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THE TEMPTATION;

OR, THE

WATCH TOWER OF KOAT-VËN:

A ROMANTIC TALE,

BY

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"THE WANDERING JEW," "THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS," &c. &c. &c.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH.

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TEMPTATION.

BY EUGENE SUE.

CHAPTER I.

Towards the close of the month of September, 1780, a female on horseback, followed by a mounted attendant, were seen leaving the sea coast, and proceeding inland, they both began the ascent of the mountain *Fal-Goët*, close to the little town of St. Rénan, and near that part of the coast of Britany which extends opposite the islands of Ouessant, Molênes, Quemenes, and Beniquet, forming the narrow strait known as the *Passage du Four*.

When they arrived at the summit of the mountain, the female stopped her palfrey for an instant, as if to enjoy the magnificent spectacle that met her view.

For in the west, the sun, setting behind the rocks of the island, already immersed in the warm vapours of the evening, cast its lengthened and ruddy reflections upon the waves that broke gently on the shore.

To the north, the Chateau of Kervan raised its turrets—its lofty spires glittering in the last rays of daylight, and overlooking the immense masses of verdure, already in shade, of the forest of Ar-Foel-Cout.

To the east were seen outstretched meadows, intersected by smiling hedges of lively hawthorn, by which all the fields of Britany are divided; and the fields themselves, decked with flowers of a thousand hues, were encircled by the mountains of Arrès, whose sides were covered with heath, and interspersed with yews and pines.

Finally, to the south, St. Rénan, with its Gothic spire and turret of grey stone, was already shrouded in the twilight, and the light mist that hung over the little river Hel-Aar, whose cold and limpid waters flowed gently at the bottom of the valley.

The female, of whom we have spoken, was dressed in a black riding habit of the English fashion, which exhibited her tall form to perfection; and when she threw back the veil that enveloped her beaver hat, you might observe a youthful face, whose fea-

tures were beautiful and regular, with the pale complexion of a brunette.

Taking off one of her gloves, she passed a delicate and slender hand through her black hair, which she wore without powder, and smooth across the forehead, and drew it over her dark eyelashes, to soften the impression of the too powerful rays of the setting sun.

It is incredible to what an extent the last golden rays of the sun, spreading over her pale and beautiful features, gave to them life and brilliancy—how much the warm reflections of its burning light harmonised with the strongly marked character of her figure. You might have imagined it to be one of those beautiful portraits, by Murillo, whose powerful effect is never properly developed, excepting by the light of a Spanish sun.

After our horsewoman had looked for a few minutes attentively towards the north-west, a kind of signal, a white veil, floated for an instant over the summit of a ruined tower that stood on the rocks near the shore, and then disappeared.

At the sight of this the eyes of our rider glistened, a blush rose on her forehead, her cheeks reddened, and she pressed her hands against her lips as if to send a kiss of love; then, contracting her dark brow, she lowered her veil, struck her steed with the riding whip, and descended the sides of Fal-Goët at a gallop, and with frightful rapidity.

"The duchess forgets," exclaimed her follower, continuing his course and endeavouring to keep closer to her side. "La Coronella is sure footed, but this road is dreadful."

These words were uttered in pure Castilian, with the tone of respectful remonstrance which her old and faithful attendant always assumed.

"Silence, Perez," replied the duchess, in the same language, urging her horse at the same time to increase its speed.

Her old squire was silent; and it was easy to judge of the deep interest he felt for his mistress, by the uneasy watchfulness with which he followed every movement of La Coronella, paying scarcely any attention to his own horse.

But, as the old man had observed, La Coronella was sure footed; for her sire was an Arabian, and her dam one of the mares of Sierra, whose race is at the present day so rare, and in such high estimation. So that, notwithstanding the inequalities of the road, the quagmires, and the ravines that intersect all the highways of Lower Britany, La Coronella did not in a single instance stumble.

In the meantime Perez could not breathe freely until he saw his mistress, who had reached the foot of the mountain, enter a long avenue that led to the Chateau of Kervan.

Perez appeared about fifty years of age—he was spare in body, and tanned like a man of the South of Spain—his flat and ample cocked hat, with its red cockade, allowed his powdered and twisted hair to be seen—he wore a coat and waistcoat of black cloth, breeches of white leather, and his ample and pliant boots reached his knee. The only mark of servitude about him was a coat of arms engraved on the clasp that fastened his belt; the latter was striped with red and white, and ornamented with gold lace; to this his hunting knife was suspended. The same arms were repeated on the studs of the horse's bit, and on the saddle cloth.

An enormous grisly and shaggy-haired greyhound followed his horse's steps.

When the duchess drew near to the gate of the Chateau, Perez dismounted, took off his hat as he passed his mistress, and went to warn the household of her arrival.

Thus, when she reached the castle, and placing her hand on the shoulder of her servitor, sprang lightly to the ground, her valets and footmen awaited her respectfully, ranged along the stairs and galleries she had to pass on her way to her apartments.

The footmen were in deep mourning; but large shoulder-knots of green and red riband, interspersed with gold, floated from their left shoulders.

The old attendant gave the charge of the steeds to the ostler, and proceeded to the stables to ascertain that La Coronella was treated with the most careful attention.

As soon as he was satisfied that his favourite mare wanted nothing, he returned, and stopped near the bridge that separated the principal court from the court-yard of the chateau.

"God bless you, donna Juana," said the servitor to a woman about his own age, dressed completely in the Spanish style, with mantle, petticoat, and *monillo* of black cloth.

"Good day, Perez; what news have you?"

"None."

"Always going to that rock," observed Juana, pointing to the west.

"Always. The duchess gets off her horse behind a lofty cliff, follows a footpath across the rocks, disappears, and I wait for her—one hour—sometimes two—but, by St. James, never so long as I did to-day."

"Heaven save me, Perez, I believe so too, and I was dreadfully uneasy about it; but what is the use of all those rambles on the sea-shore? The duchess never had a taste for them before the day when . . . ."

"You know, Juana," said the old man, impatiently interrupting his wife, "that I hide nothing from you; but my mistress's secret does not belong to me; besides I am not acquainted with it. I have, it is true, only to turn my head to discover it; but that I will never do."

"By the holy Virgin, I believe it; never since we have been married, Perez, have you trusted me with a secret, not even concerning the late duke."

"Any more than you have me respecting the duchess. Is not that the case, Juana?" added the old man. "So that let us now both be silent, and conceal the secrets of the house of Almeda . . . if the house of Almeda has any secrets," added he quickly, after a pause.

And giving his arm to Donna Juana he returned to the castle, for the night was becoming dark.

"I will return to you directly, Perez," said Juana, leaving her husband and crossing the gallery; "but I must go and get ready the duchess's bed."

CHAPTER II.

THE TOWER OF KOAT-VEN.

So the keen hunter follows up the hare
In heat or cold, on shore, or mountain height;
Nor, when 'tis taken, more esteems the prize;
And only hurries after that which flies!

The tower of Koat-Vën, which attracted in so lively a manner the attention of the duchess on the previous evening, was built, as we have already

said, on the high rocks on the western coast of Britany.

The building having first answered the purpose of a watch-tower, was afterwards bestowed by the lieutenant of Britany on Joseph Rumphius, a learned astronomer, to facilitate the meteorological and hydrographical experiments on which he had been long engaged; and as Koat-Vĕn was not far from the town of St. Rénan, where Rumphius resided, he found a wonderful convenience in the possession of this observatory. Thus it was that the circular rooms of which it was composed were generally crowded with quadrants, astrolabes, clocks, globes, telescopes, and other instruments, lying about without order in all directions.

But at the present time Rumphius was no longer an inhabitant of the tower of Koat-Vĕn, and all the *engines* of science and astronomy were collected in a kind of turret in the upper part of the building, while the useful furniture that occupied the place of all this learned apparatus, proved that the purposes to which the tower had been devoted had been suddenly changed, and that its new master, more occupied with earth than heaven, had endeavoured to make the building habitable.

The four long and narrow windows that looked out to the south, north, east, and west, and gave light to the large room occupying the first floor, were hung with long curtains; in addition to this a few chairs, including a large and excellent arm-chair with a high-back, were placed round a great table covered with papers and books on theology.

It was the day after that on which the duchess had so imprudently ventured to the summit of Fal-Goët. The sun looked down on the sea, which a playful breeze raised into ripples in its gambols, and the belt of islands and rocks whose brown crests intersected the horizon, stretched out in the midst of the pearly foam that kissed their base.

Still there existed an indescribable and deep melancholy in the aspect of the pure and cloudless sky; it caused an insurmountable feeling of sadness to arise, and you seemed to wish that the white masses of some cloud would spread themselves over the monotonous blue, as if you had reckoned on the appearance of this cloud, that its form and contrasted colour might withdraw the mind from its painful reverie.

A sky all blue, a sky without masses of light and shade, of sunshine and darkness, alas! how sad and melancholy is such a sky—it is a life without joy and without tears, without love and without hate.

It was two o'clock, and at that hour all was silent on the shore, all was mute in Koat-Vĕn. Sometimes indeed the plaintive cry of the tern mingled with the dull and regular sound of the waves as they fell heavily on the shore—sometimes the dank wings of a gull made the panes of the narrow-latticed windows of the tower tremble, or the kingfisher grazed the diaphanous lake as it carried to some hole in the wall, the moss and seawood which it stored up for the winter.

A white sail, gilded by the rays of the sun, might be seen at long intervals glancing between the fantastic peaks of the black rock, and then disappearing, like the remembrances of love and youth that shine at times on a broken heart, grown old before its day.

But this melancholy silence was soon interrupted, hurried footsteps sounded on the winding staircase communicating with the upper part of the building, the door of the large chamber opened violently, and a man entered, exclaiming, "It is she!" and immediately threw himself into the arm-chair.

This man appeared not more than five-and-twenty years of age, his hair was without powder, his nose small and straight, his lips thin, and his rounded chin was so smooth and fair, his complexion so delicate, that many a woman might have envied his handsome face.

A few slightly marked wrinkles in the angle of his eye, might perhaps have indicated a free and open nature, if the deep furrow that suddenly appeared on the forehead of the young man had not impressed his handsome features with the appearance of suffering and sorrow.

His dress was plain, of a dark colour, and exhibited his elegant form to advantage; but in the simplicity of its fashion, it nearly resembled the dress of an ecclesiastic.

He rested his head on one hand, and his features became more and more pale, while he began to turn over the leaves of an enormous volume clasped with copper that lay open on the table, and read with deep attention.

His mind must have been deeply occupied, for the door of the room opened without his appearing to take the least notice of it.

And the Duchess of Almeda appeared at that door.

CHAPTER III.

TEMPTATION.

"This is precisely my situation, and, amidst the cruel agitation this contrariety of will causes me to endure, I condemn myself much more than I ever did formerly, while I struggle with my bonds to endeavour to break them; for they were almost reduced to a thread, but still it was strong enough to retain me."—CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTIN.

But, here, Adeline, who seemed to pique
Herself extremely on th' inoculation
Of others with her own opinions, stated—
As usual—the same reason which she late did.—BYRON.

THE Duchess stopped an instant at the threshold of the door, then, untying and taking off her riding hat, placed it on a chair, and advanced lightly so close, so very close to the young man, that her cheek almost touched his, while he remained absorbed in his reverie.

Curious to know what engaged his attention so profoundly, she leant forward and saw her own portrait—her portrait, sketched in pencil—a perfect resemblance—ineffable delight! heavenly joy! and she also saw the traces of recent tears.

Then, as if from some sudden feeling of pride, the beautiful duchess raised her head, her pale cheeks became animated, and an inconceivable expression of happiness and pride lighted up her features; perhaps a slight feeling of contempt compressed her lips, and made her look more severe, as she regarded the effeminate features and delicate form of this young man; and lowering her long dark eyelashes and folding her arms on her bosom, she raised her noble and lofty figure to its utmost height, the riding-dress she wore giving it additional effect.

She was one of those beautiful Spanish forms whose nature is so rich and vigorous—oh! what fiery and headstrong passion did she not possess, what devouring and implacable jealousy, when excited!—and those thick and beautiful locks, those smooth and arched eyebrows, and the light and almost imperceptible down that gave more

brilliancy to the coral of her ruby and slightly pouting lip!

Oh Rita, Rita, thou hast numbered eight-and-twenty years; the sun of the Havannah has tinged thy voluptuously rounded shoulders.—Rita! Should we pity or envy those for whose love thou hast come hither, on horseback, followed by a single attendant? You come to an old ruined tower—you, the duchess, whose chief domestics are gentlemen; you, the proud daughter and widow of a grandee of Spain; you, whose ancestors, descended from Sancho IV., had a claim to the Spanish crown!

A movement of Rita caused the handsome recluse of the tower of Koat-Vën to awaken, as from a dream; and, raising his head, he perceived the duchess leaning on the arms of the chair—the duchess gazed on him with idolatry.

"Ah! it is thee," said he, in an affectionate tone, "thou art there."

"Yes, it is I, Henry, I, thy tempter demon," said she smiling, and kissing his forehead.

"Oh, be silent," said the youth, gently repelling her, while a dark cloud spread over his forehead.

"My child," said the duchess, throwing her arms round Henry's neck, "still these girlish scruples? See, now, I will convince you, and quiet your timid conscience."

And Rita, seated on Henry's knee, rested her head on his shoulder.

Then, as he still remained pensive and absorbed in thought, and as his hand felt like ice in the glowing palm of the duchess,—

"Henry," she said impatiently, "is it thus you greet my return? Do you no longer love me?"

And Henry pointed to her portrait. "Oh, Rita, can I cease to love you? have you not changed my life; and this new existence with which you have endowed me, does it not entirely consist of love for thee? To love you now—is to exist."

"You have no more regrets then, Henry?" said the duchess, playing with the long hair of her lover.

"Yes, Rita, yes, when you are not here, I feel the most bitter regret, because I have broken a sacred vow, because perhaps I am about to renounce the quiet and holy life for which I was born. Brought up far from the world, my passions, my senses, my ideas, all slept within me, Rita, one thing only, I loved—Heaven!—my faith was fortified in solitude, my only desire was the cloister. Yes, Rita, the cloister. If, like me, you had but seen the Abbey of Kandem, its woods and oaks, its lofty rocks! If you had heard the waves break and moan beneath the dark arches of its galleries, you would comprehend all the charms my life promised me there in the future I had created for myself—a quiet and peaceable life; for my days would have flowed on pure and calm, under the shade of the abbey, as the hidden brook flows through the dense forest—feeble, suffering, I should have loved the feeble and the suffering; my life would soon have passed in giving them assistance; and some day I should have expired without remorse and without fear,—some day, Rita, stretched in my cell, still endeavouring to gaze on the long ocean waves, striving to hear for the last time the sublime harmony of the sea wind I should have quitted this world without regret, and without fear."

And Henry buried his head in Rita's bosom.

"Oh!" replied Rita, "did you but know with what intoxication, what pride I hear these confessions! did you but know, Henry, how delightful it is to say to oneself, this weak and timid soul, that folding its wings at the least contact of earth, refusing to spread them, except to spring towards Heaven! this soul which devoted itself to God—is now devoted to me—I have become its deity. He is mine, I am his. For thou art mine, Henry—mine also are thy tears and sorrows which make me the happiest of women. Happy . . . oh, yes; superlatively happy; and yet, Henry, how little do our characters resemble each other . . . I have the bold unchanging feelings of a man, while you have all the gentle timidity of a woman; I . . . have had to overcome your scruples, your simple terrors, to prove to you that happiness could be met with even here below . . . Well, Henry! perhaps it is this striking contrast between us, that augments still more the violence of my love—the only love I ever felt—that love that makes me, proud as I am, and ever treating with scorn the homage of mankind, feel and inexplicable bliss in being here, a submissive slave at thy feet, waiting for one word of affection from thy lips, asking it as a favour, and for pity's sake."

And the duchess, gently sinking at Henry's feet, tremblingly clasped her fair hands, and looked on him with adoration.

At this moment Henry's features had a delightful expression of melancholy happiness, his eyes were moist with tears, and lowering his head he rested his forehead on that of Rita.

Then it might be said the hot voluptuous breath of this impassioned woman had suddenly animated the timid youth, and that he had drawn from the lips of the fair Spaniard the fire that sparkled in his eyes and rushed to his crimsoned cheeks.

"Oh, Rita!" he said, forcing himself to rise, "see, with what a charm you hold me . . . . Rita, with thy lips you have imparted a flame that intoxicates me, for in these moments of madness, oh! Rita, my imagination is exalted, and carries me with it—my feelings are endued with an unknown acuteness. Hark! how my heart beats, my brain burns with thought! Now I live—now the sun appears more brilliant to me, the sea more beautiful, the flowers smell more sweetly, the voice of the birds is more full of love. Now my thoughts are bent on glory and battle, and the recollection of my vows of seclusion and obscurity appears to me like a far off and forgotten dream. I know not what ardour animates me now, what power drags me on; but this dress is hateful to me, the sight of these books annoys me, this solitude presses heavily on me! I long for fame!—strife!—Oh, let me hear the cry of the warriors!—the clang of arms!—who knows but I——give me a sword, oh, heaven!—glory!—a name—a great name, that may be pronounced with envy and respect!"

And Henry's whole frame underwent an inconceivable metamorphosis; his figure became erect; his melancholy and timid countenance had given way before an extraordinary air of boldness and intrepidity: his attitude was imposing; his eagle glance had a fire and boldness the duchess could not withstand; and for the first time, perhaps, she lowered her eyes before those of Henry. How admirable he looked!

"Oh!" said she, throwing herself on his neck, "Oh, Henry, my angel! how handsome thou art—how well that intrepid look becomes thy eyes! Oh! how I love the boldness that shines in thy

looks, how can I avoid loving thee, Henry? Am I not the cause of this? Have not these ideas of glory been given thee by me?—have they not come to thee along with thy love for me? The fire that exalts thee, didst thou not obtain it from my lips? Alas!" she said, weeping, "I love thee, O I love thee, with as much jealous affection, as much selfishness and pride, as a mother loves her child. And then did you but know with what eagerness I seek, in the new feeling I have raised within thee, traces of my own sensations! Oh, I seek them as a mother seeks her own features in those of a son she adores. So that you owe me more than love, Henry—you ought to love me as a mistress, and as a mother. Hark you, Henry, it would be honourable in thee—for love like that is holy and blessed; and then again this bearing of yours that delights me so, I would not other women should witness it; and when I have snatched you from this hateful, solitude . . . you will promise me, will you not, Henry? to appear to all the world as the melancholy recluse of Koat-Vën. . . for me alone must you reserve that sparkling eye—that bold and intrepid bearing! But how foolish I am," she exclaimed, smiling through her tears,—"my love alone has the power of exalting thee thus, and you are habitually so cold and taciturn that I am the only woman who would be interested in thee. Go, poor child, thy paleness and thy sadness would quickly drive away others—for none but I can love thy pale and melancholy looks. Oh! none but I, believe me," said the duchess, in that tone of absolute conviction that all women assume when speaking to their lovers of the charm or fault which they know well will seduce their rivals.

"I have often dreamed, Rita," said Henry, sadly . . . "Yes, I have dreamed that none but thou could love me; and this idea has sometimes made me very sad. Listen, Rita, you know that a conventual life is no longer possible for me. Thou and thy love must be all my future existence . . . But tell me, Rita, should you change, you, should you no longer love me—you, the only one that I can love!"

"Oh, Henry! Henry!"

"Think what my life would then be, should you change—speak! . . . . That life you have made today so happy and smiling . . . . that future of ambition and glory thy love has pointed out to me—this factitious existence that exalts and animates me I owe to thee alone! You have said so—so that if thou leavest me, I fall back into my nothingness—not into my former life, so quiet and peaceable, but into one of frightful regret, of terrible reflection, which may last for a lengthened time, Rita!"

"Listen, Henry," replied the duchess, with singular excitement. "I never had a dread of that kind; for, judging of you by myself, I said,—'If he should deceive me, I will kill him'"—then after a moment's silence,—"Would you kill me, Henry, if I changed?"

"Yes, yes!" said Henry, vehemently; "and why not?" added he, with a bitter laugh, "you have made me forswear the only wish of my life, why should you not make me a murderer also?—and then, think, should you be in another's arms, you would laugh scornfully at the incredulous boy who, on the faith of a woman's love, had cast to the wind his future prospects and his faith, had broken his sacred oaths! No, no, Rita, you imagined truly! I would slay thee!"

And Henry's features assumed almost a ferocious expression, when he violently seized the duchess by the arm, and fixed his burning eyes upon her.

"But," exclaimed she, with indescribable excitement, and devouring him with kisses, "oh, you will render me mad with pleasure—mad with love for thee, my angel—angel adored! the power I have over thee has something miraculous in it. I know not whether heaven or hell has bestowed it on me, but it exists! To have produced this effect on thee, Henry, in one month—on thee, so unsophisticated, so timid, so full of holy faith; on thee, with thy gentle character, so full of fear and trembling—to have brought thee to this, oh love supreme!" said Rita, with overwhelming passion, as if she felt herself crushed beneath so many proofs of passionate affection.

"Oh! it is true, Rita; and sometimes, like thee, I say, and tremble—'Oh! love supreme!'"

And the duchess, erect, imposing, and majestic. extended her hand to Henry.

"Henry, in three days, here, you shall know me completely."

"What do you mean, Rita?"

"In three days, Henry!"

"Three days without seeing thee!"

"It is necessary; but, then, you can no longer doubt me, and I will ask but one word of thee,—a single vow to leave this tower, and renounce for ever the duties imposed on thee."

"In three days," said Henry, pensively; "in three days—be it so; but at night, midnight!"

"At midnight; wherefore?"

