the painter?'

'Yes, madame; how does your Majesty know that? and how comes she to be familiar with a wretched dauber like my brother?'

'He is a genius, sir, and I think a great deal of him.'

'He has a good eye for colour, madame, and a fair sense of composition, but drawing is not his strong point, and his pictures are unfinished.'

'Have you seen the little wooden house Peter the Great built—the first in Petersburg?'

'Yes, madame; he ought to have gone to Italy instead of to France for his architect.'

His criticisms on his brother were literally just. I have often reproached Francis with the cannon or pistol fired off in the middle of his pictures, so that the smoke might cover their imperfections.

By these means one could take his Turks' turbans to mean anything or nothing. All his horses had Roman noses; but this was from principle, as his model was made that way.

This Casanova, the painter I mean, was a most singular man. One day when I was speaking of his pictures in the Palais Bourbon, I said laughingly, 'Why did you represent my great-grandfather as running away at full speed on a big grey horse after the battle of Lens, when every one knows that he was made prisoner at the head of the infantry, after having done marvels in leading the cavalry?' He did not answer.

Thirty years after he painted a large picture which was sent to the Russian empress. It was the portrait of the Emperor Joseph, surrounded by his generals, Lacy, Laudon, Haddik, who all had a right to be there, but imagine my astonishment when I recognised myself among them! All my comrades were jealous. 'Why did you put me there?' I asked.

'To make amends for a wrong,' said Casanova, 'which I did to a Prince de Ligne in 1648.'

Marshal Pellegrini said, in a droll voice, 'My comrade, my countryman, for I come from Verona, put me in too, I implore you, if you only squeeze me into a little corner!'

'There is no more room, your excellency.'

'My friend, if I am hidden by the frame, if only the end of my nose shows, I should be happy. I beg you put me in.'

And he got in by sheer importunity.

I cannot remember all the places where Jacques Casanova went in his double character of knight-errant and wandering Jew, but after many years of this existence he began to find the gates of cities, courts, and castles closed to him. I remember, however, that he went to Vienna, where his brother was established, and profited by the complaisance of the Emperor Joseph, who received all sorts of people.[1]

'It seems to me,' said Joseph, who never forgot a detail, 'that you were the friend of Signor Zaguri.'

[1] From this point the *Memoirs* of de Ligne deal with a time posterior to the *Memoirs* of Casanova, which finish in 1774. The prince was writing what he remembered from reading Casanova's manuscripts, which is a further proof that the original *Memoirs* were carried much further than those we possess.

'Yes,' answered Casanova, 'he was a Venetian nobleman.'

'I don't think much of his nobility. I do not care for people who buy titles.'

'And how about those who sell them, sire?'

Joseph changed the conversation; it was easy to see he was displeased at this bold reply, which was, nevertheless, just. I think it was soon after this that Casanova went to Paris for the last time. My nephew, Waldstein, met him at the Venetian ambassador's, and took a great liking to him. Waldstein pretended to believe in magic, and to practise it: he began to talk about the clavicula of Solomon, and of Agrippa.

'How strange that you should speak to *me* of these things,' cried Casanova; '*O! che bella cosa, cospetto!*—how familiar all these things are to me!'

'If that is so,' said Waldstein, 'come to Bohemia with me, I am leaving to-morrow.'

Casanova, who had come to an end of his money, his travels, and his adventures, took Waldstein at his word, and became his librarian. In this quality he passed the last fourteen years of his life at the Château of Dux, near Toeplitz, where for six succeeding summers he was a constant joy to me, because of his enthusiastic liking for me, and his useful and agreeable knowledge.