"At midnight, Rita, I beseech thee; for it seems to me that an oath taken at night, by the light of the stars, the murmur of the sea, has something holy in it. Oh! Rita, a man must be doubly infamous to perjure himself at such an hour."

"At midnight, then," answered Rita, after a moment's reflection.

And holding out her hand to Henry, who remained abstracted, she moved towards the door.

And this unexpected, almost solemn scene, threw a kind of restraint and reserve into the parting of the two lovers, which usually was so tender.

The duchess rejoined her attendant, and had already disappeared, while her lover still waved the white veil over the summit of the tower of Koat-Vën.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DUCHESS ALMEDA.

You are descended from lofty barons, my love; in my line is a mark of disgrace, a weeping woman, for a coward may be born to our house.—MAD. SOUBISE.

THE Duchess Almeda, a creole of the Havannah, was married very young to the Duke d'Almeda. Rita was opposed to this union, for she had an inclination for a religious life; but obliged to pay her family, she yielded to their wishes, and the duties of sincere piety alone occupied her thoughts up to the moment when she came to France.

The Duke d'Almeda was an old man of great talent, but one who, fascinated like many of his class, by the false glitter of the encyclopedists, and deceived by the show of philanthropy put forward by them, devoted himself completely to the promulgation of the new doctrines. Partaking of the singular hallucination that led the reason of a great part of the French nobility astray in the speculative regions of the most dangerous Utopia, he

hastened with all the powers he possessed the progressive development of those ideas, that in after time were to become so fatal to nobility and all its privileges.

The bitter raillery with which he loaded his wife on the subject of her superstition, as he called it, had no influence upon her as long as she remained in Spain. The temporal and spiritual power of the clergy was still sufficiently powerful in that kingdom, the faith of the people so deeply seated, that Rita, plunged in that pious atmosphere, surrounded by those who partook of her belief, and meeting everywhere with the exterior signs of religion, preserved the purity of her faith.

But when arrived at Versailles she had lived for some time in the midst of the *fêtes* and delights of a lively court, her strong faith began to totter, made giddy by the dazzling whirl of pleasure.

And in addition to this, the religion of France was unlike the religion of Spain; it was no longer those lofty churches so melancholy and extensive, with their shrines glittering with gold and precious stones, which, overpowering the dubious light, shone in the midst of the darkness like some beam of divine origin. No more was heard the deep-toned and majestic song of the monks; no more was seen a population clothed in black crouching on the ground, on the cold pavement of the church, in darkness and silence, and full of faith, counting the beads of their rosary.

In France religion, laughed at and insulted in spirit, strove to dazzle the eyes by the splendour of its ceremonies. The churches were decorated in the most coquetish style, but they had partially been deprived of those admirable painted windows that caused a mysterious obscurity to reign over all, and then people went to mass to see and be seen; the sun darted its joyous rays through the lofty windows, pouring on all things a flood of light, and shining on the velvet, gold, and silk, with which a smiling and noisy multitude were covered, their magnificence overpowering that of the altar itself; and philosophy already spoke loudly, interrupting and smiling at the sacred mysteries, while the holy songs were sung by the beauties of the opera.

Besides, it must be acknowledged Rita's religious ideas were rather acquired than instinctive, or founded on reason. Endowed with a lively and ardent imagination, which had been chiefly exalted by the external pomp of Christianity, by its imposing and solemn ceremonies, she felt merely the poetry of religion—she saw but the smiling and azure wave that played upon the surface of its fathomless ocean, and cherished the feeling; intoxicated with the incense, and the distant harmony of the music of the organ.

So that when the philosophers, of which her husband's companions were composed, laid siege to this spiritualized faith with their chilling materialism, Rita knew not how to answer. They spoke to her in cipher—she answered in extacies. They opposed the immutable laws of physics and astronomy to the miracles she related; and whichever way the poor woman turned she met with nothing but cold reason or biting sarcasm; and fear made her silent, for the apparent clearness of certain objections, without entirely convincing her, still had shaken her faith.

Thus instinctively feeling the ground she had lost, she wished to take refuge in her early faith. But it was now too late—the stupid and brutal demon of the spirit of analysis had withered with its burning breath those ravishing visions of heaven and light—peopled with angels with flaming wings, amid the sounds of melody without end! All had vanished.

And this may be easily understood: a man of powerful mind and strong faith may strive advantageously and even impose his own convictions on his antagonists by drawing them within the magic circle of an overpowering eloquence; but Rita, whose lively and ardent spirit wanted depth, Rita who thought perhaps, as I have said, as much of the poetry of religion as of religion itself, could not enter the field against her adversaries.

The consequence was she always had the worst of the argument, her self-love became irritated at always seeing captious reasoning opposed to her confused assertions, and in the end she herself doubted her own belief. It is but one step from doubt to incredulity; that step was taken, and Rita became a freethinker.

Incredulity necessarily made in the first instance a vivid impression on an organization of so exalted a nature as that of Rita—in fact from the first there was a fatal attraction, in striving, as she thought, with the Deity; for the revolt of a rebel is not without a kind of wild poetry—there is something daring in blasphemy. But the absolute incredulity of Rita lasted but a short time: indifference succeeded to it—and at last the Duchess Almeda found herself without either hatred or love for heaven.

I more particularly point out this phase in Rita's life, because from that very instant her existence was completely changed.

For that imagination of hers, so lively and passionate, which up to this time had found sustenance in the thoughts of eternity, which open an endless career to ardent minds—that imagination, having soon exhausted what it had received in exchange for its ruined belief, was doomed to be consumed in its own fires.

If the glowing soul of Rita still wished to tremble with joy or sorrow, after falling from such a height, she could only fly to love; for love itself is a kind of creed and religion. For Rita in particular it must be so—for Rita, who if she had lived with selfishness, with rage, and implacable and ferocious jealousy, would have sacrificed all—rank, fortune, and country.

But it was not in this manner they loved at that time in France; so that Rita, finding no one who appeared worthy of a passion of the description she comprehended, although surrounded by admirers received their attentions with scorn, remained pure in the midst of corruption, and lived a discreet life with the Duke d'Almeda, until at length his sudden death set her at liberty.

Rita's sorrow was not great at the loss of the duke; but to maintain appearances, she passed the time of mourning at her country seat. At the same time she left the court without regret, for the arrogant strictness of her principles had attracted the enmity of all; but in spite of the calumnies of a few, who asserted that her modesty was but assumed, general opinion agreed on one point, namely, that the actions of the Duchess d'Almeda were completely pure; but of a purity so proud and intolerant, that the most dissolute conduct on her part would have created fewer enemies than her insolent virtue.

Wearied out with their enmity, and having no-

thing to keep her at Versailles or Paris, Rita came to reside at Kervan.

Rita since she had been in France had never found herself in such complete solitude; then it was she felt the loss of her early faith, but it was too late. The duchess, vexed and distressed, passed her long hours in the endurance of an unknown, painful sensation; she grew thin, and tears rolled down her cheeks; without help, without a refuge from her melancholy feelings, from the nervous excitement that preyed upon her, thoughts of suicide were a hundred times present to her mind, but either her courage failed, or some secret presentiment restrained her. Thus she dragged on her life in misery, up to the very moment, when by a singular chance she became acquainted with Henry.

One of her women came one day to tell her that some fishermen going into the ruined tower near the sea-side, had found there a young man of exquisite beauty, almost dying, and knowing the humanity of the duchess, they had come to the castle for assistance.

This little history struck the romantic mind of the duchess powerfully; she made no reply, but the same day went herself to the Tower of Koat-Vĕn, accompanied by Perez. There for the first time she saw Henry. Affected by the gentle sadness that overspread the handsome features of the youth, Rita, with some emotion, explained the object of her visit, "having heard that some attentions would be of service to him, she had come to offer her own services."

Henry gratefully thanked her, but added, he was in hopes he should soon be no longer in need of them. His history was very simple, an orphan, brought up by his uncle, an old ecclesiastic, he had never left him until his death. Left alone in the world, without fortune, without friends, Henry had no other resort but to obey a call he believed to be sincere, and to enter a cloister. But as the decision would be irrevocable, he wished to prove, whether he could support the solitude, the fasts, and the austerities of a monastic life; and he had for some time occupied this tower.

But he was deceived in his strength, and had fallen ill; an old servant also who had attended him, having abandoned him because he was unable to pay for his services, he should have died unnoticed had it not been for the unexpected visit of the fishermen. "But," he added, "it signifies little now; for I feel my life is ebbing, and soon, a poor orphan, I shall seek in heaven a mother I never knew on earth."

His melancholy resignation, his isolated state, the sickness by which the youth was broken down, together with his ingenuous features, affected the duchess so powerfully, that she felt at first sight, a profound pity for the unfortunate man.

From this day, a new existence began for Rita. By singular contradiction, this lofty duchess, who had resisted so many great and splendid offers, felt an unknown sensation arise within her at the sight of this suffering and unhappy youth; and after the most graceful flattery, the most distinguished manners, and the most fashionable impertinence, had been unable to attract a single look from Rita. . . . The melancholy and pale features of Henry remained impressed on her heart; those looks she had seen but once followed her everywhere; and the accent of his gentle and timid voice were re-echoed in her soul.

Rita was so delighted with this love, that she made no attempt to check it. At liberty, immensely rich, what was to prevent her being Henry's? And then, he being alone, isolated, without relations, would he not be hers, hers, only? would he not absolutely depend on her? would he not possess all from her? and would she not be the only one to love him? For that was the only way in which she understood love.

Yes, Rita would have been jealous at the death of Henry's mother or sister, if Henry had possessed a mother or sister; for the love that Rita felt was almost a mad selfishness, so exclusive was it! And the more Rita knew of Henry, the more she loved him. She passed hour after hour in listening to the confidence of his simple and ingenuous soul—in seeing that heart, of which he was as yet ignorant, unfold itself by degrees—and feeling the same emotions within herself that she imparted to Henry; for she was equally ignorant of the feeling of love, so that it was a constant exchange of delightful details, on each new discovery they made in their own hearts.

And then Henry was so timid, so bashful, and then, as he asked nothing, you must needs offer him all.

In fact the most frenzied, the most violent, the most overbearing love had taken possession of Rita. At her age, the development of a passion like this could not but be terrible, so that every other consideration gave way before the uncontrollable desire of seeing Henry hers; and forgetting her rank, her fortune, and her social position, she decided on offering her hand to him, although he had acknowledged to her that, although noble, he was descended from a very poor Breton family.

"What care I for his fortune?" said Rita. "Is he not noble? and besides, the only daughter of a grandee of Spain, I can give Henry the title and name of my father. Yes, I would have him hold all of me, even his name—a name that would become him so well, for Henry is handsome, brave, and intelligent. I know not a gentleman equal to him, and then he loves me so much. Oh! he loves me with adoration, that I can well perceive. Oh, my heart!—I love him so much, it could not be otherwise; and has he not sacrificed all he could for me in this world, poor youth? The faith he had sworn to—his future prospects, so pure and calm, towards which he looked. . . . And who knows," said Rita, with terror, "who knows if it is not true happiness he has sacrificed for me!"

But the three days she had asked of Henry for reflection had, if possible, rendered her intention more decided, more unchangeable. Thus on the third day, as soon as night set in, she put on her cloak, and leaving the oratory that communicated with the chapel by means of a gallery, joined Perez, who was in attendance.

Leaning on the arm of her attendant, she walked from the chateau to the sea-shore, and having reached the large rock, left Perez and gained the tower.

Henry was already at the door on a kind of landing place at the foot of the stairs, but dressed in such a manner that Rita at first did not know him, but stopped in alarm.

Henry was dressed in the garb of a monk, and his hood being down, nearly concealed his features.

"Rita—Rita!" said he, in a gentle voice; and scarcely had he pronounced the first syllable of her name, when the duchess, recognizing her lover, threw herself into his arms.

"Henry, why this dismal dress?"

"Was it not that I was to have assumed before I knew thee, Rita? I wished to be clothed in it for the last and only time, that I might make the sacrifice complete; do you wish I should?"

"No, no, but come," said Rita, rushing to the stairs.

Henry gently held her back. "Listen," he said, pressing Rita's lips to his own. "I wish to be alone, above, before you enter. I wish once more to hear your footsteps on the stairs, the rustling of your gown—shall it be so?"

"Yes, yes; but let me tell you," returned Rita, with joyous haste, so anxious she was to confide her secret to her lover! "let me tell you, Henry, I have come to offer you my hand—my hand—an immense fortune, a title, a noble and glorious title, all is thine, thine—all for him who——"

"Dear angel," said Henry, kissing her forehead, and interrupting her, "directly."

"Yes, yes, but make haste, look you, Henry, I will not wait more than a minute," said the duchess, with childish impatience.

And Henry disappeared in the shadows of the tower.

A minute afterwards Rita was at that door which she well knew, notwithstanding the obscurity.

She opened it, and uttered a cry of astonishment, almost of fear.

CHAPTER V.

SURPRISE.

I will possess you by every imaginable sacrifice, and possess you entirely.—Diderot.

The surprise of Rita was extremely natural, for the dark chamber of the Tower of Koat-Vën was no longer to be recognised; damp walls darkened by time had disappeared behind elegant purple silk hangings, that made the room appear half its usual size.

And there was a profusion of candelabra, gilding, and mirrors reflecting the flames of a thousand candles, that threw a resplendent light over the circular room.

The timid and melancholy Henry, changed into a bold and elegant cavalier, offered his hand to the duchess to lead her to an arm-chair placed near a table splendidly arranged, loaded with silver-gilt plate, flowers, and glasses.

Yes, it was really Henry. Only instead of the garment of a monk, which he had no doubt assumed to conceal his dress, it was Henry magnificently attired in a coat of blue-shot taffety embroidered with gold, and a waistcoat of silver cloth. It was Henry, glittering with the light of the diamonds that sparkled beneath his long lace ruffles, on his garters, his shoe buckles, his shoes with red heels of red leather, and on the pommel of his sword.

It was Henry, who wore with perfect ease and grace his lordly dress, decorated with the orders of Malta and St. Louis, and ornamented with large epaulettes of embroidered white satin, showing that he was in the king's service.

But, alas, Henry's features no longer possessed that expression of sadness and suffering which had so much charmed Rita. His looks now were lively, and had an expression of triumphant scorn; his eyes, which the duchess had hitherto seen cast down and veiled by their long eyelashes, now sparkled with malice and gaiety; and the cloud of white and sweet scented powder that covered his hair increased the brightness of his brilliant black eyes.

"I know not whether I wake or dream . . . Henry . . . ." cried the duchess, trembling and borne down by an unconquerable feeling of fear and grief.

"*Madame la duchesse* shall know all," said Henry respectfully, and affecting the extravagant politeness which at that time would only allow you to address a female in the third person.

Rita threw herself in an arm-chair, exclaiming, "Explain yourself; in the name of heaven, sir, explain yourself."

"In the first place, *madame la duchesse* will allow me to ask her if she has ever heard speak of the Count de Vaudry?"

"Often, sir, at the time I was at Versailles."

"Then *madame la duchesse* will hear perhaps with astonishment that I am the Count de Vaudry."

"You, sir, you Henry; but then—oh heaven—what does it mean—but the Count do Vaudry, as they told me, was serving in the navy, and was absent in America. It is impossible—for pity's sake, Henry, explain this mystery?"

It is true, *madame la duchesse*, I served in the American seas, where my ship formed part of the squadron of Admiral Guichen; but after two years' service I returned to France. It is now about two months since."

"Then what, count," said Rita, rising impetuously from the chair, "what has been the motive of this disguise? For I am confused, my head is wandering! Henry! for pity's sake; do not trifle with a weak woman! What was the reason of this deceit? what does it mean?"

"If you will be seated, duchess," said Henry, with inconceivable coolness, "you shall know all!"

Rita mechanically resumed her seat.

"*Madame la duchesse* will excuse me if my tale begins at rather a distant period, but it is necessary for the proper understanding of what is to follow.

"About two years since, Marshal Richelieu, somewhat of a relation of mine, but greatly my friend, seeing with pain that the free and merry traditions of the Regency, and the time of Louis XV., were beginning to be forgotten, and lost in the torrent of new ideas by which we are carried away, had the idea of founding a society—a *club*, as our Anglomaniacs call it now-a-days—the first condition being that each member should be of good family! The marshal reserved the president's place for himself.

"The members of this club were above all to devote themselves to expose this modern hypocrisy; which, instead of acknowledging openly and freely as formerly, that pleasure is its object, by my faith, acts the prude, denies every thing, and as a justification, entrenches itself behind I know not what imaginary laws, natural, fatal, sympathetic, irresistible, and others, which I luckily forget; so that when a woman deceives her husband, oh, it is nothing, my dear, *it was ordained*; or, perhaps, *it was natural*, for among uncivilised nations it is very common; or else, they were swept along by the *magnetic current*.

"So that it is the usual plan to refer everything to destiny or nature! and the lover escapes scot free. All these matters are mixed up with sounding words, and romantic phrases that deceive no one; but although we gain in good breeding it is become extremely wearisome, though perfectly respectable."

"I know not, count——"

But nevertheless, *madame la duchesse,* formerly all these matters took place within our own circle, with drawn curtains, and we could always talk of virtue to those poor devils, who really stand in need of it if they would be happy. But now-a-days we, must have equality in love as well as in politics; and every woman, imagining herself a Julia, must have a St. Preux, and look for him heaven knows where. But it matters not; . . and because she chooses some low-bred man instead of a duke or peer, she calls it trampling under foot 'the odious and moral prejudices of birth . . . or accomplishing a fusion of all ranks.'"

"But we must not allow such a profanation to be effected; and we must demonstrate to women the folly and danger of their pretended passions for low-born people, and by means of one of those excellent, though perfidious tricks called a hoax, must cause the old system to flourish again."

The duchess turned deadly pale.

"I became a member of this precious association a short time before my departure for America; and being wounded in one of our last actions, the admiral imposed upon me the duty of conveying his despatches to his majesty.

"While I remained at Versailles, I heard some severe remarks made on your prudence, madame; and between ourselves, you well deserved them. What, madame, you must be unable to reproach yourself with a single weakness? and then you placed no bounds to the professed austerity of your principles. It was an assumption the world could

not decently tolerate; for there are two things that are never pardoned—superiority in man—virtue in woman."

"Go on, sir," said Rita, coldly.

Henry bowed, and continued.

"Then, madame, it was the opinion of a small party that your prudence was due to the discretion of your lovers; so that when they saw a handsome officer mounting guard at the palace, or a great lord at the king's levee, malicious tongues pretend that the common observation was, 'The reputation of the duchess is mounting guard;' or, 'See, the duchess's virtue is saluting his majesty.' But others, who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth, having fully proved the purity of your principles, made a vow of hatred and envy so incurable, that they solicited me, since I had just arrived, and you were acquainted with me, to try my power against your terrible virtue.

"I must acknowledge, *madame la duchesse*, that at first I hesitated, for I had only to remain three months in France, and should be obliged to sacrifice two to effect my purpose; so that, thanks to my indecision, you ran a great risk of remaining virtuous all your life. When one evening, supping at M. Soubise's with the Prince of Guemenée and his mistress, I felt a strong inclination to possess the latter. She and the prince refused my solicitations; but Guemenée said to me, 'My dear count, subdue that proud Spanish beauty, and if you succeed, Leila is yours; if you fail, that race-horse you bought of Lauzun becomes my property.'

"I laid the wager; and then I decided, madame, to make you listen to my suit."

While the Count de Vaudry was uttering these impertinences, in the most impudent and careless tone, Rita played mechanically with one of the knives that lay on the table; but she uttered not a word, an almost imperceptible motion alone agitated her eye-brows.

"Madame de St. Croix, one of your most determined enemies afforded me some curious information respecting your romantic and enthusiastic character. My plan was soon arranged. An old tutor of mine, the worthy astronomer, Rumphius, lent me this isolated tower; here I took up my quarters, and, thanks to the address of my messenger, you were soon informed of the recluse of Koat-Vën. The consequence of my wounds, and the effects of excess, had rendered my cheeks pale, and my hair being without powder, still further increased my juvenile appearance. These are all the physical secrets by which I added to my youthful looks. . . . The sea breeze, the light of the stars, unhappy predestination, monastic vows, melancholy, grief, candour, timidity, all lent a new charm to my conversation. . . . . . Love effected the rest, and I was blessed! I was blessed, *madame la duchesse!*"

Rita was silent.

"You also were happy, madame, and will be so again; for it was a pleasure on your part to have, by love's means, effected the certainty of snatching me from my holy vocation; to have roused within me a proud and intrepid soul; and to have placed before me a future, brilliant with fortune, nobleness, and glory. Be satisfied, madame; thanks to the instinct of your extremely sympathetic soul, I have exceeded all your wishes. Since (it is now nearly fourteen years) I have had the honour of serving in the royal navy, my monastic vocation has, I assure you, been considerably modified. I have an income of fifty thousand crowns, and his majesty has very recently appointed me to the command of one of his frigates: here, then, are future prospects, in accordance with your wishes. But after all; raillery apart, we have both been happy, duchess; you by the illusion, and I by the pleasure of producing it. Let us part, then, good friends; for a month's *tête-à-tête* ought to have exhausted your love as it has mine. Adieu! then, madame; and if we see each other again, let us promise to laugh heartily at this folly of our youthful days: a folly which has nevertheless an excellent moral; for observe, Rita, after a few words, a few phrases, in one month I have induced you to sacrifice, for my sake, rank, title, and fortune, believing me, as you did, an obscure man, and without any social position. You must acknowledge that you staked heavily; let it be a warning to you; and thank heaven that happily I am incapable of abusing or accepting your offers, for I took the vows of a Knight of Malta before the death of my elder brother."

"Count," said Rita, pale as death, after a moment's silence, "your conduct has been infamous; it was an act of meanness unworthy a gentleman."

"Why zounds, duchess, our old marshal has committed many such, and his ducal coronet is still firmly fixed on his head; and besides," said the count, proudly, "all this, *madame la duchesse*, has taken place between persons of an equal rank."

"Count," replied Rita, in a trembling voice, that gave the lie to her assumed calmness, "you have done me much wrong; but, unfortunately for you, you alone know it. I shall deny all; and as you have already told me my reputation is established, and as you are an acknowledged coxcomb, consider——"

"But," said the count, "if I reckon correctly, the world will, after all, decide that a man overwhelmed with the favours of a pretty woman—for I have witnesses ——"

"Witnesses, sir!" said Rita, with a scornful smile.

"Witnesses, madame! the old Chevalier Lepine has for the last month condemned himself to the turret of this tower; and by means of the door that communicates with the chamber, he has not lost a single word of all our interviews. Guemenée thought too much of his mistress not to make sure."

"Oh, God! God!" cried the duchess in despair; then rising with burning cheeks and eye on fire.—

"I suppose, count," she said to Henry, with an air replete with dignity, "I suppose, this cruel joke has lasted sufficiently long; you have forgotten the respect that is due to a woman, and a woman of my rank! Sir, I know not whether you are or are not the Count de Vaudry; all I know is, that I found you here alone, suffering and unhappy; it appears as if the deep compassion I felt for an unfortunate man, whether really so or not, was to be punished as a crime. I am punished, sir; and if the love I felt, in spite of myself, for a being I believed isolated, without a friend on the earth, is also a crime, worthy of the most fearful sufferings, I endure them—for I love you, Henry!" said Rita, shedding tears in spite of herself, "I have loved you with all the pity, with which your misfortunes inspired me, I have loved you with every hope of making you the happiest of men—loved you, Henry! —oh, how well I loved you!"

Henry was afflicted.

"And I came to offer you my fortune, my hand my title- believing you poor and unknown! I loved

you so much—I still love you as much—for I always love you!" murmured Rita, convulsively falling on her knees. "I still love you, for what you have just said would have killed me, but that your voice pronounced it; and so much I love that voice, I did not die. Believe me, trust in my love; and I will swear to you by heaven, if I have not learnt to doubt in heaven—and Henry, there is that again, observe—I no longer believe in heaven, in anything. I have but thee in this world; oh, that I had still a resource in prayer; had I but one name to invoke in my sufferings; but no, no! nought but despair and death! I did thee no wrong! I was about to sacrifice all that a woman of my rank could sacrifice! I was at thy knees; still I am there! I have been my mistress; I wished to be wholly thine, to be thy wife. Well, I wish it no longer, Henry. I will be what you wish me—oh, say, Henry—only love me, love me!"

And weeping, she madly kissed Henry's hands. A tear overflowed his eyelids, and, his heart breaking within him, he bent over Rita; when a badly stifled laugh was heard behind the tapestry.

Henry alone heard it, and ashamed of his emotion, he resumed his *sang-froid.* "Rise, *madame la duchesse*," he said. "Why, what is there so desperate in our case? we have loved each other for a month, the whim has passed over. And I say to you, what perhaps you have said to others, silence and adieu!"

"Believe it not, it is a horrible calumny," cried Rita, terrified; "believe it not, Henry;" and she crawled towards him on her knees.

At this moment, the hangings that surrounded the room were raised, and the stupefied duchess perceived a group of men and women, laughing and shouting, "Bravo, bravo, Count de Vaudry! You have won your wager; the trick is complete."

The duchess having risen, violently repelled the count; and endued for the instant with supernatural strength, she rushed towards the door and disappeared, before any of the party could obstruct her flight.

"Wretch, that I am; she will destroy herself!" cried Henry, going in pursuit of Rita.

"Kill herself for that!—nonsense!—she will live," said the Duke de St. Ouen, preventing Henry's leaving the room. "Ladies, assist me," he added, addressing half a dozen beautiful women, who surrounded the table, "I hardly know poor Vaudry again. What will the marshal say?"

The lesson has perhaps been rather too strong; and then, if I really was her first lover!" thought Henry, in one of his fits of vanity, and remembering the excessive tenderness of Rita.

"Bah! I have too much modesty, to take the honour to myself;" and, recovering his gaiety, he added, "besides, the women are right; we are always the first, like kings, the first of the Christian name! But there are so many Henrys the chances are much against me." Then, addressing himself to Chevalier Lepine, "Chevalier, you can tell Guemenee that I have honourably won his mistress."

"Oh certainly, you have won me fairly," said the most seducing little prize in the world, at the same time taking hold of Henry's arm.

"Tell him all about it at dinner, Leila," exclaimed the chevalier; "but, come, to supper, to upper!"

"Yes; to supper!" they all exclaimed in a loud voice.

CHAPTER VI.

A SUPPER.

Until I know this sure uncertainty
I'll entertain the offered fallacy.—SHAKSPEARE.

THEY placed themselves at supper.

And such a supper!—replete with elegance mad with wine, debauché—as every supper, when, well understood, ought to be; for supper is to the chaste dinner what wit is to plain sense, a lover to a husband, or poetry to prose.

And then we dine by the vulgar light of day, but at supper—at supper—we must have the rosy light of candles, which alone can adorn, tinge, and perfect the toilette of a woman, which alone inspires you with I know not what delicious and joyous intoxication.

Aristocratic and adorable light, broken into jets of flame, shining in aigrets of fire, in sparkling plumes, as if solely made to decorate what you delight in; and render still more dark the shades by which they are surrounded.

Instead of diffusing thyself pale and sad on all alike, without affection or choice, like the vulgar light of day, thou lovest to sparkle on polished *facettes* of crystal; to play complacently on the changing opal so dear to *blondes*; or to dart upon the diamond star that trembles on the forehead of the *brunette.* How well dost thou reflect the intricate tracery of a golden arabesque, softly fallest thou on the watered folds of the drapery, while all the rest is buried in an amorous middle-tint or the deepest shadow.

And thus appeared the large and hitherto solitary chamber of the Tower of Koat-Vën.

Lighted in this manner, nothing could be more coquettish, nothing more wanton, than those seductive girls covered with jewellery, interlaced with the waving plumes of their white and powdered head-dresses, from which depended garlands of rubies and emeralds, on the sweetest necks in the world, dappled with veins of purest azure.

Their very looks might tempt you to clasp their long and slim waists, made more slender still in appearance by the amplitude of their skirts supported by *demi* hoops; well might you long to kiss those white and rounded arms, issuing so fresh from a mass of the richest lace, that came as low as their dimpled elbows.

By heaven! who would not hear the rustling of those dresses of thick satin, covered with flowers as changeable as the plumage of the ring-dove—those long robes disclosed the silk stocking with its golden clock, and the tiny high-heeled slippers covered with brilliant spangles.

Let us conclude with those insolent streamers of azure or scar let riband, with which their slender corsets of silver gauze were enamelled, and the quivering of their bare and beautiful shoulders, whose alabaster was enhanced by little ebony flies arranged in the most killing manner.

And, oh, the scorching voluptuousness of those half-closed eyes, that shone so brightly, in contrast with their rosy cheeks, rendered still more provoking by the effects of wine; for these fair damsels did not refuse frequently to hide the lively red of their lips in its white and sparkling foam.

Then, hey! for merriment—drink deep—a maddening orgie, gentlemen! and long live folly!

Oh, no! know you not those orgies of folly, so maddening and so lively, those dear delights, whose distant remembrance at times illumines our faded youth? Such orgies as these are known only from

fifteen to eighteen. Yes; in such orgies as these there is frankness, gaiety, madness, pleasure. Who cares for the richest food? the plates fly through the window—who cares for wine? crash go the bottles—who heeds the prison, though captured by the patrol? And as to women, some one has said; "All are handsome in the eyes of monks and school-boys."

At that time a revel consists in a merry, careless, unlaced wench, who breaks the lamps, assaults the police, sleeps in prison, and laughs like a mad thing, until the hour arrives to begin again.

But later in life, when satiated with revelry: we still have many revels; but we are calm, sarcastic, unmoved: we hate the noise. It is a drinking bout, loud talking, the debauch is analyzed, and commented on; it is a cold vice, without excitement, such as becomes reasonable men, no longer boys. There are girls at supper, because it is the fashion, and sometimes an amusing folly; but little notice is taken of them—they are as it were a luxury, a kind of rich and rare dish, beyond the feast.

This long digression leads us to observe that the gaiety of the present supper was of a quiet nature, at times dull, dreaming, and political; for men of thinking minds foresaw a dismal future, and the rumour of American independence was the first lightning-flash that passed across the menacing sky.

The parties assembled at this supper were, Count Vaudry; Chevalier Lepine, a captain in the navy; the Marquis de Rullecourt, a colonel in the royal dragoons; the Duke de St. Ouen, captain in the light infantry; Viscount Monbar, colonel in the guards; and lastly, Baron Mallebranche, a major of artillery.

The six ladies were dancers at the Opera, a class of females then much in vogue.

"At least you cannot deny that my prize is a charming girl," said Henry, looking at Leila; "and what fools we are! We kill ourselves by our plots, cares, calculations, to be deceived by selecting our mistresses from society, when we have wenches as pretty, who will deceive us without any expense —we deserve all that happens to us."

"There is no doubt of that," cried the Chevalier Lepine; "women of the world only deceive us to avenge morality."

"Spite against the duchess," said St. Ouen.

"And why not, after being shut up for a month in the turret of this tower? . . . were we not obliged to have our waggons brought along the most horrible roads, to put this room in a proper state to receive you this morning, on your arrival from St. Rénan? If my suit had not been so haughtily repelled by the duchess on a former occasion . . . ."

"And ours also . . . . And then the pleasure of being present at the defeat of an enemy brought us here," exclaimed the men.

"I am the only one you do not pity then?" said Henry. "I, who have avenged you; I who have lost in this place one month out of perhaps two that I have to remain in France. If I had not had so strong a fancy for the little rogue Leila—if I had not stood in need of some master stroke to open my way to success in the world—if it had not been necessary I should sow, in order that I might reap, as the philosopher says——"

"I very much doubt," replied Mallebranche, "whether your adventure will make many 'myrtle blossoms open, beneath the sun of admiration, among the women,' as that fool Dorat says."

"How much you are in the wrong, my dear Mallebranche! women always love us in proportion to the anxiety we give them, and that from coquetry. Tears become them so well, give such brilliancy to their eyes; and then how tantalizing is a fine bosom when it heaves with sighs and sobs! Believe me, grief is their ornament and strength; besides, a fine woman who knows what she is about, is satisfied that nothing is less enticing than a merry look; the eternal smile must be left for those where only beauty consists in a fine set of teeth."

"He is quite right," said Leila, "There are some women who like to be beaten. One of my friends has a particular taste for that evidence of love; and when her bonnet is torn to pieces, her hair all out of curl, and her clothes nearly off her back, I can assure you she is not a little vain."

"Have you no remorse, you wretch?" asked Coraly, a beautiful *blonde*, on whom it was said M. de Bouillon had expended 500,000 livres.

"Yes, remorse!" they all exclaimed with one voice.

"Why the deuce should I have any remorse? Have I not sacrificed myself, I, Vaudry? Have I not played my part better than Molé himself? Zounds! do you take no account of that?"

"But if she loved thee?"

"If she loved me! well it must be one way or the other; either she still loves me, and that would be disgraceful in her, after my behaviour,— such an immoral weakness would deserve no pity; or she hates me, and will seek revenge; and as she can do that, we are on equal terms. Besides, to sum up all, I endeavour to convince myself that she is a false and cunning coquette, who has laughed at twenty poor devils as I have laughed at her; in that case, my cruel behaviour is only justice."

"But if she is no coquette?"

"If—if! Well, I will answer in my usual phrase; of what consequence is it to me? What can she attempt? To assassinate me . . . . I have often braved death when it threatened in a more dangerous place, and from a less fair hand; so let us talk of something else. What about the opera? What has become of Guimard?"

"You must look to the list of benefits," said St. Ouen.

"What! is she still with M. Tarente? How does she look?"

"As thin as a silkworm," cried Virginia. . . . And yet she ought to grow fat on so rich a leaf."

"As to Sophy Arnoux and the Italians; what are they doing?"

"They play three times a week; but they are all so dreadfully virtuous; they live among each other, actors and actresses. They are all married; but still Marshal de Lorges has contrived to carry off Colomb from this matrimonial and indecent colony," said Leila.

"And Duthe?"

"Always in the fashion; but La Quincy, her lady's maid, is her rival. At the last meeting at Long Champ, she had such a splendid set-out: four magnificent English horses, with red morocco harness, mounted with silver, and covered with Rhenish diamonds; but I must acknowledge the lieutenant of police took care to alter that."

"And Rosalie?"

"In Germany," said Leila.

"How!" exclaimed Henry; "she has left that delightful little house at the Thermes, on which I expended as much as two thousand louis?"

"No, no. I mean by being in Germany, that the

German ambassador, the Count de Mercy, who protects her, is quite mad in love with her."

"And Granville?" asked Henry, who had not yet come to the end of his questions.

"Oh! Granville," replied Leila; "she has had a curious adventure with a financier, and the handsome Lauzun."

"Lauzun? nonsense! Why he is a monk," said Virginia. "Certain affairs of the heart, in which he was a lover——"

"That was before he became one of us," observed Leila. "Granville, as you all know, was beautiful as an angel, and under the protection of Mouron; our man of money detested Lauzun, and had a hundred times asked Granville to sacrifice the handsome duke. Well; it happened one day, the financier being informed that Lauzun was on a visit to his angel, he went up stairs and disturbed their *tête-à-tête*. Lauzun was in a rage, called Mouron a clown, an impudent fellow, and an ass; thrust him into a closet, the door of which was glazed, put the key in his pocket, and continued his attentions to Granville. Afterwards, having well pommelled Mouron, they thrust him into the street; so that ever since we call our friends *Mourons*."

"An excellent joke!" they all exclaimed, with one voice.

"But the best is," said Leila, "a month afterwards Mouron lent Lauzun two thousand louis, to proceed on a voyage to Hungary."

"Quite right, girl," said Rullecourt; "it was absolutely necessary that the simpleton should recompense the Duke de Lauzun for having condescended to agree with him in taste."

"By-the-by! what of Lauzun and the Duchess de S——?"

"The same with regard to the duchess," replied St. Ouen, "as Leila tells you in the case of Granville, at the *Comédie Française*."

"What's that?"

"That rogue Clairval has taken Lauzun's place."

"What!" said Henry; "do the women fall so low! Actors!"

"It's common; very common. And as Lauzun alone was acquainted with the secrets of Clairval and Madame de S——, the Duke de C——and the Duchess de G——, her sister, did all they could to obtain proofs of the affair from Lauzun. He refused; but M. de C —— broke open his desk, and there he found Clairval's letters. The duchess has been sent to a convent.

"Look at the difference, girls," said Henry to the ladies; "they never put you in a convent for matters of that kind; you need not complain, therefore, of your condition."

"Oh! we don't complain of that; we only find fault with them for rivalling us. They spoil our trade, as Richelieu's mistress said."

"Ah, Richelieu! do you know what has happened to him?" said Rullecourt to Henry. "He is going to be married."

"On what account?"

"I can't tell; but it must be a dreadful act of vengeance, for his wife is confoundedly ugly.

"But what is more comical than that, is the touching manner in which he received an immense legacy, left him by one of his old mistresses, who for that purpose disinherited all her relations.

"'Zounds!' cried the old marshal; 'if all my ancient flames were to do the like, I should be richer than the king.'

"And the manner in which he announced his marriage to his son," continued Rullecourt.

"'My lord duke de Fronsac,' said Richelieu to him, 'I am more honourable than you. You never mentioned your marriage to me, but I have come to inform you of mine. You have no children; but although I am eighty years old, I calculate upon one who shall be a better subject than you; but do not alarm yourself, duke, we will make an abbé of him . . .'

"'Zounds, marshal!' answered Fronsac, 'you can do better than that—make him a cardinal, they have never injured the family.'"

"Ah, Richelieu! Richelieu!" cried Mallebranche, who had kept himself sober; "Richelieu, thou democratic cardinal, whither do you lead us?"

"To our ruin, to the ruin of the monarchy, to that of France," said Rullecourt, slowly filling his glass.

"That is true enough," observed St. Ouen; "he has overthrown feudalism; the courtiers have succeeded the landlords; and after the courtiers, came —faith, I know not whom—something horrible, between a tiger and an ape—as the philosophers would say."

"Ah! the philosophers! the fact is they have performed their task . . . nothing could be better done," said Monbar, sipping his wine; "they have devoured the monarchy . . . or nearly so . . . but now the monster is so gorged, it cannot stir . . . . When the boa is full, it sleeps . . . let them sleep over their monarchy . . . but at least leave us our books."

"What's that?" exclaimed Mallebranche; "the philosophers destroy the monarchy?—by heaven! gentlemen, you do them too much honour. The encyclopedia overthrow the throne of Charlemagne! that would be strange indeed! Did it not expire with Louis XIV., and through the fault of that great monarch? What? because the lion in its headstrong course dashes itself to pieces over a precipice, you would say it was killed by the croaking of the crows that hover over its carcass? The philosophers destroy the royalty of France! No, no, d—— it, do not say that; or they will believe it, and the fools will be delighted at playing the parts of destroyers of an empire. The filthy worm that rots in the tomb would be puffed up with vanity, and believe it had killed the mighty soldier thrown into his grave in his breast-plate of steel."

"Only observe," said St. Ouen, "he attacks the philosophers! I should say he has read their last pamphlet on the navy."

"That again is shameful, gentlemen," said Rullecourt; "and were they worth the stick we should break on their shoulders, it would be an excellent thing to punish such vile braggarts."

"It is infamous," said Mallebranche; "and these are Frenchmen who traduce the bravest men—the wretches—Frenchmen! mark you, Frenchmen! . . and the English can show you, written in French, in a French book, printed, sold, and distributed throughout France . . . . 'on such a day the French were cowards.'"

"It was false," replied Rullecourt; "they were no cowards, but brave as they were, it was necessary at all hazards to make them unpopular . . . and the chief of the party held up his hand, and all the pack gave mouth in the wished-for tone; and while our brave and noble gentlemen opposed their bosoms to the English cannon, a motley group of cowards, braggarts, and pitiful splitters

of words, crouching on the straw of their granaries, insulted with impunity these brave and daring men."

"The philosphers," said Leila, "what an appetite they have! I supported five and they called me Venus."

"One more meal, and they would have called you Minerva, child," observed the Duke of Saint Ouen. "M. Voltaire, and he is a great philosopher, said much the same to La Pompadour and La Dubarry, to get a *de* placed before his name, and the office of gentleman in waiting."

"Philosphers! three of them quarrelled about marrying my mother," cried Virginia; "but she would have none of them . . . No! she would not descend from her station . . . . Why, my father was coachman to the Prince de Lambese."

"Your mother's heart was in the right place, Virginia; and from this day I promise her a pension of fifty pistoles," said Rullecourt.

"The philosophers—oh! the monsters!" cried Coraly; "one day one of them told me we should have no more operas."

"No more operas, I said to him, no more operas! Why then, sir, if we had not an opera, what would be the use of being a pretty girl?"

"She is quite right," said Henry. "Suppress the opera! why nature would have all her pretty girls on hand; she would be overburdened with them—no means of getting rid of them: the opera, child! is a beautiful institution of social economy."

"We should be overwhelmed with a torrent of pretty girls," said Saint Ouen.

"A philosopher . . . ah! I know," said Virginia, 'a philosopher is one who has nothing and envies every one; for I remember an excise officer who came from Saint Lazarus, said to me one day . . . 'As a proof that I am a philospher, I walk through the mud, and my trousers are full of holes, while you ride in your carriage, and have your dress embroidered from top to bottom; that is an infamous thing, for embroidery and coaches were made for the world in general.'

"'Not at all,' I observed, 'mud and misery were made for the world in general; you have your share, so do n't grumble.'"

"I say he was right," observed Leila "for this, stupid embroidery they place round our gowns is of no use but to scratch our chins."

At this sally they all burst into a fit of mad laughter. Every one was merry, drank, and grew tipsy, fell into each others' arms; became uproarious; and finished by talking English—the slang of debauchery in good company, bold and unblushingly indecent.

CHAPTER VII.

SOLITUDE.

Hail, learned doctor!—GOETHE, *Faust.*

A SLIGHT rosy tinge in the sky foretold the rising of the sun. The stars yet shone in the heavens, the sharp and fresh morning air gently shook the foliage, everything breathed quiet and silence,—the atmosphere was impregnated with the aromatic odour of those delicate plants, that surrender the treasures of their perfume to the amorous breezes of the night.

At the farthest extremity of the little town of St. Renen, beyond its dark and winding streets of lofty houses, with projecting rafters, at about one hundred yards from the gate, a rather lofty wall extended, flanked here and there with clumps of trees.

This wall, ruinous in many parts, was covered with ivy, bind-weed, and pellitory, which, nestling in the fissures of stone, expanded in the form of nosegays, garlands, and coronets of various colours.

If you pushed a little door almost destroyed by worms, which you might see at an angle of the wall, you would find a small garden covered with closely planted trees, the walks being nearly obliterated.

But if, in spite of the boughs of trees that crossed each other in every direction in this mass of foliage, you should succeed in passing this formidable enclosure, the picture that would then offer itself to your sight, would make you ample amends for your trouble.

It was an enchanting scene for a lover of solitude.

Figure to yourself a small house of one storey, isolated in the midst of a plot of thick grass, green to the very walls, forming a moderately sized parterre, covered with roses, jasmines, and honeysuckles.

But, twilight having yielded to day, streams of golden-light already tinged the summits of the lofty trees of this smiling and quiet garden. As the sun attained the horizon, the petals of the flowers, steeped in dew, began to display themselves, and every blade of grass shook off its sparkling pearl.