It must not be supposed, however, that he was content to live quietly in the haven of refuge that the kindness of Waldstein had provided for him. It was not in his nature. Not a day passed without a storm: something was sure to be wrong with his coffee, his milk, his dish of macaroni, which he insisted on having served to him daily. There were constant quarrels in the house. The *chef* had spoilt his polenta; the coachman had given him a bad driver to bring him over to see me; the dogs had barked all night; there had been more guests than usual, and he had been obliged to eat at a side table; a hunting-horn had tortured his ear with discordant sounds; the *curé* had been trying to convert him; Count Waldstein had not said good morning to him first; the soup, out of *malice prepense,* had been served to him too hot, or too cold; a servant had kept him waiting for his wine; he had not been introduced to some distinguished person who had come to see the lance which pierced the side of the great Waldstein; the count had lent some one a book without telling him; a groom had not touched his hat to him; he had spoken in German and not been understood; he had got angry and people laughed at him. The fact of the matter was, that people laughed at him for many reasons. When he showed his French verses they laughed. When he declaimed Italian verses with much

gesticulation, they laughed; when he came into the salon and bowed in the style which Marcel, the famous dancing-master, had taught him sixty years before, they laughed. When at all the balls he danced a minuet in a grave and stately manner, they laughed. When he put on his befeathered hat, his cloth of gold coat, his black velvet vest, his buckles with paste diamonds, worn over rolled silk stockings, they laughed.

'*Cospetto!*' said he; 'low scoundrels that you are! You are all Jacobins, you are wanting in respect to the count, and the count is wanting in respect to me when he fails to punish you.'

'Sir,' he said one day to the count, 'I wounded a great Polish general in the belly. I may not be a gentleman by birth, but I have raised myself to the position of one.'

The count laughed, which was another grievance.

One morning the count went into his room with a pair of pistols in his hand, and looked at him seriously, though he was inwardly dying with laughter. Casanova burst into tears, and fell on his shoulder. 'What!' he said, 'should I kill my benefactor—*O che bella cosa!*'

Then, thinking that he would be suspected of cowardice, he took up the pistols and returned them gracefully to the count, holding his hand at the level of his eyebrow, as one does in a minuet; then he wept a little more and fell to talking of magic and macaroni.

All the mothers in the village complained of his talking nonsense to their little girls!

He managed to involve the count in a quarrel with the monks at the Abbey of Ossegg, which he called, for some reason known only to himself, *Calvados.* When he got indigestion from overeating, he declared he was poisoned by the Jacobins! He bought a quantity of cloth on credit from the count's factory at Oberleitersdorf, and flew in a rage when asked for the money.

He could not endure so much persecution! God ordered him to leave Dux! By the way, he always pretended that everything he did was by God's order. God ordered him to ask me for letters of introduction to the Duke of Weimar, who is very fond of me, for the Duchess of Gotha, who does not know me, and for the Jews in Berlin.

He went off secretly, leaving a tender, proud, honest, and irate letter behind for Waldstein, who laughed and said he would be sure to come back some day.

Poor fellow, they did not offer him a place as tutor, or librarian, or chamberlain, but kept him cooling his heels in the anterooms, and he revenged himself by proclaiming loudly that all Germans

are stupid. The excellent and amiable Duke of Weimar received him marvellously well, but he instantly became jealous of Goethe and Wieland, and declaimed against them and the literature of the country of which he knew nothing! At Berlin he launched his diatribes against the ignorance, superstition, and dishonesty of the Hebrews I had sent him to, which did not prevent him from borrowing money from them and giving them bills drawn on Waldstein in exchange. My nephew laughed, paid them, and embraced him when he returned. As for Casanova, he laughed and wept at the same time, and said that God had told him to take a six weeks' voyage, to go off without saying a word, and then come quietly back to his room at Dux. He told us all that had happened to him, including these little contrarieties, which he dignified with the name of humiliations.

A week after he returned there were fresh disturbances. The strawberries were handed to every one before him at table, and none left for him; and worse still, a portrait of himself which had disappeared from his room, and which he flattered himself had been taken by an admirer, suddenly reappeared, hung up in an inferior and degrading position. Thus he went on, agitating himself, grieving, groaning over the conquest of his ungrateful country; talking to us of the League of Cambray and the glories of the ancient and superb city of Venice, which had hitherto resisted all Europe. His appetite began to diminish, he ceased to regret life, and he ended nobly enough, at peace with God and man.

Printed by T. and A. Constable, (late) Printers to Her Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press

0

Casanova de Seingalt, Giacomo Girolamo
The memoirs of Jacques Casanova de Seingalt