And then, I know not what confused and indistinct sound spread through the air, what uncertain murmur announced the wakening of nature; but at the signal given by this deep-felt harmony, the butterflies shook their variegated wings, myriads of glittering flies shot through the air like a shower of sparks, the birds sang beneath the foliage, and the trembling curtain of transparent vapour that shrouded the summits of the oaks and poplars was gradually dissipated, while their green foliage was more sharply defined on the azure of the sky, which became every instant brighter and clearer.

The door of the house opened, and the light of day inundated a small ante-chamber that divided the habitation into two parlours.

The person who opened the door, was a man about forty years of age, dressed in a good camlet cloak of a dark colour, wearing no powder, and with his hair carefully fastened by a knot, known at the time as a *frog-knot*. He was thin and stooping, and dreadfully marked with the small-pox, with the marks of which his poor face was terribly seamed.

This man had, in one hand, a plate and a bowl of smoking hot thick milk, which he kept carefully stirring. He approached a door communicating with the ante-chamber, applied his ear to the keyhole, and listened for an instant—then, hearing nothing, he retired on tiptoe to the kitchen immediately opposite.

Three or four times he went through the same pantomime, but after each journey his features had a greater expression of uneasiness, and his looks betrayed an affectionate impatience, which he strove, however, to moderate, so fearful he appeared to be of making the least noise.

As he advanced for the fifth time, always with the bowl of milk in his hand, the door at last opened, and he uttered a cry of surprise and joy, saying, "How late you are this morning, brother; I was quite uneasy—here is your milk, brother, take it at once; it is nice and hot—brother—brother!"

But his brother heard him not, but went towards the garden, while the other brother timidly followed him with the bowl of milk.

The brother, to whom the bowl was offered, was the learned astronomer, Rumphius, at that time engaged in profound researches on the astronomy and religion of the Hindoos.

He was a little brown man of an olive complexion with a bust that appeared enormous, when compared with its accompanying legs and arms. Rumphius was also furnished with a nose of great length, sprinkled with snuff, thick great eyebrows, and the awkwardest walk you can well imagine.

The strings of his old velvet breeches were untied; his stocking,—for he wore but one—was rolled in a spiral manner round one of his legs, while the other was entirely naked. In addition to this, he had a slipper on one foot, and a shoe on the other; his shirt was open, his neck bare, and one arm only had been passed through the sleeve of his grey *ratteen* dressing-gown, the other sleeve hanging loose, like that on the jacket of a huzzar. Finally, his ragged hair escaped, straight and tangled, from under an old damask cap, placed awry on his head, which had one day been blue.

Sulpice, perceiving by the abstracted air of his brother that he was immersed in some profound calculation, thought it was useless merely to speak to him; so, according to custom, he led his brother gently towards the wall of the house, and when he came against the obstacle he recovered himself, and for an instant returned to the earth and bent a fixed look on Sulpice; who dexterously availed himself of the opportunity, and placed his favourite bowl of milk in Rumphius's hand, who drank it at a draught.

But, through unpardonable want of thought, poor Sulpice, forgetting the bowl, was on his knees completing the toilette of one of his brother's legs, tying the knee-strings of his breeches, and so on.

When Rumphius, having mechanically lowered his hand to the level from which he had taken the bowl, and meeting with nothing on which to rest it, abandoned it to its own weight, and the bowl was broken.

The sound made Sulpice rise.

"Oh, good heavens, brother! why did you not speak to me?" he said, in a tone of remonstrance; "here is the bowl all broken to pieces."

"Really," said Rumphius, with an air of astonishment, "the bowl is broken—well, Sulpice, such is the simple offering the worshippers of Vishnou make to their deity—a simple broken earthen pot, when they invoke Nandy-Kichara, the king of the birds, who possesses beautiful wings and a sharp beak, and feeds on serpents. They break an earthen vessel, when they have respectively touched both their nostrils and their great toe. It is a very primitive proceeding, Sulpice, for it is presumed that this Nandy-Kichara is one of the seven stars of . . . that . . . when . . ."

Here the astronomer's voice gradually sank, and he no doubt finished his definition to himself. For according to his habit of profound abstraction, he always forgot the party he was speaking to; and falling back on his own thoughts, pursued with fresh ardour the curves of the satellites and planets that were symbolical of Vishnou.

Seeing that the thoughts of his brother were no longer of this world, Sulpice made another attempt to introduce the rebellious arm of the astronomer into the sleeve of his dressing gown—but it was all in vain, and the sleeve continued to hang *a la hussarde*.

Sulpice, therefore, contented himself with packing up, with a sigh, the wreck of his dear bowl, and Rumphius buried himself in the shadows of one of the garden walks, a little more worn than the others; sometimes moving slowly, and at others with hurried footsteps.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWO BROTHERS.

Now he to whom all things are but as one, who comprehendeth all things in that one, and beholdeth all things in it, hath his heart fixed, and abideth in the peace of God.
THOMAS A KEMPIS.

RUMPHIUS was professor of mathematics at the naval academy at Brest, when the father of the Count de Vaudry wished to prepare his son for the sea service. Having heard of the fame of the astronomer, the count strove to induce him to leave his office of public instructor, and devote himself to the education of Henry, promising him a suitable pension for his services, sufficient to enable him to devote himself ultimately to his favourite studies, without the necessity of losing his time at the academy.

Rumphius accepted his offer, and brought Henry sufficiently forward in his studies to enable him to embark as a volunteer in 1770, under the orders of M. de Suffren, and when M. de Breugnon went to conclude a peace with the Emperor of Morocco, Henry was twelve years of age.

Rumphius having parted with his pupil, took possession of his little house at St. Rénan, from which he seldom stirred, except for the purpose of making some meteorological observations at the tower of Koat-Vën.

The evening of the day on which the bowl had been so cruelly broken, Sulpice, after having superintended the dinner preparations and prepared the frugal repast with the most minute attention, was waiting for his brother, for the dinner hour had struck some time since.

Sometimes to soothe his impatience, he strove to improve the symmetrical arrangement of the dinner service, gave a brighter polish to the glasses, placed his brother's comfortable arm chair (he himself had one without arms) in such a position, that even the rays of the setting sun should not incommode him. He then went into the kitchen; from the kitchen to his seat near the window; and all without uttering one word of complaint; even stifling the sighs that rose at the fate of two excellent fried fishes that were being dried upon the grid-iron.

At length Rumphius appeared; but with an air of greater absence of mind, and a deeper appearance of fatigue than usual. Sulpice had a presentiment of a game at cross purposes on the part of his brother.

"Good evening, brother," said Sulpice, pressing Rumphius's hand.

"Good evening, brother," replied Rumphius, affectionately.

"Are you ready for dinner, brother? You have been at work since the morning, and your head must be fatigued and heavy: you want a little rest."

If Rumphius had concluded his meal he would have found three subjects to quarrel on in these

observations; as it was, he took a note of them in his mind, said nothing, but continued eating.

"I broiled these mullets myself, brother," said Sulpice, timidly. "How fond our father used to be of them. Do you remember, brother?"

Rumphius gave an affirmative nod.

"How glad I shall be if you enjoy them."

Rumphius answered by holding out his plate. You ought to have witnessed the pleasure and happiness with which Sulpice waited on his brother, and how pleased he was at seeing anything revive his appetite.

"Do you know, brother," said Sulpice, with an air of pride, interrupting himself in his meal to fetch a small packet, covered with blue paper, which he unrolled joyfully, keeping his eye fixed on Rumphius—"Do you know, brother, that the *Mercure de France* has passed some high econmiums on you, and that——"

"Bah! all folly," said Rumphius, gnawing the back-bone of the fish. "Have you anything else to eat?"

"Yes, brother; here is a buck-wheat cake. I have kept it hot because I know you are fond of it." And Sulpice rising to fetch the cake, the movement of his chair caused it to creak along the floor.

"What a dreadful noise!" exclaimed Rumphius; who, having made a hearty meal, began to feel an inclination to contradict.

"I beg your pardon, brother," said Sulpice, alarmed.

"If you were not so extremly obstinate, we should have a servant to wait on us; it would prevent that constant creaking of the chairs that drives me out of my senses."

"But brother," Sulpice ventured to say, "you yourself forbad my having any one, for fear your books, papers, or instruments should be touched."

"The fact is," said Rumphius, "I want one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow; I am a mad man, an ass, and am always contradicting myself. I ought to be confined—have cold water poured on my head—exactly so, *douches* on my head. Yes, yes; they ought to pour cold water on my head," continued Rumphius, by this time in a state of pleasant irritation.

"Nobody said so, nobody thought so, brother; if you wish we should have a servant, we will have one at once. I was in the wrong; you will forgive me my mistake."

This submission did not suit the fancy of Rumphius; so, being beaten at one point, he made an attack upon another. "Sulpice," he added, "you just now told me I seemed fatigued! do I really look unwell?"

Sulpice dreaded questions of this nature more than any other; for he had no idea what answer Rumphius expected.

He therefore contented himself with saying, "You looked a little overcome; but it is nothing now"

"That is as much as to say," exclaimed Rumphius, "that is as much as to say, that I pretended to look fatigued, that I might be pitied—and what was to do me good? The dinner, certainly; as if you told me coarsely, that I only forgot my fatigue when eating—that I made a God of my belly. You may as well go on and say I get drunk—that I kill myself by excess. Call me Tiberius, an epicurean hog, Vitellius, Sardanapalus!"

"I never said anything like it, brother."

"That's an excellent observation; you never said so. Ah!—there needed nothing more. You never said so—I believe you. Had you said it—I should have treated you as you deserved—as——"

"But, as I did not say so, brother——"

"What! you contradict me again? It is pure obstinacy on your part, downright fondness for argument and disputation. . . . What new game is going to commence? I suppose, taking a supposition, I can say to you, that you are wrong. You strangely mistake the power you arrogate over me—that . . . ."

And here Rumphius, still founding his argument on a supposition, gave free rein to his ill-temper, in the hopes of raising the anger or the grief of Sulpice; but his poor brother, still confining his ideas to the point of departure, which he well knew was founded on a supposition, remained unmoved; and when Rumphius, out of breath, had finished his last philippic in these dreadful words: "You are a bad brother, a Judas". . . . calculating on an answer that would give him fresh vigour.

The gentle Sulpice answered him smiling, and with the greatest coolness possible, "That is to say, you *suppose* that I am a Judas; for we started with a supposition, brother . . . and you *know* how much I love you."

The astronomer was silent, and his anger, which had constantly been increasing in violence, suddenly cooled; the answer had thrown ice upon its flame. He must begin again, and this fresh disappointment began to irritate Rumphius once more, and he certainly would have been suffocated if he had not found some means of renewing the conversation; and, seeking for a subject, he soon discovered one.

"Apropos, Sulpice," said he to his brother; "what were you telling me about the *Mercure de France?*"

"Some high encomiums it has passed on you, on the subject of Indian astronomy."

The philosopher breathed, and launched out with vehemence into a long discussion on the Hindoo deities, in which his brother vainly endeavoured to follow him, completely losing himself among the incomprehensible names of Gourou, Gocarnam, Pringuery, Indra, Pouchkanary, &c.

"Ah!" at length Rumphius exclaimed, his blood boiling within him, "ah, you are not aware that Gorou means master or guide; kings are Gourous of their own kingdoms—you know nothing of it, and yet you think you may insult me with impunity," cried Rumphius beside himself, and overcome with rage and indigestion.

"I do not insult you, brother."

"I say you do insult me!" cried Rumphius in a loud voice, "and you shall acknowledge, that you have no idea what the true Gourou is—acknowledge it, wretch!" roared out Rumphius, seizing his brother by his coat. But his strength failed him, and the astronomer fell, almost exhausted, and panting for breath, into his brother's arms, who placed him in his arm-chair.

His poor brother, on his knees, endeavoured to wipe off the perspiration that trickled down the cheeks of the sage, who sat with his eyes half closed.

"Be calm, brother," said Sulpice, "be calm; I was in the wrong—yes, yes, I was—it was I that contradicted you; forgive me."

"No, Sulpice, it was I," said Rumphius, who had now gained his point; "the heat of the argu-

ment led me astray, I went too far, but you know when a quarrel is over I think no more of it. Pardon me, Sulpice, you are one of the best creatures that ever descended Mahomet's golden mountain, as Brahma says."

"How good you are, brother—but I ought to be too happy in having such a brother, I ought never to give you the least uneasiness," and tears came into his eyes and stopped his speech.

"Now be quiet, Sulpice," said Rumphius, who felt his own eyes grow dim, "be quiet, you make me ashamed of myself and my passion;" and the astronomer passed his bony hand across his eyes.

"Pray, say no more about it, brother," said Sulpice; "come, now, go to bed, you work so much that you will make yourself ill."

And Sulpice did not retire to his little chamber until he had seen Rumphius asleep, nor until the words Gourou, Pringuery, and Hoëtquel were only heard at long intervals.

Sulpice was about to get into bed, when several vigorous blows on the gate of the house echoed through the building.

All he was afraid of was that it would awake his brother.

He went down hastily, therefore, and speaking through the thick door of the anti-chamber, exclaimed, "What do you want?—who is there?"

"Are you the astronomer, Rumphius?" said a voice.

"I am his brother, he is asleep,—for God's sake speak lower!"

"Give him the letter I will put under the door, he must, if he wishes to avoid fearful consequences, give it himself to the Count de Vaudry; mark you, he himself must place it in the hands of that nobleman, who is now at Paris: swear this shall be done."

"Yes, yes, I swear," said Sulpice trembling.

"Stay," said the voice, "it is from the Duchesse d'Almeda."

A letter was then slipped under the door, and Sulpice heard the stranger retire.

CHAPTER IX.

AN INTERIOR, 1780.

A rich voluptuous man is more unhappy and more to be pitied than the poorest and most despised wretch.—MASSILLON.

Hotel de Vaudry.—These words were written in letters of gold on a slab of black marble, placed on the pediment of one of the handsomest houses in the *rue de l' Université.*

A noble stone cushion, supporting the coronet of a count, was sculptured on the rich entablature of a lofty door of carved oak.

On each side of this door, which was framed in heavy stone work, was a railing formed of golden arrows extending to two wings, attached to the principal building.

This edifice occupied the extremity of an immense court.

The buildings that were attached to the wings of which we have spoken, contained the stables and apartments for the servants, and were furnished with back doors, and concealed on the side of the court by arcades and false windows.

The appearance of the mansion was in reality majestic; its two long rows of lofty white windows with small squares of glass, contrasted well with the walls of the building blackened by time; a large circular flight of steps of considerable elevation conducted you to the glazed door of the vestibule, and the tops of firs and chesnut trees that rose above a kind of clock tower in the centre, on the summit of the building, made it evident that a large garden was situated at the rear of the house.

About eight days had elapsed since the occurrences in the tower of Koat-Vën.

Just as twelve o'clock at noon was struck by the clock of the mansion, a loud blow of the knocker made the huge door tremble.

This violent blow made the enormous *Suisse*, or porter, start in his arm-chair; he was a red faced man, pimpled, most exquisitely powdered, and wearing a bag to his hair; he was dressed in a green livery embroidered in every part with the colours and arms of Vaudry; according to the fashion of the day, this magnificent livery was ornamented with embroidered shoulder knots, and a large belt or baldric, worked with silver thread and emblazoned with coats of arms, to which was suspended a dragoon's sword, crossed his shoulder.

The porter's son, a boy of about fourteen years of age, also well powdered, and dressed like a postilion in a livery of the same colour, prepared to open the door, while his father raised himself on his legs, put on his laced hat, and seized his tall halbert with its tassel of red, blue, and gold.

The knock was repeated more loudly and several times.

"Go, Lorrain, and see who that blackguard is who so far forgets himself as to knock in this manner at the door of the hotel Vaudry," said the Swiss with an offended air.

Lorrain in high glee seized his whip, and in spite of his spurs and heavy jack-boots hastened to see who the rascal was that *forgot* himself.

The knocking still continued to be repeated with the greatest energy.

Lorrain having half-opened the door, perceived a thin little man in a grey cloak with a round collar, and wearing a cocked hat and travelling boots, he kept the knocker of the door in his hand and continued hammering most unmercifully, at the same time looking into the air as if he was following some object with his eyes, but without discontinuing his confounded noise.

"Stop, I say,—have you escaped out of some cage at the fair of St. Laurent?" exclaimed the impudent boy, aping a great man's lacquey, and cracking his whip in the stranger's ears.

"St. Laurent," said the little man, who seemed only to have heard or at least understood the last word that had been said to him, "St. Laurent?—no, no—Henry de Vaudry—the count—I wish to see him," he continued, with his eyes fixed on the firmament.

"What shall I do, father? its a madman," cried Lorrain at the top of his voice.

At this strange cry the Swiss came out of his box, his face redder than his sword belt, "Hold your tongue, you fool, to cry out in this manner,—don't you know that in a well ordered mansion you ought to be able to hear a mouse walk?—to cry out in that manner outside the door of the Hotel de Vaudry!—go in at once, you will be a disgrace and shame to your family!"

The honest Swiss had almost forgotten Rumphius, for he it was, accompanied by a porter, who carried his light portmanteau. Happily the philosopher seized the Swiss by his sword at the very instsnt he was closing the door.

"The Count de Vaudry!" repeated Rumphius, but in this instance he looked at the man to whom he was speaking.

"Ah! allow me the honour of saluting M. *de* Rumphius," said the Swiss with an air of respectful remembrance; "you have come no doubt, sir, to spend a few days at the hotel; although the count is invisible to everybody this morning—I must not fail to announce monsieur."

And the Swiss enjoining the porter to go as fast as he could through the servants' offices, and not leave his foot marks in the court-yard, returned to his box and gave a long and loud whistle; at the sound of this, the large glass door of the vestibule half-opened, and you might see through its panes the figures of five or six footmen dressed in the same livery as the Swiss, powdered, with bag wigs, red breeches, silk stockings, and shoes with silver buckles.

These men examined Rumphius with great attention, for absorbed in his contemplations, he continued walking about in various directions and drawing lines upon the sand with his umbrella, then looking upwards he would suddenly stop, no donbt working some equation, then he would again move on, and once more stand still.

At this instant a coach was rapidly driven through one of the arcades that communicated with the stables, and had it not been for the reiterated exclamations of the coachman, Rumphius would have been snatched for ever from his scientific pursuits.

But luckily the astronomer leaped on one side, the coachman checked his horses, brought their paces to a walk, and drew up opposite the steps.

The horses were magnificent, their harness black, the carriage of a grey colour but without armorial

bearings or cyphers, the coachman was out of livery, his dress also was grey, and a footman in garments of the same colour stood near the equipage.

Rumphius went up the steps, the door of the vestibule creaked on its hinges, and preceded by a footman, the astronomer ascended a splendid staircase ornamented with gilding, with a lofty dome overhead; it led to the smaller apartments of the building, for Henry did not usually occupy the larger rooms, that were devoted to the reception of company.

The footman handed Rumphius over to the care of an old servant, "The count will be delighted to see you, sir—be so good as to wait here an instant, I will announce your arrival and get your room ready."

And the astronomer found himself alone in an elegant room of an oval form, the furniture and painting were of green damask, the ornamental designs white, with rich beadings, and the whole framed in golden scrolls and mouldings.

The valet de chambre returned almost instantly, and opening the folding doors announced M. *de* Rumphius.

"I am disturbing you, count," said Rumphius, seeing Henry was not alone.

"Not in the least, not in the least, my good Rumphius, be seated;" he then addressed himself to a beautiful fair woman with dark hair, rather stout, and fresh coloured, whose features sparkled with malice and pleasure. [It was Leila, the lost prize of the Prince de Guemenée, one of the guests at Koat-Vën.]...."My dear, the carriage is below, I shall perhaps request your company to-morrow to sup with Fronsan and d'Escars; good bye, my girl."

And pinching her chin familiarly he saluted her with a waggish look.

Leila smiled, threw her veil over her head and moved towards the door, then turning back she stood before Rumphius, who was seated, made him a very low curtsey with the most serious air, and skipped out at the door in two bounds.

The poor man on receiving this unexpected salutation, suddenly rose and returned the compliment with a most respectful bow, but as awkward a one as even an astronomer could well make, but he had hardly got through the ceremony before Leila had disappeared.

As to Henry, he laughed to such an excess that he rolled from side to side in his golden embroidered silk *robe de chambre*.

"A delicious wench that is, that Leila," cried Henry, still bursting at intervals into a laugh, "what a glorious curtsey—and you, Rumphius—your bow was perfection itself."

"Faith, count," said Rumphius, who once relieved from his day-dreams was not easily disconcerted, and he spoke in the coolest and most innocent tone in the world, "faith, count, I made the best bow I could to madame,—the lady was one of your relations, no doubt? she had an air of great respectability."

"Pray be quiet, if you begin again I must leave you,—too much laughter will do me no good."

"Why count, I saw this lady in your bedchamber —in the morning, and your coach waiting her orders."

"But, old philosopher as you are, did you not observe that there were neither armorial bearings or liveries, and I allowed *her* to go down unattended, and pass by all the servants in broad daylight?"

"Aye, I see," said Rumphius, with a wicked smile, which he intended to be cunning and malicious—"I see. Thus Vishnou allows it; she is Yaroudah-bassys a satellite of Venus—otherwise the countess by the *left hand*."

And the modest philosopher after having stammered out these words blushed deeply, as if he had allowed himself to give utterance to some shocking indecency.

"By the left hand, .. exactly so—you are quite right—but you need not blush for having said it, Rumphius, although your observations were rather free and had a strong flavour of the abode of evil; zounds! the left hand, say you?—why you are becoming quite a cynic governor—by the left hand!"

"I am quite distressed, count," said Rumphius, confused, and in a state of despair at having uttered so indelicate a speech—"I am quite distressed."

"No, Rumphius, one must make a selection—either continue to avoid women and their favours, as you have hitherto done ... at least you tell me so."

"I make the same assertion again, count."

"Or else boldly say, I am a wild debauchee, a street-wanderer, a shameless libertine."

"I ... I, count," said the astronomer, who could hardly contain himself for shame. .. I?"

"Don't you perceive, I was only joking, I only said it to tease you, my good old friend; I am delighted to see you, for I was about to send for you that I might thank you for the tower of Koat-Vën, which my people have put in perfect order."

"And the count took the observations he intended?"

"More than I intended; I was taking observations for a whole month."

"Was the subject the Virgin, the Twins, the Ram, or the Scales?" demanded Rumphius. "Ah! if you had but devoted yourself to astronomy, count, with your abilities there is no knowing where you might have been carried; but no, you would content yourself with what certainly raised the envy of others, for I remember there was an amplitude .."

"There, there, forget the amplitude, and listen to me. When I left that confounded tower I intended to have gone to St. Rènan, if I had found time. Unfortunately I could not do so—but listen to what I have to propose to you—the king has given me the command of a frigate—we proceed, I believe, to India—at least so one of my friends, the principal secretary to the navy, has informed me in a letter."

And Henry opened a rich *secretaire*, curiously inlaid with ivory, to look for the note.

While this was passing Rumphius cast his eye over the bedchamber of his old pupil.

The hangings were of crimson cloth.

The ceiling might be almost said to be embroidered with gold, the arabesques crossed each other in so many directions; the looking glasses and the carved pannels were framed in white borders resembling palm trees, whose branches crossed at the top, and supported groups of cupids and doves—all this was in mat gold on a white ground, and the effect was wonderfully rich.

A number of miniatures hung over the mantle-piece, and opposite to them was a large painting by Le Brun, representing Henry's mother, a woman of distinguished beauty, dressed like the huntress Diana.

The awning of the bed and its fringe were of golden tissue, and the bed itself was raised on an *estrade* or platform covered with skins of lions and tigers, no doubt collected by Henry during his voyages.

The rest of the furniture, which also appeared to

belong to another age, was according to the fashion of the day, large, square, and massive, and ornamented with burnished gold.

Among other things a superb clock might be noticed, of carved ebony of the most exquisite workmanship, one of the chefs-d'œuvres of Adrien Morand. Two little silver cocks, covered with emeralds, sang the quarters of the hours to the airs of Lulli. This precious piece of furniture had been given to Henry's grandfather by Louis XIV. There was also a toilet service of Sevres china, beautifully painted, dazzling the eye with the brightness and variety of its enamelled colours. All this bore the grave impress of antiquity, proving that Henry appreciated the religion and poetry of what reminded you of by-gone times. Finally, the long curtains, half open, allowed you to see the old trees of the garden, whose leaves autumn had already begun to tinge with its golden hues.

"Ah!" said Henry, "here is the note—listen, if it depends on my friend I shall, in the first instance, carry out despatches to America, and from thence, unless Admiral Guichen detains me, I shall proceed to join chevalier Suffren in India, for it is probable he will be placed at the head of the squadron in that part of the world. So that if you are still engaged on Indian astronomy, perhaps you would like to accompany me, it is an excellent opportunity, such as you are not likely to meet with again . . . well, what say you?"

Rumphius thought he was dreaming, he could not collect his ideas. It was his most ardent desire to visit India . . . to see the cradle of astronomy. and to go there with his friend, his pupil; it was enough to make him lose his senses; so that he was only able to testify his gratitude to Henry in broken accents, and half sentences, unconnected with each other.

"How, count . . . see the Linghams . . . the temples of Vishnoo . . . shall I be fortunate enough to hear the Brahmins pronounce the sacred *Djon*, with the right nostril?"

"Why, zounds, Rumphius, what the devil does it signify with which nostril it is pronounced. But, however, you accept my offer, that is the principal point. I will let you know when we sail, that you may join me at Brest—that's agreed on; allow me to attend to my toilet . . ."

"How, Count! Zirouvallouven . . ."

"What devil of a name is that?—how can you pronounce it without distraction—to listen to you one would think you were cracking nuts"

"Ah! count, I know many more," cried Rumphius, with strange fatuity, *Paltanaton-Soullai* and *Savorignai-moarty*, and then *Karyma* and——"

"Enough, enough, for goodness sake, my good Rumphius, I do not doubt your science."

"If I wished to go on," said Rumphius, "there are the infernal regions of *Visany-calpaty laquila*—"

"I am perfectly satisfied in regard to your knowledge—but you must excuse me."

Henry rang his bell and his faithful Germeau prepared to shave and dress his master, while two other valet-de-chambres brought him what he needed to fulfil his important duties.

"You see, my good Rumphius," said the count, "I have so many things to do to-day."

"At the navy office, count?"

"Certainly not, it is quite enough to think of naval affairs when on board. No, I have laid a wager with Lauzun, that I will run a horse of my own breeding against his Talbot, which, notwithstanding the war he has succeeded in obtaining from England, you cannot calculate how much trouble I have had, and what money it has cost me to bribe M. Polignac's jockey, but I have him at last, and we shall see what Talbot will do against my Amadis."

"Afterwards I must pay my respects to his majesty, visit Marshal Richelieu, see my good old uncle the Bishop of Surville, and return here in time for the ballet, for I have appointed Puysegar and Crussol to meet me here, that we may go to sup with Soubise. To-morrow morning I have breakfast from a restaurateurs with that oddity Rivarol and that fool Marmontel; after breakfast I must witness the taking of the veil by that poor girl, Claveney . . . all Paris will be there to hear the music of Mondonville, and after that I must dine at Versailles with Prince Montbarry . . . Thursday I hunt with the king . . . I have twenty horses in my stable, and egad I find them too few . . . You may judge then . . ."

"How will *M. le Count* be dressed?" said the valet; "it is a fine day."

"Well . . . that spangled flesh-coloured velvet . . . no, no, the Lyon's embroidery, the last that Lenormand brought me."

"And what ruffles *M. le Count*—English or Malines lace?" said Gemeau, with an important air.

"Malines—no, I think for this race none at all; I will be this morning *en chenille*, and a plain English green frock coat will do very well. But really, my poor friend, I beg your pardon for these childish details, which must make you smile and pity me—but once at sea, I will regain your esteem. Ah, by the bye, your apartment is ready, here you are in your own house—give your orders for dinner to the maitre d'hotel, if I should not happen to be with you . . . but now I think of it, to what happy chance am I to attribute this kind visit; and your excellent brother, how is he?"

And Henry, rising, glanced in the mirror and observed—"That rascal has surpassed himself . . . my head was never dressed so much to my fancy as it is day."

At the question of the count, Rumphius sprung from his chair. "What an ass I am . . that wandering head of mine, the first thing forgotten was the very object of my visit," and searching in his pocket he drew out the letter Perez had given to his brother.

"Here is a letter, a man brought it to St. Rènan while I was asleep, my brother took it in, at eleven o'clock at night, I believe . . . it comes from the duchess who is dead, my brother tells me, I know nothing of it myself."

"How dead? what duchess is dead?" exclaimed Henry.

"Oh, it was a Spanish duchess who lived in our part of the country."

"Leave the room," said Henry to the servants.

Then approaching close to Rumphius . . "Do you know well of what you are talking . . . at least——"

"I am speaking the truth, count," observed the frightened astronomer.

"The truth . . . the truth . . . no, that is impossible . . . it is not so, it cannot be so, it is impossible," and Henry looked with anxiety at the fatal letter.

"Dead!" he exclaimed once more.

"Certainly she is dead—quite dead . . . the proof count, is this, there was a most superb funeral, much money distributed amongst the poor, and the curé of *St. Jean de St. Rènan*, one of my old friend

distributed it . . . and he received her last sigh—she died of a violent inflammation of the lungs, that was not properly attended to . . . the disease was so rapid they had not even time to fetch a good physician . . one came at last, but it was too late."

"Oh! this is dreadful," exclaimed Henry, for after all I am certain she loved no one but me, her unbounded devotion, her offers, her despair, all proved it to me—and I have caused her death, as a recompence for so much love."

"Then violently breaking the seal, he exclaimed, 'yes, it is from her . . . . ."

CHAPTER X.

A SKETCH OF THE HEART.

The heart? a strong muscle.—BICHAT.

Who can trace all the ramifications of this root of iniquity? who can explain its many parts and its entanglements? It strikes me with horror, I dare no longer look upon it.—CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTIN.

HENRY read the letter.

The characters, at first distincly written, became gradually so ill-formed and confused, that it might be easily seen the duchess was dying when the pen fell from her hand.

The first sentence was evidently written in haste, as if Rita feared her time would be too short.

"Henry, I have deceived you, all you have been told respecting me is true—can you now forgive me?

"Yes, I have had lovers, Henry, and you are not the cause of my death!

"I wished to acknowledge this to you, but was afraid I should not have time; I feel myself so ill—my poor head fails me—I have wept so much I can scarcely see.

"You are innocent of my death, I alone am guilty, Henry, yes, I wish it to be so, I, I alone—Have no feelings of remorse; I say again, you are not the cause—I have merited all I have suffered at your hands.

"Adieu! adieu! for my sight fails me—my hand becomes rigid, adieu, Henry, have no—

And nothing more—nothing, with the exception of a few illegible marks.

But at the bottom of the letter, which bore the traces of many tears, the following words were written in another hand:—

"*Died the 13th October, at two minutes past 3 o'clock in the morning.*"

"My dear Rumphius," said Henry, after a long pause, "I wish to be alone . . . excuse me. . ."

And he threw himself in an arm chair, while the astonomer softly left the room, quite overwhelmed all his pupil's sorrow.

The count's most bitter thought, after reading the letter, was this—"I was not her only lover."

Then he threw the letter in the fire with as much rage as if destroying some rival's billet-doux.

He cursed this letter, althought it might almost justify him in his own eyes, and in those of the world. He even felt vexed that he was not in any degree the cause of her death.

Such was the impression produced by the sublime untruth of Rita, by which she had degraded herself even from the tomb, to save her lover from remorse.

And this was the natural consequence, for to tell the truth—man has scarcely any feeling except for that which pleases or deeply wounds his selfishness or vanity.

To say to him, you are ridiculous—but not terrible, is to do him wrong, to doubt his energy, to treat him as a mere boy.

For there is fear for crime, and laughter for folly—so that we had rather be dreaded than laughed at.

Who would not rather be Cain than Jocrisse.

"I have been a dupe then," said Henry to himself.

This conviction, if it could not efface, might at least weaken the bitterness of his repentance, for he could not avoid saying to himself "The heart of Rita did not beat for me alone; she deceived me when she said the contrary."

From thence arose a strife between selfishness and vanity.

"Believe you have been a dupe," said selfishness, "and you will sleep tranquilly."

"Believe yourself a monster of perfidy," said vanity, "and if you cannot sleep you will console yourself by thinking that she preferred death, to the loss of your love."

Vanity was right.

So that Henry considered Rita's letter as a last and irresistable proof of that burning and despised love that led the unfortunate duchess to the tomb, and spite of Rita's assertion, he accused himself as the fearful cause of her death.

So that with this conviction from this day forward, Henry conceived it right to take upon himself, himself, infamous, perjured, almost an assassin, that melancholy scorn—that almost fatuitous horror, which every human being fills with proud despair when it says to him . . . . after necessary preparations.

"Well, wretch that you are, with your libertine conduct, your cruel want of thought you have caused the death of this beautiful lady who . . ."

"Or else."

"Oh God! madame, without imagining it, or rather knowing it well, you have raised a dreadful flame . . . this poor—has blown out his brains, and died pronouncing your name."

"And then—nothing more is necessary to give you the most envied reputation, not even leaving to you the necessity of 'unclasping the cestus of Venus," as they said in those days."

CHAPTER XI.

THE WOMAN WITHOUT A NAME.

I have seen love, jealousy, hatred, superstition, and rage carried among women to an extent never experienced by man.

It is particularly in moments such as these that women surprise us, beautiful as the seraphim of Klopstock, and terrible as Milton's Satan.

Woman bears within herself an organ susceptible of the most terrific spasmodic emotions, it is during this hysterical delirium that she looks back to past times and rushes forward into the future, all time is present to her mind.

Sometimes she has made me shudder, the rage of a wild beast has become part of her nature, thus have I seen her, thus have I heard her—what sensations she possessed, what expressions she made use of!—DIDEROT.

IT is night.

Nearly opposite the hotel de Vaudry, there stands a house of modest appearance.

On the third floor, in a simple sleeping apartment, a woman is seated before a table.

She is engaged in reading.

A small looking-glass is on the table.

This woman is enveloped in a large brown cloak, and has her features concealed by a mask of black velvet.

She appears in profound thought, but cannot repress at intervals a deep shudder, that causes her

mask to tremble—she raises her hand and presses it against her forehead.

Then her eyes shine vividly through the eyes of the mask, and in a low tone she says—"No—no weakness."

Then again she meditates, and reads.

The book she was reading was of a singular nature—"A Treatise on Poisons, by Ben Afiz," an Arabian physician, translated into Spanish by José Ortèz; a book filled with such horrible knowledge that the inquisition ordered it to be seized and burnt, and Philip V. expended more than a thousand double pistoles to buy up all the copies he could discover for the purpose of destroying them.

Such was the dreadful book this woman was reading.

After a short time she rose and opened a large *secretaire*, from which she drew a casket and placed it on the little table.

Opening this casket she appeared to contemplate its contents with pleasure; these consisted of a vast quantity of bills on the first banking houses in Europe.

The sum they represented was immense.

Then raising the cape of her cloak, she drew from her bosom a small steel chain, strong and closely twisted, to which were suspended without any arrangement, more jewels than would suffice to decorate the diadem of a king.

So sparkling were these precious gems, that when the feeble light of the single candle by which the chamber was lighted fell on this mass of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, the whole figure of this woman appeared as if illuminated.

You might have said it was a focus of burning light, from which a thousand dazzling flashes issued coloured with all the hues of the prism.

Then dropping this ponderous chain, which now, almost buried in the folds of her brown cloak, merely shot forth at times a few brilliant sparks. This woman said with a sigh, "shall I have enough!"

After a moment's silence she again raised her hand to her mask, and attempted to remove it, saying in a low tone, "If there were yet time!"

But she lowered her hand again, for the outer door of the apartment was heard to open, then the second, and lastly, that of the bedchamber itself.

A man entered and respectfully saluted the female, who answered by an inclination of the head.

For one instant the head of one of those enormous mountain greyhounds, with long grisly hair appeared at the door—but retired with a growl on a signal made to him by his master.

The man relieved himself of his large cloak and wide-brimmed hat—you might then see his thin form, and his tanned and copper-coloured features.

It was Perez, he was dressed in black, in two months he had grown older in appearance than if ten years had passed over his head.

The masked female was Rita, the *late* duchess of Almeda.

"Well Perez," she said.

"Well, madame, here is the list you required of me."

"Give it me, give it me," said Rita in an eager tone, taking at the same time the list from her squire . . . and she read it, while Perez closed the casket, and replaced it in the secretaire.

She read it.

It contained names and addresses—the bishop of Surville, Leila, the Chevalier de Lepine—she then said....

"You have entered these houses?"

"I soon shall, madame."

"My dresses, Perez, our disguises?"

"You shall have them to-morrow, madame,".... then after a pause, he continued, drawing near to Rita, "It is necessary now to remove this mask, madame."

Rita gave no answer.

"Everything must be completed—and these are useless sufferings."

Rita was silent.

"What is done, is done—besides it will soon be too late."

"Tell me, Perez," said Rita, interrupting him, "tell me—were my funeral ceremonies magnificent, for you witnessed them?"

"Magnificent, madame."

"Was there any suspicion, Perez?"

"No, madame, you know that after your women had left, who entered your room that you might reward them before your death—I and Juana remained alone with you, until the moment when the priest arrived; the chamber was darkened—you appeared dying—he administered the sacrament to you and then left—then us two, Juana and I, alone watched you, and as soon as these last ceremonies had been performed according to your express orders, I and Juana alone, lowered your coffin into the vault of the chapel, close to your oratory..the next day it was on the road to Spain, accompanied by Juana and your principal domestics, who carried it to the chateau de Sybsyra, and placed it in the family vault."

"Then there was no suspicion, Perez? no one suspected?"

"No, madame, the ignorance of the medical man you sent for was also of use—but you know all about that, madame—but in the name of St. James take off the mask."

"Has he had my letter, Perez?"

"Yes, madame, the astronomer took it to him ten days since, I chose this man for the office because they told me he was acquainted with your priest and your medical attendant, and he would be sure to give *him* the particulars of your death."

"And what did he say—*he*—"

"*He?* oh, for eight days *he* would see no one—but after all he could not have acted otherwise—as his old valet de chambre told me, but by this time *he* is almost restored to his usual spirits."

Here Rita was unable to suppress a slight exclamation of sorrow, and lifted her hand to her face.

"That mask .. in the name of Heaven! you still wear that mask," cried Perez, "remove it, madame . . it must be done."

After a moment's silence, Rita said to him in a low and trembling voice—"You see I am a great coward, Perez—I shall die with shame—well, I acknowledge it, I dare not!"

"You dare not!"

"No, Perez, I dare not, I fear to do it."

"Fear, madame, fear! when twenty days since, you said so bravely to me—'Perez, I will avenge myself of him—but understand me—that the vengeance I long for should be complete and certain, *he* must believe me dead, Perez—but that is not enough, no one must be able to recognize me, so that he may see me face to face and yet not recollect me—what then shall I do, Perez?'—Oh, you had no fear then, and seeing you so bold, so decided—I told you of a secret I had brought with me from Lima . . . of a burning corrosive substance which the Indians use to trace indelible marks on their bodies."

"Oh, Perez, Perez."

"You had no fear either, when you said to me—'I have sacrificed my name, my rank, my existence, I will sacrifice what remains of my beauty, which would be wasted somewhat later, in useless tears,'—so that you no longer hesitated, and this mask covered your features—and now you are afraid, when nothing remains of your dazzling beauty—fear now, when this mask no longer covers aught but features defaced, and no longer to be recognized!"

"Oh, yes, it is that, the idea of seeing myself hideous, chills my soul—Yes, I dread it—Oh! it is frightful, frightful to think of . . . Perez—I know it—I am a coward, it is shameful, but I dread it. When you was not present, I did not dare to remove the mask!—but now I will do so—but my mind is reeling—I shall go mad . . . mad! Oh, Henry! . . Henry! Oh, God! what have you caused me to do?"

And the miserable woman rocked her head in her hands, with heart-rending cries—but rising quickly, she exclaimed . . . "Now I think of it, Perez, are you certain of the efficacy of your secret? Do you know that I have often moved my mask?"

"Again, I must tell you, madame, my dear mistress, the pain you have felt is a proof there is no redress."

"Oh! it is not true, it cannot be true, Perez."

"But, by St. James, I only followed your orders; obeyed your will."

"Wretch! ought you always to obey them," said the duchess, in a state of delirium—it was the last lamentation of vanity, in a young and beautiful woman, expiring within her.—"Ought you not to have pitied a poor creature, led astray by love and hatred? Ought you not to have deceived me—have told me it was done, although it was not? . . . Oh, I see by your looks, Perez, my good and faithful servant . . you spoke falsely, did you not? you deceived me, you said to yourself 'this poor woman is mad, let us have pity on her, for her project is too horrible'—the awakening from this dream will be too dreadful . . . . But, you do not answer me, Perez—you say nothing—there you stand motionless. Alas! your silence alarms me, speak wretch, speak, then," cried the duchess, seizing him by the arm.

"Let my mistress, let the duchess pardon me for what I have done; but this scene is too dreadful for both of us. Let us see then, madame."

As he uttered these words, Perez broke the strings that tied the mask, and it fell . . . .

And Perez, unable to suppress a cry of astonishment and fear, concealed his head in his hands, and knelt at his mistress's feet, to prevent her seeing his tears.

For this man of iron loved her with with a servile devotion, so mechanical, complete, and disinterested, that it resembled the instinct of a dog for his master; yes, Perez had devoted body and soul to Rita's vengeance, with the blind impulse of a dog that rushes at a wild beast, at the sound of his master's voice.

Rita, remained for an instant motionless—her eyes fixed—gazing without seeing.

She soon recovered her senses, and with one step, reached the little table; seized the mirror, cast a rapid glance in it, and fell senseless in her chair.

Two large tears fell on her cicatrised cheeks.

The unhappy woman could no longer be recognized; Perez, was the only man in the world who could have known the Duchess of Almeda, in these frightfully disfigured features.

Rita shed many tears, and only interrupted her heart-rending sobs, to seize the mirror with both hands—look at herself—and cast it away, exclaiming—"Oh God! oh God! all is lost, all is lost—nothing left—all lost—beauty, name, rank, nothing is left me—nothing . . . ."

"But vengeance, madame," said Perez, seriously, when her tears flowed less rapidly.

At that sound Rita raised her head, and said, in a firm voice, while she dried her eyes with her hands.

"Pardon me, my good Perez—pardon my weakness, my injustice; but I once possessed beauty—I was a woman . . . and you must pardon this last look I have cast on so glorious a past, so full of hope . . . but now all is forgotten, and you shall see if I fail in energy."

Then taking up the looking-glass, she gazed on herself for a minute, without exhibiting the least emotion.

"Well, Perez, am I afraid now?" and she placed the glass on the table, with a steady hand.

Perez kissed the hem of her garment.

"Oh you have said truly, Perez; vengeance is left to me—hatred—wild, free, and unshackled; for I have not a single sentiment of pity to restrain me—not a future hope that can make me change—my vengeance is limited to this world, I will not forget it; my hatred binds me to it for ever—forget my vengeance! when every instant my disfigured features exclaim—'Revenge thyself, he has deprived thee of beauty, rank, love, and honour—Revenge thyself, for now a poor, vile, nameless creature, you once possessed a name honoured throughout Spain—Revenge thyself, for you lived an almost royal life, and now thou are a wretched wanderer; thy life devoted to the accomplishment of a single vow; to feed without ceasing, a devouring flame, with one passion only . . . Vengeance.'"

"But, should he die, madame; die before you are revenged," said Perez, suddenly, and in alarm.

"Oh! but he will not die, Perez," exclaimed Rita, with an accent rendered almost prophetic, by its tone of conviction—he will not die—he cannot die . . . I have a faith in my breast, a certainty of the future, that tells me he will not die; and then only consider, Perez; it must have been something unheard of, superhuman, infernal . . . I know not what . . that has induced me to do what I have done; something that makes me certain that I shall be avenged—for the feeling with which I am endued is a kind of second-sight, a dream of the future—yes, yes, I feel it here—I shall be avenged in due time; the time will arrive, Oh! yes, I am sure, Perez; let heaven or hell say no! I say, still say, 'yes it shall.'"

And Perez believed her, for her actions, her words, and the expression of her features, possessed that inexplicable authority, that affects the conscience like a secret revelation, a psycological phenomenon, that reason is obliged to admit without the power of analyzing.

"And this vengeance, madame, will it be very dreadful!"

"Truly, Perez, it will," said Rita, with a terrible smile; "this vengeance—but say Perez—you have heard of Cain, Cain the accursed?"

"Yes," answered Perez, terrified at his mistress's looks.

"Cain, you know, had a mark on his forehead Cain, whom a sanguinary fatality surrounded, with a circle of desolation, which he could not overstep, because he was condemned to remain in the centre."

"Go on," said Perez, his heart throbbing violently.

"Well!—*He* shall be *Cain* the accursed—*I* will be his *fate*."

CHAPTER XII.

COUNT HENRY VAUDRY.

A good action is often performed to enable us to do evil with impunity.—ROCHEFOUCAULD.

I have often said that the misfortunes of mankind arise from not being able to rest quietly in a chamber.—PASCAL.

Still, infamous as I was, I piqued myself on my honest and correct conduct; to such an extent was I filled with the spirit of lies and vanity.—SAINT AUGUSTIN.

MAHOMET, St. Agustin, Pascal, Rousseau, M. Jaquotot, the heavenly St. Simon, and many others besides, (for the number of deities and wise men, now a-days is very great) look upon education as a kind of second existence bestowed on man.

Provided in the first instance with physical life; he must, they say, to render him a perfect being, receive another, a moral life.

This idea has always appeared to me to be as true as it is excellent; only, in my mind, there is great difficulty in the choice of these intellectual *procreators*, although the number who pretend to the task may be always considerable . . . at the time these events took place, the most able men of this description, were the Abbés, some among them, reckoning twelve or fifteen *spiritual* children, born alive, without mentioning those who never drew their breath.

But this second nature is terribly tenacious—contact with the world modifies it, without changing it, and we are sure always to discover in the direction of the thoughts and acts of mature age, the primitive traits of these second fathers, and truly, sometimes the resemblance is enough to alarm you.

It is a fact, that in extreme youth the soul, or the spirit, or the heart, in a state of fusion, as it were, through the effervescence and fire of the passions; is plastic, and capable of receiving impressions. By degrees the flame becomes weaker, and the soul grows cold and hard—it is tempered. In some cases, this lava has been poured into a sublime or hideous mould; but bold and strongly marked; in other cases, the matter has swelled, and bubbled a little; and when extinguished, become a shapeless mass.

This is not the preface to a work on elementary instruction for the use of those who wish to become *angelic*, or the announcement of *a special* establishment to wean a *Brutus* who bites his nurse, or to correct a Lycurgus, who at six years of age, presents addresses for the abolishment of birch rods, as a violation of individual liberty, and the dignity of mankind.

No, this is simply a digression, to enable us to speak of the early education of Count Henry de Vaudry, and thus explain the apparently loose principles that have placed him in so false a position, with respect to the *late* Duchess d'Almeda.

Henry Vaudry, the youngest son of a great family, should have been an ecclesiastic, according to the order of his birth, and the exigence of that lofty social idea that binds the present to the past and the future, by the hereditary concentration of property in a single hand, through the law establishing the right of succession of the eldest son . . .

For formerly people laid on a rock, with iron and granite, the foundations of a durable edifice; not for themselves, for death would often overtake them before the last stone was placed; but for their children, and for their descendants.

This sublime care for the future, this moral and conservative law, that made the birth-place of a family inalienable and sacred—Oh, this was barbarous and brutalizing!

Formerly, religious and political institutions opposed themselves to the excessive increase of the population, so as to render less considerable the frightful number of men without the means of existence, destined, whatever the *Utopistes* may say or do to the contrary—to live here below, in the midst of privation and misery.

So that this profoundly moral restraint, affecting the rich as well as the poor, tending to keep mankind in equilibrium, with the small portion of happiness granted to humanity, for the noble purpose of making each man's portion larger—Oh! it was a brutalizing and barbarous age!

At the present time we build, with mud and plaster, a dwelling for a day, we act like miserly old men, who say—"After I am gone, of what moment is it"—And it is true, what does it signify?—Much, indeed have we to do now-a-days, with the religion, and the recollections of attachment to our native home!

Is your mother's tomb there—beneath the grass, in the meadow, in which she loved to seat herself, and nurse you, when an infant. If it should please the engineer to extend his noisy railroad over the blessed spot where every evening you breathed a prayer; why the engineer will not spare your mother's bones.—"You shall be paid three times their value"—and that is an answer to everything, and the ashes are cast to the wind.

So that since there no longer exists, in France, a single spot, where the engineer cannot construct a canal, a road, or a line of telegraphs, the result is, it would be foolish to build a house, or plant a tree, for it would not be unlikely, that when you woke in the morning you would find yourself dispossessed of it.

This last and mortal attack on family ties, morality, and the religion of the past and future, on the sacred rights of property, is called *public utility*.

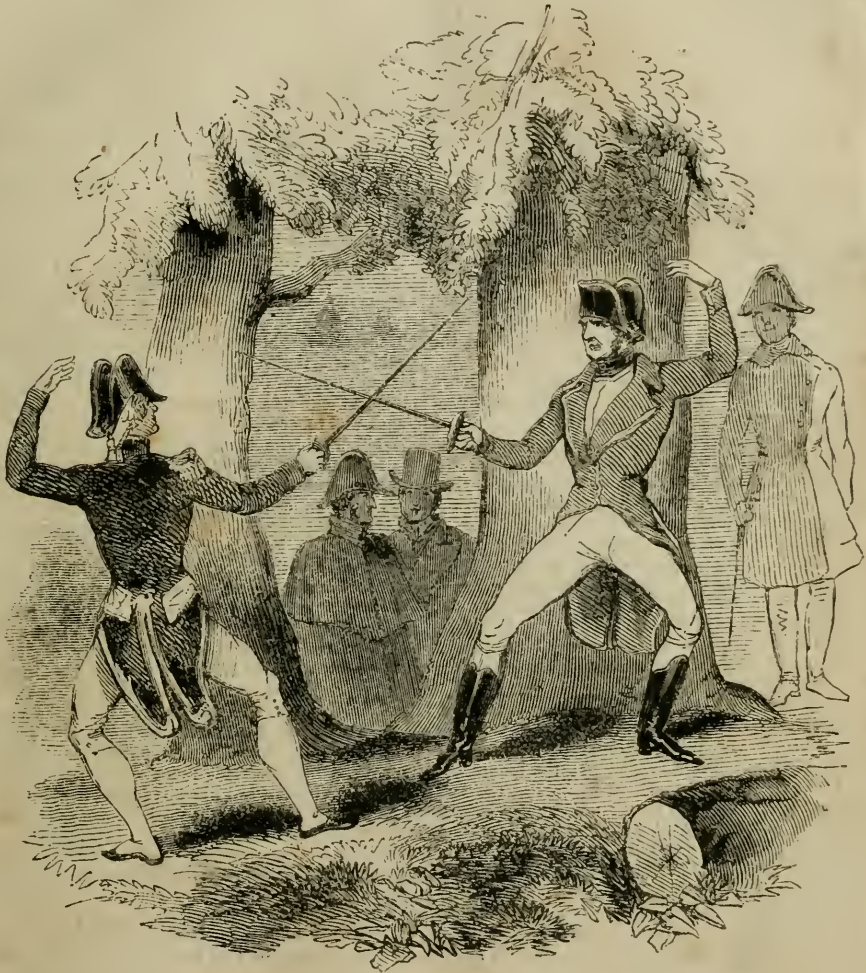
And thus this *public selfishness* that attacks all to the injury of all—this hideous and destructive idea, that commerce should be above all, that every one should sell, pay, or purchase—that what is most pure and most holy in the heart of man, that the sentiment that alone attaches him to his country, *love* for the tomb and the birth-place, can be indemnified by gold, and sacrificed to the vain hope of an imperceptible amelioration, of happiness purely material,—this—this is civilization—this is progress!

But this is not all: we find at the present day organised beings who gravely tell you, (this variety of our species are called political economists, or philantropists), they tell you with an innocent and deep satisfaction—

"Ah! sir, what happiness this is! do you not observe, thanks to our assistance, how the population increases, how humanity pullulates, how it heaves and moves? it is a perfect ant-hill, sir."

And thanks to our immortal revolution, has it not relieved us of a thousand shackles by which the increase of population was checked? has it not driven from their convents the useless monks?—children, sir, children are the riches of the state;—did not the Emperor, sir, who knew their value, give a reward to women who had borne twelve living children?

I believe it; the emperor loved men as the butcher loves oxen; so that to encourage, through blind philanthropy, an unhappy wretch to take a companion although unable to support a family, is to say to



him, "be the fatner of children—never mind whether they have bread or not, if they want it, death will relieve you of them." When it is too full, the flood of mankind overflows its banks, there are channels for it—the plague, war, small pox, debauchery, prostitution,—and then it finds its level again, for it is the same thing not to increase, as formerly, or to increase, as at the present day, to feed the plague or war—death always has his share....only now-a-days, it is true, mankind becomes manure, the earth is a gainer, it becomes richer.

Be the father of children :—still marry in the midst of thy filth ; join your misery to that of another, and give birth to crime,—what signifies it? the gallies or the guillotine will take care of them,—obliging instrument of death ! economical haven from the distresses of the times !—would they abolish the? e it would be cruel—how many men would have no refuge but the streets, and it would injure the prospects of many others.

Yes, such are the unhappy consequences of this miserable sophistry, that the prosperity of a country being founded on the increase of its population, one ought at every risk to encourage the re-production of the species.

This complete ignorance of the laws of nature, this headstrong blindness that impels us to the abyss—is civilization, progress.

So that this civilization appears to me to be amusingly sublime, and especially profitable to doctors, grave-diggers, executioners, builders of plaster houses, and modern governments, for they ruinus

by their great care. But then can we pay too much for progress? for it is a consoling fact for mankind, a truth to draw tears even from the eyes of a philanthropist, that both budgets and crimes have become in France, most astonishingly progressive.

But my admiration of progress has made me, I am afraid, forget Henry.

Henry being the youngest son, was to enter into orders, but as he was noisy, headstrong, sensual, vain and passionate, and as he asked the ladies'-maids the most impertinent questions, and exhibited propensities as little monastic as possible, it was thought better to destine him for the navy, and make him a Knight of Malta.

And thus they reconciled his situation, with his position as youngest son, and the interesting future of his poor little family of vices, who would have vegetated pale and shrivelled in the moist shadow of a cloister, did on the contrary become beautiful and full grown gentlemen when breathing the open air, they expanded themselves in the sunshine of of many a country, and enjoyed themselves on the azure bosom of the waters of every ocean.

The worthy astronomer, Rumphius, gave Henry a few lessons in Latin and French, but more particularly in mathematics, but at the age of twelve education can scarcely be said to have begun, so that we do not wish to attribute the origin of the irregular passions that developed themselves, alas, at too early an age, in the young chevalier, to the influence of the modest sage.

Thus, in 1767, near the end of April, Henry left the chateau of Vaudry, where he had passed his childhood. He left without the embrace of a mother bathed in tears, for Henry had been long deprived of a mother; he left the chateau, therefore, without bearing away with him the idea that a tender voice would every evening breathe a prayer to heaven for him.

And this was so much the worse, for Henry, to all appearance, seldom invoked heaven himself, at least in such a manner as to be profitable to his future hopes, but if Henry had not the tender and pious exhortations of his mother, he had the last advice of his father the Count de Vaudry, an old lieutenant general and knight of some order, who conducted him to Brest himself, and confided him to the care of Chevalier Suffren, one of his most intimate friends.

"Adieu, chevalier," said the Count Vaudry to his son, "remember what you owe to your king, your flag, and your name, and then commit as small a number of follies as possible."

It was at the age of twelve years that Henry thus embarked as a volunteer on board the Union frigate, commanded by Captain Suffren, and placed under the orders of Count de Blugnon, proceeding to Morocco to arrange a treaty of peace.

Henry, with his handsome and spirited features, the decided outline of his figure, and his bold look, much pleased M. Suffren, who recommended the boy to the care of the eldest of the *gardes marines* (volunteers), whose service and studies he was about to share.

You may well imagine that a party of twelve or fifteen *gardes marines*, the oldest not more than eighteen years of age, and who, nevertheless, had lived a hundred times as long as any full grown man .... if life consists of an assemblage of emotions and contrasts... you may well imagine, I say, that a turbulent, satirical, rash, merry, mad, and insolent company, such as this, must have been an excellent school for the development of a character so ardent and impetuous as that of Henry, and he was not long before he made great progress in his imitation of them.

And this was a happy thing for Henry, for nothing is useless to man, virtues not more so than vices, they merely require an object, a direction—look at Henry—leave him on land, at his paternal chateau, he would have been a foolish, capricious boy, insolent, obstinate, impatient, and sensual.

Place him on board, give him a commander to obey, cast him into the midst of the dangers of an adventurous life—and the child becomes almost a man, his vices are no longer vices, they are precious qualities — obstinacy becomes firmness — passion courage—vanity, a noble pride of rank—impatience, a desire to learn.

Henry then became a great favourite with his companions, only for a few days he was slightly troubled with a few qualms of modesty, or scrupulous simplicity—but he soon took his proper station, and a month after his embarkation his handsome rosy cheeks seldom blushed, so that on one occasion, having left the vessel with his young friend the Marquis de la Jaille, they entered a *café*, and making the most of their slender voices, called for punch and tobacco.

Neither did he blush when both of them, concealed under a gateway, surprised some belated grisette, and snatched as many kisses as their delighed victim could suffer without outraging morality.

It must be acknowledged that by the time he had served two months on board the frigate he had been six times under arrest — had fought two duels—had one evening, by means of a rope cleverly extended from one side to the other of a steep street, tripped up and enraged a party of honest citizens,for whom he laid in wait, while his Orestes, la Jaille, and others, pursued them with shouts of laughter through the streets. But, on the other hand, Henry could climb to the truck of the main mast with as much agility as the most active of the boys. Henry knew the name of all the ropes—Henry could reef a sail like a foremost man—boxed the compass in a breath—and what was better? understood it and demonstrated it when necessary.

May we not presume, then, that after such a beginning, the young chevalier Vaudry would make up by his energy, ardour, and courage, for what he wanted in continence and austerity?

This prediction was verified; at fifteen years Henry had been present in two actions, and at one shipwreck, and proudly did he exhibit his first wound.

At sixteen years he sailed for Malta, there to commence his *caravanes* on board the holy vessels, but still under the rather unseraphic wings of the brave Suffren.

Still later, in 1774, during the war of independance, he was made a sub-lieutenant, fought like a lion, and received two famous wounds in his body, from a pike, as he was boarding Admiral Byron's vessel, during his celebrated action with the Count d'Estaing.

Finally, the reason of his being made so young, a knight of St. Louis and lieutenant, was because in the action of the 17th of April, 1780—being then the sailing master under Count de Grasse, he disengaged the Robust from a very dangerous position, and received, during the action, his fourth wound.

But such is the influence always exercised over others by real merit, that all the officers of the squadron applauded the flattering distinctions with which the young count was recompensed, for Henry

having lost his father and brother, found himself, in 1779, alone, and at the head of his family.

In the opinion of Suffren, De Grasse, and D'Estang, Henry promised a most brilliant career in the navy. His chief fault, they observed, was that of hazarding his own life and that of the crew by his careless temerity, showing a supreme contempt for his own life and that of others—with this exception no one had more deeply studied his profession—no, one possessed more of that indomitable but well regulated courage, by which a good officer is known.

But, alas! here am I in the position of a man who has a horse to barter, a house to sell, or a mistress to get rid of, who having in the first instance emphatically enumerated the charms, advantages, and hidden qualities of each object, finds himself suddenly brought to a stand still by the terrible word that made our friend the antiquary so furious—that devil of a *but* of dreadful augury.

Without doubt Henry was a skilful sailor, brave, handsome, intellectual—*But* if he had confessed to the vessel's chaplain, he would have been obliged to say to him, "Father, with the exception of treason, theft, and assassination, I have committed every crime."

But what could you expect?—the poor boy was so young when he left his father, he lived, as we may say, the life of a full grown man; he hed travelled through Spain, Italy, Greece, India, the Colonies,—I know not where, and in every country, thanks to his handsome face, his wit, and his money, he took advantage of the less scrupulous of the honest women, and of all those who made no pretensions to modesty.

After all these Turkish, Greek, Indian and Spanish kisses,—while there was scarcely time for pleasure—when at the age of fifteen one has braved death full twenty times, and stalked through blood, or stabbed a dozen Englishmen when boarding a vessel. See you not, he could not fail to have lost a little of his native innocence.

Find out if you can, in the midst of an agitated, libertine, and perilous life, like this, the time to be sober, loving and continent, when you live in the midst of contrasts, abundance and privation—revels and battle—desires and satiety.

Find out if you can, a time for those innocent and primitive thoughts of love that arise and increase in solitude, one of those extatic passions of fifteen, which perhaps are the first and only poetry of the soul, charming, timid, discreet love—so very discreet, that the loved object is frequently ignorant of its existence, for very often the lover himself knows not which is the darling creature—love that leaves no void, and is yet without aim or result.

Alas! alas! is it the same with love as with religion, does it only burn with more fervor when the divinity is veiled and wrapt in mystery?

And then consider, if Henry had not the profound veneration for women that is their due, it was not his fault.

Isolated so young, almost an orphan, he never felt that adoration for a mother or sister, that lively and holy affection which in after years gives to love I know not what perfume, delicacy, and purity, what sentiment of respect and thankfulness, as if the sex to which you were indebted for a mother or sister became, on that account, sacred and inviolable in your eyes.

And then again consider, in devoting himself to a woman Henry never obeyed the solicitations of his feelings; precocious pursuit of pleasure had destroyed his future love—that chord was wanting in his heart; without either hating or despising women, he considered them all-powerful for pleasure, but useless for community of mind, so that, physically, he was full of respect, politeness, taste, and kindness,—because he was a man of the world,—but as to allowing his heart to take an interest in his pursuit, he neither thought of it nor had the power to do so.

As far as he was concerned, should she prove faithless, it was only a change he anticipated, or a great relief; and in the same manuer he regarded his own want of truth.

So that his conduct to the duchess appeared to himself to be quite simple—for after all Henry belonged to an age for which the duchess was not adapted,—merely try to find a woman like Rita in the eighteenth century!

In the eighteeth century, *philosophism*, "that pure and brilliant torch of reason, that regeneration of abased humanity," still infamously strove along with the regency, when this false philosophy mixed its leprosy with that gangrene, sending forth to the world its books of folly, impiety, or obscenity, that, according to its intention, corrupted a state of society it had the atrocity to reproach with corruption, and at a latter period decimated it by its executioners.

In the eighteenth century, when they bestowed an apotheosis on Voltaire, on him who insulted France in her purest and chastest glory! on him who rushed with foaming mouth on Joan of Arc, as ignoble and powerless libertines abuse those they are unable to dishonour; when Diderot wrote for that age his filthy novels—Crebillon aided him—Vade his plays—Piron his ode—and Beaumarchais, his drama. When Helvetius, Condorcet, and the encyclopedists lived splendidly by atheism and filth; when the hideous passions of a population, already devoid of religious belief, began to ferment; when the best of kings, the most virtuous of queens, were overwhelmed with calumnies vomited forth by the philosophical party in the language of Billingsgate.

Think, then, of the condition of a woman capable of taking a passion in a serious light, when we are aware of the scandalous success of Clairval and Jeannot, and when the book of Laclos was but a mirror of the state of society.

No, no, in that unhappy age, in the midst of those terrible saturnalia, wild and fearful as the agony of a madman, every species of immorality was common, every vice had taken up its freedom.

But after all, looking at this epoch no longer as a moralist but as a mere man, it was truly a delightful time, and our hero being little of a moralist, completely reconciled himself to it, for the dear count foreseeing instinctively what must happen, had, if I may so express myself, laid out all his happiness in an annuity for life, and lived day after day a life of pleasure—and this appears to me to have been his excuse.

What would you expect? after two years of hard fighting Henry arrived at Versailles; all his connexions were broken, he had perhaps no more than two or three months to pass in France—it was necessary he should get a name by some bold stroke, to perfect his reputation as a brave seaman, by the addition of that of a man who had accomplished some original adventures, and to speak the truth, in those days that was a difficult task. The handsome Lauzun was successfully romantic—the Marquis d'Vaudreuil was noted for his cool indifference—Prince de Guenemée for his luxury—Tilly for his military airs—Crussol for his wit,—and Vaudry truly must imitate the time of the regency, and, as it appears to me, he was tolerably successful.

In other respects he was the best fellow in the world, for born of a careless and merry nature, Henry did not possess a sufficient amount of real superiority either to hate or adore human nature. Although both amiable and brave, happily for himself he wanted that active intuitive spirit that permitiug one to grasp the world at a glance, sums up the joys and hopes of mankind in the two words—*annihilation, vanity*—obliging the mind to cast itself for ever into the abyss of despair.

No; Count Vaudry's ideas were not so lofty as by one look to glance over the the course he had to run. Instead of looking ardently at the horizon, he amused himself with every new prospect that sprung up by his side.

In one word, Henry was one of those admirably constituted beings who possess minds but not genius—sense, but not a soul—vices, but never follies; one of those delightful fellows who, able with impunity to possess certain qualities, pursue a long career of love, glory and pleasure, applauded by all—leaving behind them, it is true, a few newly opened tombs, a few dishonoured families, and a small number of mourning children calling on their mother.

But how can you be cruel enough to reproach them for such trifles? they are such seductive faults,—they are so elegant in their cruelty, so nobly prodigal, so gaily brave,—men who risk their lives a score of times to avenge their mistress for an uncivil word or look; without doubt they themselves would without the least scruple, oppress the soul or drive into eternity the very same woman, on account of some miserable feeling of vanity. But what does all this prove?—that the women were fools in being serious in their loves, that they should repay perfidy by perfidy and no one would die of it—quite otherwise.

Such was Henry; fighting bravely when afloat, and on shore amusing himself everywhere and with everything. This was the whole existence of the count, and to complete this character, unassailable by the moral punishments of this life, let us add that most profound expression, that most incurable of all negative feelings, "*What signifies it to me?*" the most expressive, both morally and physically, for Henry would utter it with an accent of the deepest conviction.

"What signifies it to me if I were to die this instant? at least I can be comforted with the sweet consolation of never having refused myself anything, of never having had a wish ungratified, for young as I am, and yet contemplating death while young, I habituated myself to go beyond all my fantasies, to live double—fearing I might not have time to live long enough: never imitating the folly of those fools who store up their pleasures for some future time; madmen! a future time! as if a premature death might not overtake them, and thus demonstrate to them the folly of all human forosight."

This is a summary of the practical aud theoretical morality of Henry, and if you add to this long sketch the striking points of his character when afloat—that is, his customary despotism of the most absolute character—a will of iron—unexampled courage—the most profound contempt for his own life and that of his officers or men, and his strongly marked aristocratic pride, you will have a tolerably complete idea of Count Henry de Vaudry.

CHAPTER XIII,

AN EVENING PARTY.

For all things are seen under many aspects, and through the course of many years.

The scene is laid in Paris—Faubourg St. Germain, at the house of the Countess d'Emard.

The Marquis has just been relating in a very lively manner the adventure of Henry and the Duchess, the particulars about the tower, the death of Rita, &c.

The recital has proved extremely amusing—even interesting—some few have decried the horrible conduct of Vaudry, but several of the ladies who were on a visit to the Countess, left in the hopes of meeting with M. de Vaudry at Madame de Vaudemont's, who gave a party that evening.

Only two intimate friends remained with the Countess—the Chevalier de Berey, and the Marquis d'Elmont—the Countess is not young.

Countess. I did not wish to say I expected M. Vaudry here this evening, for fear they should all remain—and I had rather we had a little *committee*, but now Chevalier you must divert us a little, for really this tale has been extremely melancholy.

Chevalier. Then, madame, I will tell you a curious adventure of Lauraguais.

Marquiss. Lauraguais again, his tricks are inexhaustable—it is wonderful how the millions of M. de Guimené increase, the more he spends the more he has.

Countess. That is to say the more he owes! poor prince, with his almost royal establishment—but let us have your story, Chevalier.

Chevalier. Some days since, Lauraguais held a consultation with four doctors in medecine, he received them at the hotel de Brancas; and then very seriously proposed the question to them, "whether it was possible to die of *ennui*,"—all the doctors answered in the affirmative, and then after a long preamble, full of terms of art, they gave a written opinion, with the best faith in the world, "that it was morally and physically possible to die of *ennui*." The Brancas are most of them hypocondrical and melancholy, and the doctors believed the consultation had reference to one Lauraguais' relations—and they even specified in their certificate that the only remedy for the disease was, if it were known, to remove the cause of the lowness of spirits from the sight of the invalid.

Countess. Well, go on.

Chevalier. Provided with this opinion, all in due form, Lauraguais who was deeply smitten with Sophy Arnoux, made a deposition before the commissary of police, in which he complained that his rival, M. de Barentin, by his continued importunities to Sophia, would infallibly cause that inimitable actress to die of *ennui*. Lauraguais consequently required the authority, whose duty it was to watch over the health of the public, to order the said Berenten to abstain from visiting Sophia under pain of suffering the penalties awarded to those who attempted the life of another.

Countess. Charming, do you know Chevalier such an order as that is an excellent precedent.

Marquis. Certainly, we can cause tiresome people to be locked up on account of the public health.

Countess. The fact is they ought all to be placed beyond the pale of the law.

Chevalier. Or rather of society, that would answer better.

Countess. From whom did you hear this story? Chevalier.

Chevalier. From M. de Fronsac.

Marquis. A fine fellow that—he was very amusing the other evening at Trianon.

A valet de chambre announces "The Baron and Baroness de Cernan."

Countess (*to the Chevalier.*) Good heavens! Madame de Cernan with her husband! (*to the Baroness*) Good evening, my dearest beauty (*to the Baron.*) Why its an age since I have seen you M. de Cernan.

The Baron (*kissing her hand.*) You are a thousand times too good to notice it, madame, and I have come to lay myself at your feet to claim your forgiveness.

Baroness. Do not believe a word of that at least, madame, Monsieur de Cernan did not come to pay you a visit.

Countess. Seeing you with him, Cecile, I ought to have doubted it.

Baroness (*in spite of the signals of the Baron.*) No! you have not—he has come to see M. de Vaudry, whom you expect, he tells me.

Baron (*smiling.*) As Madame de Cernan wishes to excuse my assiduities to her—she makes use of this pretext—and I must be foolish enough to agree with her.

Countess. The pretext is at least well chosen, for the fact is, M. de Vaudry, since that frightful adventure is more the rage than ever. It is horrible to say so, but such is the fact. He is often here, his mother was an intimate friend of mine, and I assure you he is, after all, one of the most amiable men of the world you can imagine.

Baroness. Still, madame, his conduct has been so odious, that he appears to me, on the contrary, sovereignly hateful.

Countess. Yes, my dear child—but he is one of those men you hate even to adoration.

Baron. Has he already returned into society?

Marquis. It is quite regular, I believe—a seclusion of twelve or fifteen days after the event . . . and you can re-appear, that is the term.

Baroness. Is it quite true that the Duchess died of despair?

Marquis. Complete despair . . . that is a matter of consequence.

Chevalier. Happy Vaudry—no one has such luck as him, he will be quite the rage.

Countess. Hold your tongue, that is shocking—and who to look at her would have said that a prude like this duchess would have died of love; I recollect her extremely well—I supped with her at Marshal de Luxembourg's—she was a woman of a distinguished air—superb eyes—a perfect neck—but too brown, and her eyelashes were too strongly marked.

Baron. I have been told she was affectedly haughty.

Chevalier. Ridiculously so, she was a living reproach to many women much better than herself, for between ourselves, it is easy to be virtuous if you have neither heart nor soul.

Marquis. However that may be—it appears to me that she took Vaudry's joke too seriously.

Countess. To speak the truth, I am far from excusing the conduct of M. de Vaudry—but when I consider with what cool disdain, what insulting irony the Duchess repulsed the most simple galantries—with what an impertinent air of superiority she spoke of other women—but while I pity her I had rather it should have happened to her than any one else.

Baroness. But then consider what she must have suffered.

Countess. Certainly, and therefore I pity her, but I should have pitied her much more had she been more tolerant before her fault; at my age, my dear child, we are allowed to say all we think—well, I have seen the world, and I am convinced that it is more difficult to pardon her superior purity, than her errors, for a very simple reason—because people of an austere life are usually deficient in modesty and good nature.

Chevalier. The Countess is right, and then what a pitiful taste—for before Vaudry made himself known, she imagined she only loved—and in fact she did only love—an unknown man, whose origin was equally mysterious. . . and this you must acknowledge was almost depravity.

Marquis. Or a fondness for mystery . . . a lover of this description, is so easily concealed . . . and yet, for my part, I agree with those who consider she was not virtuous, but cunning—so that it appears after all that there is much room to excuse Vaudry. It is not his fault if the Duchess has taken it into her head to change a comedy into a tragedy.

Countess. And then again, the reason of the indulgence shown to M. Vaudry, arises from the fact of his having avenged mankind for the cruelties of the Duchess, and the women for her superior virtue, for after all, we ought not to make ourselves appear better than we really are.

Baron. But nevertheless madame, nevertheless, we must amend and arrive at perfection in morality as well as politics.

Chevalier (*aside to the Countess.*) I'll lay a wager that within five minutes the Baron mentions America.

Baron. Stay—in America (*the Countess hides her face behind her fan.*) in America they improve, and the proof of that is they rebel—they are subject to the mother country—Well! all at once they say—Bah! we will no longer be subject to her, and they no longer are subject to her—this is grand, is it not?

Chevalier. It would be extremely grand if they were the strongest.

Baron. They will be sir, they will be, for their cause is our own.

Countess (*laughing.*) How Monsieur de Cernan—ours also?

Baron. Certainly, madame, it is the cause of the whole world, rebellion will triumph because rebellion is one of the most sublime virtues—first of all it is easy, and within the reach of every body, of every capacity, then it is natural, it has its germ in every human heart, I—I now, for instance, when a boy I rebelled against my master—I rebelled against my nurse—I rebelled . . .

Countess. Excuse me if I interrupt the course of your rebellions, but what are we—we, the nobility—rebelling against?

Baron. Against ourselves, madame, against our own class—is it not admirable?—much superior to America.

Chevalier. I completely comprehend the political and the insurrectional system of the baron—we solicit the *Canaille* to have the goodness to set fire to our houses, and afterwards to cut our throats, that is excellent; but what comes next?

Baron. Next? why, having abolished our monstrous titles and destroyed our scandalous fortunes, we shall be all equal—all brothers—I shall be on a level with my groom—is it not grand?

Chevalier. And after that?

Baron. Well, after—France will become an immense garden covered with fruit and flowers, of

which every one will have his share—we shall be shepherds, these ladies shepherdesses—there will be virtue enough for every body—white dresses for the unmarried, blue dresses for the young married folks, and we shall go in mourning for our friends—a golden age—just read Condercet.

Chevalier. Well, and what next?

Baron. My dear fellow, what more would you have? it would be a terrestrial paradise, we should live without having any necessity for other laws than natural laws, eating when hungry, sleeping when drowsy—how excellent it would be!

Chevalier. But crime, how would you repress that?

Baron. Oh! all done away with—crime!—abolished, along with taxes and seignorial rights—can there be crime in a regenerated state of society—living on vegetables and equality?

Valet de Chambre (*entering.*) Monsieur le Count de Vaudry!

[*A general movement of curiosity and admiration, Henry enters and salutes the Countess.*

Countess. Come here Henry, I wish to speak to you—give me your arm.

[*The Countess enters the boudoir that adjoins the drawing room, the doors of which are open—visitors enter—they form themselves in groups—Henry is superbly dressed in a coat of flesh-coloured velvet, covered with gold embroidery and spangles—he appears careless and easy, which being anything but what was expected, produces considerable effect—the Baroness Cecile de Cernan is twenty years of age—beautiful as an angel, full of fire, but at times wrapt in thought, frequently foolish and half mad—the Baron de Cernan is thirty years old, has a fair pretention to ability—careless—brave—immensely rich—and deeply smitten with philosophy.*]

Baron (*to his wife.*) Really, madame, what I am about to do is extremely strange . . . I am unacquainted with M. de Vaudry, and my request must appear very improper to him.

Baroness. Then do not make the request.

Baron. But you have engaged me to do so.

Baroness. I? not in the least, I told you the Countess had been well known to M. Vaudry's mother, and on very friendly terms with her—and that if you were introduced by her, your request would not be refused—that was all.

Baron. Would you then have the goodness to make the request yourself.

Baroness. What folly—you cannot expect it.

Baron. You are extremely intimate with Madame d'Emard, you might easily interest yourself for me, a request is always less offensive when it comes from a woman—we men are always so ridiculous with our politics and forms . . . Ah! in America!

Baroness. Well, I consent—but really I am too condescending.

Baron. See—the Countess is entering the room. (*The Baroness seats herself near the Countess and speaks to her in a low tone—the Countess looks cunningly at Cecile—the latter blushes, and the Countess kisses her on the forehead.*)

Baron (*aside.*) Bravo—its all right—my request is in good train.

Countess (*addressing Henry, who is talking and laughing with the Chevalier,—points to the seat next to her.*) Henry, come here, I want to speak to you—to ask a favour, it is rather bold certainly after scolding you so much just now.

Henry (*smiling.*) It is really a sudden demand for the payment of your lesson—but it was so gracious and amiable a lesson that I am not offended—I grant all you ask.

Countess. Even when the favour does not interest me personally?—but a pretty woman, who hates you with all her heart.

The Baroness blushes—Henry who has looked at her stealthily, perceives it, and answers with indifference.

Henry. Between ourselves, madame, both hatred and love begin to weary me—love has brought so many disagreeable consequences with it that I shall reform myself—entirely, and it is only to your ancient and good friendship that I grant your request.

Baroness (*rising with an air of vexation and turning over some music books, says, aside.*) Impertinent foppery—how cool he is, and how careless after his frightful behaviour to that poor woman—it is odious.

Baron. Well, madame, how do we get on?

Baroness (*impatiently.*) Good heavens, sir, how should I know, do you imagine I was thinking about it?

Baron. It is amazingly pleasant, truly, that I, who came of at least as good a house as Vaudry, that I should be obliged to solicit . . .

Countess. Yes, my dear Henry, he is dying with the desire of going to America, and if you can grant me this favour I shall consider it a personal obligation.

Henry. With the greatest pleasure, I see no inconvenience in it—but I must first inform Marshal de Castries.

Countess. A thousand thanks, my dear Henry,—you must yourself inform Madame de Cernan of the good news.

Henry (*coolly to Cecile*). If I had been aware of the intentions of M. de Cernan, I would have anticipated his request, since this slight service gives me an opportunity of expressing my devotion to you.

Baroness (*coldly*). Sir, in the name of M. Cernan I thank you a thousand times for your civility, being happy, nevertheless, in thinking that we are solely indebted for this kindness to our common friend, the Countess d'Emard.

Henry (*still coolly*). For the first time perhaps in your life, Madame, you would be unjust towards our excellent friend, in attributing my ready acquiescence in your orders to her influence alone.

The Baroness salutes him, and blushes; Henry for the rest of the evening addresses no part of his conversation to Madame de Cernan.

Baroness (*to the Countess, when about to leave the room with the old Duke of Lermos*). Do you dine to-morrow at the Duke de Castries'?

Countess. No;—but why do you ask me that question, my dear?

Baroness. Only because I was invited, and I would have offered to have conducted you.

Countess (*kissing her forehead*). Wicked girl! it was done to vex me, for I hold dinners in horror.

Henry (*aside*). And I have to speak to Marshal Castries concerning M. de Cernan,—I must get myself invited to-morrow.

The Baroness leaves without looking at Henry.

Henry (*aside*). All goes well:—now then to rejoin Crussol, and take him with me to sup with Leila. (*He leaves the room*).

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSAILLES.

I have raised a monument.

VERSAILLES!—what grandeur, what misery, what reminiscences are in that word! Versailles!—one of

those eastern dreams in which the fancy revels; a beautiful fairy tale, the admiration of innocent childhood--a magnificent palace covered with diamonds and flowers, and peopled with Genii with wings of flame. Versailles!—one of those meteors that light up the whole firmament. Versailles!—one of those gushes of royal poetry that are written in gold, bronze and porphyry!

In this gigantic creation everything becomes truly colossal, and almost prophetic.

Versailles! at first a place of poverty, a mean, obscure hamlet, dry, burnt up, without either fountain or shade.

Then, a man said—" instead of this desolate village I, I myself will rear a monument to astonish all Europe. I will raise its pomp and glory to such a height, that although its dazzling splendour may pass with me, it shall leave recollections the pride of future ages: by the magic of art I will create wonders. Nature shall give me laws; on this bare and calcined earth a thousand fountains shall distribute their streams in marble basins, and the foliage of lofty arcades of verdure shall wave around this monument; a splendid regal city shall arise, to which kings shall send to honour it, for I would that the name of Versailles, at present unknown, should some day " weigh heavily in the balance of the destinies of the world!"

But what man, what prodigy was this?—Louis XIV. Who was minister?—Colbert.

Who raised this immense structure?—Mansard, Le Brun, Le Notre, Puget.

And everything became as imposing as Versailles.

If the King chose an emblem, it was the sun; must the gates of the palace be adorned, there are victories to be sculptured, and the eagle of Austria and the lion of the Castilles are chained to the threshold.

Versailles has a chapel,—there Bossuet preaches; Versailles has a theatre,—Moliére performs in it.

And then for an audience there are Condé, Montmorenci, Villars, de Saxe, Rochefoucault,—I know not who; all that proud aristocracy, still bleeding from the sword of Richelieu, who decimated them in the name of the King of France.

And yet this proud, rich and independant nobility, almost sovereign in their own estates, still pressed round the steps of the throne, because the king was for them more than a king—he was a sacred principle, like honour and virtue.

And Louis XIV. died—and Versailles fell with him!

For you uttered a fatal truth for France and for your race, great king, when you exclaimed, the sceurge in your hand, " I am the state!"

Yes, you was the state;—yes, the monarchy consisted of you alone. After your irreparable division with Rome, when, believing yourself strong, you relied on your own strength instead of that of heaven. After substituting a single ephemeral despotic power, for that sublime trinity of government, the three immortal powers that alone can ensure the future safety of a government—*heaven*, the *king*, the *people*.

And thus your monarchy could not exist after your decease, great king, because from being divine, as it was to the eyes of all, you had made it human, —because you alone was the monarchy, you, the hero, you the demi-god, whose very look produced an age of prodigies.

And, like the sun you had taken for an emblem, sun of a day, you dazzled the world with your resplendent light, and in the evening you set majestically in the sombre west. The last glimmer of your twilight still cast a pale ray on the crown of your descendants. And then night came on, dark implacable night, a night of blood, storm, and tempest, which has strewn with ruins the ancient soil of France.

And after the death of the great king, Versailles remained, still proud, sad, imposing, but abandoned, like those immense chateux, the poverty of the present day will not allow to be inhabited.

For the regency succeeded this age of greatness.

The regency! and what did the regency and its libertines in those endless galleries,—beneath those enormous vaulted roofs, where the voice of Bossuet once thundered? The regency at Versailles!—a bitter mockery. The regency with its suppers, its infamous orgies, its boasted disbelief of every creed! once more, could the regency that ended in the corruption of the whole country restore Versailles to life?

Louis XV., so great a king—if he had been willing, but the task was wearysome,—Louis XV. made a good attempt, but himself, his court, his men of letters, and his artists, were no longer great enough to fill Versailles. The splendid *souvenirs* of the great age raised this palace to too great an eminence, the air is too keen—the atmosphere of its glory too piercing for their narrow and corrupted breaths; its grandeur crushed them, its immensity confounded them, so the court took refuge at Trianon.

There, at least, everything was on their own scale, all was little, spangled, coquettish, painted, rosy, powdered and perfumed; there, was there a soft echo for the slander and affected voice of the atheism of the boudoir, for they were satiated with vice, and it was necessary they should dabble a little in impiety to restore their appetites.

In fact, atheism became rather fashionable, it was much relished—that is, at first,—afterwards, for they grew weary of everything, when they were satisfied, the remains were thrown to the people.

After the reign of Louis XV., after the reign of mistresses and favourites. came that of a king, an *honest man*, of great and superior virtue—the reign of a young and intelligent queen, good and happy who, confident in her purity, had no necessity for concealing her innocent preferences.

But although inhabited, Versailles was still a desert.

Such perhaps were the thoughts of Henry Vaudry on his way to Versailles, to dine with Marshal Castries.

And yet I do not imagine that the thoughts of the count could have been of so melancholy and grave a nature.

Softly cradled in his goodly coach, drawn by four magnificent horses, preceded by his outriders, on his road to the house of the minister, in the hopes of there meeting the Baroness Cécile de Cernan; it must be acknowledged it is not probable that Henry was at the moment dreaming of the causes of the fall of empires.

The count was considerably smitten with Cécile—for his passion for Leila had had its day. He endeavoured to pass away his time by paying attention to the wife of a notary, but beginning with the husband who overloaded him with flattery, down to the clerks, who were amused at the scene, every one was so prejudiced in his favour, so desperately easy, that the amiable seduction disgusted him, and to the regret of the husband, his wife, and clerks, he broke off the connexion, after about eight day's intimacy.

In this state of affairs an intrigue with the Baroness Cernan must have appeared to him so much the more agreeable, from the fact of Cecile's appearing extremely distant to him.

Arrived at Versailles, he presented himself before Marshal Castries, and mentioned the request of the Baron de Cernan.

"Although his majesty sees with uneasiness the infatuation of a portion of his nobility for this cause," said the minister to him, "I had rather have the baron in America than here, so, my dear count, take him with you. But now I recollect, Madame de Cernan dines with me to-day, you had better remain and talk over her husband's business with her."

Henry accepted the invitation, it was what he intended. The baroness soon arrived; never did she look more beautiful; dressed in a gown of lampas silk embroidered with silver, with white hair-powder, a head dress of *frimas*, with long lappets that strayed over her lovely neck, while a stream of diamonds mounted on large plates of black enamel, gave additional delicacy to her fair complexion. It was impossible to imagine a more delightful or enticing *ensemble*.

Henry accosted her with extreme but cold politeness, and informed her that the marshall had agreed to the b_ron's request, without adding a single word of compliment.

Cecile already irritated against Henry, but without being able to say for what, was outraged at this last proof of indifference, almost disdain, on the part of the count, but her anger reached its height when she found herself seated at table by his side. So, making up her mind not to answer anything Henry might perchance say to her, she entered into deep and earnest conversation with her left hand neighbour, an old councillor of the parliament.

Henry, on his side, maintained a lively dialogue with his neighbour, the beautiful Marchioness de Vaillé.

Much need had the old councillor to pay deep attention to every word of Cecile, for he could scarcely understand anything she said, the ideas of Madame de Cernan were so eccentric and irrelevant. It was not the same with the Marchioness de Vaille, she was quite delighted with Henry, who never appeared to better advantage.

What perhaps may explain the vain attempts of of the poor councillor to follow the singular conversation of Cecile is, that she was listening to Henry while she answered her neighbour.

Almost opposite Henry, and on the other side of the table, sat an English officer of handsome features and distinguished appearance, but he seemed absorbed in sadness, was absent, thoughtful, and scarcely appeared conscious he was one of that magnificent dinner party.

"Do you know who that officer is?" said Cecile to the councillor.

"Yes, madame, it is Sir George Gordon, a lieutenant in the English navy, and a prisoner of war; but as an exchange of prisoners has just taken place, he is free and can return to England as soon as he feels inclined."

"It is astonishing—his appearance is extremely sad for a liberated prisoner."

"Very sad," said the councillor, "one would say some profound grief occupied his thoughts..what can it be?"

"How! cannot you guess, sir, with the knowledge you possess of mankind?"

"No, madame—I need be a wizard for that purpose—a magician."

"A magician! what would not I give to be a magician, a fairy"—observed Cecile. "to read a man's heart," and Cecile mechanically looked at Henry, then again taking up the word, she added, "to know for instance the secret sorrow that oppresses that poor Englishman—yes, really, I should be curious to know that secret—what would I not give for it."

"As far as that goes—without being a fairy, madame, it is easy for you to know what is written on the hearts of all those who see you..you can read nothing except—'I love you,'" answered the councillor with all the remaining gallantry of the age of Louis XV.

Not a single word of this conversation escaped Henry, who had also been struck by the melancholy and absent look of Sir George.—He had merely smiled when Cecile exclaimed she would give all the world to discover the secret of the melancholy prisoner, and he easily induced the Marchioness de la Vaille to express the same wish.

Then raising his voice, the Count said negligently, addressing himself to the Marchioness and Cecile, "When I was young, ladies, I would have sworn upon my soul to learn the secret that interests you —yes, had I heard a woman form such a wish, I should have thought nothing too extravagant to satisfy her, either by cunning, strength, or impudence. I would have obtained the secret, and proud of my victory—have laid it at the feet of my divinity. But at my age," he added, looking more directly at Cecile, "we are happily not so romantic in these matters, and we leave business of this description to the young people, who have to prove their prowess."

"What nonsense," said the Marchioness. "The fact is, I think I should be amazingly flattered at such a proof of devotion to one of my caprices.... and perhaps....in exchange for his secret, I might confide to him one of a more gentle nature."

Cecile blushed deeply, but said not a word, then turning towards the councellor, she was about no doubt to set his wits to works in the discovery of the meaning of her unconnected phrases, that might pass for riddles, when the marshal's secretary entered, and placed some dispatches in his hands, which a courier had that instant brought.

M. de Castries asked permission of the ladies to open the letters, and not being able to restrain his surprise, he soon afterwards read the contents aloud. "It is an account of the glorious action of the Iphigenia, commanded by Count de Kersaint, he found himself in the night-time, in the middle of Admiral Rodney's squadron, but making sail in good time, although pursued by three frigates, he had an opportunity of engaging and capturing them all successively."

Scarcely had M. de Castries done reading, when recollecting that this news must be unpleasant to Sir George.—

"I beg pardon, Captain," said the Marshal, "but you see we are so proud of any advantage we obtain over your nation, that this news has turned the head of an old soldier like me, and prevented my announcing the event with the consideration due to your position—that is my excuse Sir George, will you accept of it?" said the minister in the mildest tone.

Sir George hesitated, reddened, and looked at the Marshal with astonishment.

"He does not understand what has been said," thought Henry, "and how pale and melancholy he looks, every instant he knits his brows! Egad I am like the ladies, I should like to know what ails him."

"Allow me to communicate these dispaches to his majesty," said the minister, rising from the table.

The company returned to the drawing room.

Henry offered his hand to the Marchioness, and Cecile took that of the counsellor.

The Baroness was choking with vexation, for Henry had not addressed a single word to her during the whole of the dinner-time.

"Do you know that English officer?" said the Count to the Duke de St. Ouen, one of his guests at the tower of Koat-Vën, pointing at the same time towards Sir George.

"Well," replied St Ouen, "I met him at one of Genlis' parties, he had a long game, and a good player he is—it is Sir George Gordon."

"The devil!—I have often heard talk of him, it was la Jaille who took his brig—Sir George it seems is a brave sailor, and fights like a lion, introduce me to him, I should like to become acquainted with him?"

"Nothing is easier," said St. Ouen—and they approached Sir George, who was looking abstractedly through the window.

"All is for the best," said Henry to himself. "Madame de Cernan is piqued—let me discover Sir George's secret, and she is mine." Thinking thus he drew near to the Englishman.

CHAPTER XV.

DIFFERENT MODES OF LEARNING A SECRET.

Marchioness. It is a dangerous post, Marquis.
Marquis. We have plenty of courage.—GOETHE.

"SIR GEORGE," said St. Ouen, "allow me to intro-

duce to you, before you leave, one of my intimate friends, Count de Vaudry, lieutenant in his majesty's navy, and one who has an anxious desire to become acquainted with you."

Then bowing to Sir George, he left him with the Count.

The Englishman, after making a profound bow to Henry, looked at him with a cold and chilling expression of countenance, and said nothing.

"Zounds, Sir George," said Henry with his accustomed ease—"I was much vexed at the indiscretion of the Marshal, but the devil's in it if you cannot forgive us our success, we experienced a severe loss in capturing you, for my friend the Marquis de la Jaille, received two desperate wounds from a battle-axe, and saw three-fourths of his crew stretched on the deck, to enable him to have the glorious pleasure of capturing your highness's brig, the Triumph, I believe."

"The Triumph, Count," answered the imperturbable Englishman."

"Your coolness, Sir George, shall not prevent my declaring that you are the hero of one of the bravest feats of arms performed during the war."

"If it is as you are kind enough to say, Count, I have had sufficient time to forget it during my captivity."

"But you are free now, Sir George—free—and yet you look sad and care-worn, why the deuce is that?"

"Count!" said Sir George proudly.

"Pardon me, Sir George, if I speak thus freely to you, as sailors and young men ought to converse with each other.—Frankly then, I shall be delighted if you will allow me to call myself one of your friends, for by heaven, captain, I feel I should have infinite satisfaction at finding myself alongside of your vessel, with an equal force, and a good breeze, there to hold a parley, bravely, broad-side after broad-side."

"You do me too much honour, Count," said Sir George, gravely.

"Zounds! do not call me Count, call me a presumptuous fellow, a madman, an ass, if you will, but do not have that chilling air, Sir George. This is how you wrong me, you a prisoner and a stranger—as I see you distressed at the time you ought to be happy—as you are of my own age, my own profession, my own rank in life, I offer you my services at first sight—I know it is rather out of the usual course, but I offer you my friendship as a true and loyal gentleman, accept it," and Henry extended his hand cordially—Sir George took it and said to him, still coolly, but with a slight emotion, "I am sensible of the proofs of interest you have shown towards me, Count, no one could be more so, and I am grateful for your kind feelings—what alone pains me is, that I do not feel myself in a situation to avail myself of them," he then bowed profoundly to Henry and left the room.

"Bah! he is mad," said the count; "there is something very repelling in his physiognomy, but he interests me now, at least as much as he does Madame de Cernan,—I must follow him, for by heaven! I will know."

And hastening after Sir George, Henry found him at the foot of the staircase leading to the gallery of princes, at the instant when he was calling his servants.

"Sir George," said Henry, taking him by the arm, "you shall not escape me in this manner, you shall listen to me—it is absolutely necessary I should have some conversation with you; I have to tell you that...."

"What have you to say to me, count?" replied the Englishman with his diabolical *sang froid*.

"Zounds!—I have to tell you...."

"I am listening, sir."

And Henry seeing his advances thus rejected, could think of no other means of learning the secret he burned to know, when suddenly a most luminous idea came into the head of this pupil of Suffren.

"What I had to say," said Henry briskly, "what I have to say, sir, is, I should like to hear a few particulars of the action with your brig,—but let us leave this gallery and go into the garden."

They went out, and found themselves alone upon the esplanade in front of the new façade of the palace.

The Englishman was completely at a loss.

"Yes, sir," continued Henry, delighted at his idea, "my friend, the Marquis de la Jaille, told me that you caused him to be fired upon, at the very instant he came on board your vessel, without suspicion, seeing that you had struck your colours, and that this infamous conduct alone could have given you any advantage."

Sir George's cheeks reddened, his eyes sparkled, and he replied, but still calmly—

"The Marquis de la Jaille lied, count."

"Lied!" exclaimed Henry, "lied!—do you know, sir, this is almost a personal insult, considering my close intimacy with la Jaille?"

"Take it as you understand it, sir,—your questions also have for a long time been insupportable."

"Sir," said Henry, "follow me,—there must be a superb moonlight in the avenue of St. Cloud, we will call on Prince Monbarrey, who has a party tonight, to obtain seconds."

"I am at your orders, count," said Sir George, bowing.

And he followed Henry to the Prince Monbarrey's.

It will be a great misfortune if I cannot get at his secret, for really this Englishman interests me amazingly, and I never felt such lively symptoms of friendship.

Arrived at the Prince's, Sir George met with Lord Fellows, he gave him a short account of the business, and two minutes afterwards two coaches were on the road to Paris.

In one Lord Fellows and Sir George.

In the other Henry and Rullecour.

They stopped near Chenil-Neuf.

"Whenever you please, sir," said Sir George, placing himself before Henry; and on a signal from their seconds they crossed their swords.

Henry, who was a superior fencer, evidently avoided aiming at Sir George's life, his intention being to wound him slightly, but the moment he rested on his parade, after having avoided the sword of his adversary, the latter profited by the lost time, and dealt Henry so severe a thrust that it brought him to the ground.

"Enough, enough! gentlemen," said the seconds.

"Oh! yes, enough," said Sir George looking at Henry, who with one knee on the ground rested on his sword.

"Ah! sir, sir!" added Sir George, "why did you give me such unreasonable provocation? I assure you on my honour that I felt towards you a very different feeling from hatred."

"Zounds!" exclaimed Henry in a feeble voice, "and I also, and it was for that very reason that...."

He fainted.

In four hours he was in his hotel at Paris and under the care of the surgeons.

CHAPTER X

THE SECRET.

The rudeness that hath appeared in me, have I learned from my entertainment.—TWELFTH NIGHT.

THE day after the duel the Count de Vaudry was in bed and asleep, in the large red damask chamber in which he had received the astronomer with so much gaiety.

Rumphius was also there, leaning on his elbow, while he read attentively in a huge folio, and at the same time kept turning a spoon round and round in a cup placed close beside him. Occupied in this manner, the worthy philosopher exhibited an action so like that of an automaton, that Vaucanson himself would have been struck with amazement.

The hand that moved the spoon, and the arm that moved the hand, produced a rotary motion at the bottom of the cup, which could not but effect wonders.

"In the name of heaven; what have you been doing, M. Rumphius?" said Grosbois, the old valet de chambre, with a look of horror, at the same time plucking the philosopher by the sleeve.

"What's the matter?—stop—I have just finished—I only want to see what Father Hortius says about Brahma, and what he thinks of the treatise on Gourou," said the astronomer, looking vacantly at Grosbois, and still moving the spoon round the cup with marvellous regularity.

"But, M. Rumphius," said the servitor, "it is of no use your moving the spoon round the cup, there is nothing to mix—see, you have spilt all the medicine by the side of you, the marble is all covered with it and so is the carpet also; it is my fault, it always happens when I ask you to do anything.

"You are quite right, at any rate," said Rumphius, verifying the fact with an incredibly serious look, "I have thrown it all out of the cup.—Ah, well! Grosbois, there is a symbol exactly parallel to this in the *Veikoula*,—'*The juice of the palm tree overflowed the basin*,' says the grand ritual of the Brahma, the *Nittia-Carma*, the juice of the palm tree...."

"But we have nothing to do with the juice of the palm tree here, M. Rumphius, it is nearly an hour since the count took his medicine,—but it is all my fault, it always happens thus when I leave you alone."

"Alone! Grosbois, alone!—that is like the true Gourou, he must be alone to be worthy of facing Visnou, and...."

At this moment Henry, waking, interrupted the astronomer's digression.

"Where am I?—what o'clock is it?—is it day or night?" asked Henry.

"At length he speaks," said a voice, and Sir George approached the wounded man.

"By heaven! Sir George, a sight of you does me good,—what a devil of a heavy hand you have! but after all I believe it is nothing."

"No, count, no," said Sir George, "there is no danger, the surgeons have not had a minute's uneasiness, it was only a violent blow on one of the ribs, so that you need not be alarmed.—Adieu! count, I wished to see you before I left, but now I am satisfied your life is out of danger, farewell!"

"You are going to England, then?" said Henry.

"To England," said Sir George in a melancholy tone, and then repeated, "Yes, to England."

"Leave us," said Henry to Rumphius and his valet de chambre,—then addressing the captain—

"Listen to me, Sir George,—when I saw you for the first time your reputation as a brave seaman was known to me, and it is to the admiration I felt for your courage and your brilliant action that I attribute the peculiar interest you inspired me with at first sight. Without being much of a physiognomist, Sir George, I saw by your looks that you was oppressed by some profound sorrow.

"In the hopes of your confiding in me that which might have enabled me to be useful to you by relieving your sufferings, I made several advances which were very properly repelled, for you was not sufficiently acquainted with me to make me a depository of your secret. I was obliged, therefore, to attempt another plan; by dreadfully calumniating my poor friend, La Jaille, who more than any one else admires your bravery, I found the means of crossing swords with you, with the full intention of not wounding you, but keeping myself merely on the defensive. It is true I ran the risk of losing my life at that game, but I am in the habit of thinking little of such trifling inconveniences. Perhaps, Sir George, you will now ask me what connection there is between this duel and the interest with which you have inspired me. I will tell you. In France, captain, when two gentlemen have bravely crossed swords with each other, they become friends for the rest of their lives, and in a case of confidence it is as good as an intimacy of twenty years.

"Now, therefore," added the count smiling, "now, since we have been acquainted with each other for twenty years, do you think I am worthy of being the depository of your secret? for you possess one—and you suffer, I am sure, because perhaps you need a friend to confide in."

Sir George was at first alarmed at so much generosity and delicacy, and taking Henry's hand in his own, he looked at him with a softened expression of countenance, but was unable to utter a word.

"So, then, Sir George," continued Henry, "if you can open your heart to me without dishonour or betraying a sacred promise, do so in the name of friendship, for I should not have been so strangely obstinate in rendering myself worthy of your confidence, had I not felt a secret presentiment that I could be useful to you. Come, then, is it a woman you wish to get rid of?—I'll carry her off for you. Is it a troublesome husband?—I will keep him out of the way. Is it...."

"So much generosity shall not be lost, count," said Sir George, interrupting Henry; "since you wish to know my secret, which ought to die with me, you shall know.—I have played, sir, played on my credit, and lost a considerable sum—four thousand louis. Lord Gordon, my father, is governor of the Indies, but it is impossible for me to collect sufficient money to pay this debt of honour before I leave, for I ought to return to England with the least possible delay, under penalty of being considered a coward. I went to M. de Castries in the hope of seeing our ambassador—unfortunately he is not at Versailles; in him only could I have confided, our family connexions would have allowed me to do so. That is my secret, sir, and as I must pay this debt and leave, which I cannot do, as I shall be dishonoured to-morrow—this night will I blow out my brains! Now, since you know all, adieu! and thanks for the interest you have exhibited, I shall die satisfied at being regretted by one more friend."

"By heavens! I was sure," cried Henry, "that your confidence would be good for some purpose,—if not for you, at least for myself."

Sir George looked at the count with astonishment.

"Certainly,—but hold, betwen intimate friends we may speak in a business-like way; listen, then, my dear George,—I have an income of fifty thousand crowns, my steward is an honest man, and this nearly doubles my fortune; in the course of two years I am six months on shore, and I need throw my money out of the window; I do not know how it is, but I always find myself some thousands of louis in advance. Besides in case of necessity, there is an uncle of mine the bishop of Surville, immensely rich, and always complaining I make his situation of uncle a complete sinecure. See now, Sir George, how you can confer a great obligation on me,—the public securities in France are becoming rather unsafe, I have for a long time had a desire to place some money in the British East India Company's stock; as your father is governor of those possessions, would you be good enough to let me have some shares, and as they must be paid for in ready cash, I will give you a check for a hundred thousand livres, payable at sight, on Bourette, the farmer-general, to whom you can send the shares from England. If you would have the extreme kindness to take this little business in hand for me . . . ."

Sir George seemed about to speak.

"Do not refuse me'" said Henry with emotion, "may I not some day be a prisoner in England myself?—nay, do not be selfish, Sir George; do you hesitate to render me this service? On my honour I will not be ungrateful, if I can find an opportunity at any time to be useful to you in return."

There was so much delicacy in the manner in which this offer was made, that Sir George was unable to refuse it.

He threw himself into Henry's arms.

They understood each other at once, and Sir George accepted it.

Sir George departed for England the same day. after having paid his debt.

Henry left alone, said, as he rubbed his hands, "I knew I should learn his secret——and now Cécile is mine!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WOMAN WITHOUT A NAME.

They are themselves the cause of what they most dread... LUCAN

OH! blessed art thou, raging despair, mad and headstrong, that, like Roland, tearest up lofty pines by the roots, rending the rocks and scattering them around! thou who exultest with ferocious joy at the sight of thy breast bleeding beneath thy sharp nails, blessed art thou! for in expending thy strength and thy spirits, thou wear'st out thyself, and death or prostration of strength follows thy delirium.

But thou, calm and deep despair, that filterest slowly, drop by drop, without ceasing—falling in leaden tears upon the heart! thou, whose every pulsation is a cold and bitter agony,—Oh! be thou accursed!

Yes, believe me, there is something dreadfully miserable in this incurable sorrow, but a hundred times more miserable still, is the rage you feel at not being able to envelope the whole world along with thyself in the pale shroud in which the soul is swathed.

We dare not repeat the dreadful thoughts that arise . . . and happily fade away in the mind of such a suffering and hating being as that of a woman like Rita, for instance.

Imagine to yourself what she must feel at the sight of the dazzling sun, at the sound of the mad and joyous tumult of a great city, at the sight of splendid equipages hastening to some revel. Oh, God! what must not the poor creature feel. When at night the distant sounds of a ball or concert die away on her ear?

Oh! it is dreadful to imagine, that, while you are alone, sad and despairing, in other places they laugh, they sing, they talk of love—of pleasures past and to come.

Truly, in these dark paroxysms of misanthropy you might exclaim, "let the wish of Nero be applied to the whole world"—were it not that it would be nipping your revenge in the bud.

Rita still occupied the small room opposite the hotel Vaudry.

She was alone that evening, Perez having gone to the count's to ask after Henry's health, for Rita was already acquainted with the issue of the duel.

"Let Perez come," she said, "I await him without fear—my presentiments never deceive me.—*He* die before my vengeance is complete!—can it be? do I not hear that inward voice that says to me, he belongs to thy vengeance, body and soul? are not these wishes so strong, so absolute, that they will, so to speak, order events?—perhaps you will say, it is madness; yes, I believe *he* cannot die, because I wish it, not because the time for his death has not arrived, and in this conviction consists my power—this conviction is my strength—it supports me, it enlightens me, it gives me an incredible confidence in the future,—this conviction, in fine, gives me that immense power which every being who has faith in his mission, as I . . . ."

At this instant Perez entered.

"By heaven! duchess, he is saved, his wound was of no account."

"I knew it," said Rita, calm and collected, "such must be the case; but, Perez, since his life is safe, we must now think about executing our projects, besides, everything is ready to ensure our success;—perhaps there's justice above, but I prefer to play my part here on earth, it is more certain—and by my hatred, never was avenging deity more implacable; listen, then—I have no fear.

"If I had intended to avenge myself in a sudden and incomplete manner, I would have killed him; but I did not wish it, I had rather, as I have said, that an implacable fatality should pursue him without ceasing, and surround him with a circle of horror, that no one should dare to break through it, or lend a friendly hand to the proscribed one. He shall live, Perez—he shall live, but alone, isolated, banished in the midst of the world, for seeing that fate has stricken without pity all who have dared to approach him, this wretch, whose love and friendship are mortal—say, Perez, who will dare to convey to him a single word of hope or consolation?"

"But this vengeance is dreadfully horrible, madame."

"Yes, yes, horrible—as horrible as it is just; but tell me, what would you think, Perez, if you were told—'In three days thy friend, thy mistress, and thy living relation only, shall be dead?' dead because they loved thee—dead because they were connected with thee—dead because a fatal influence over all that surround thee, follows thee, and will for ever follow thee; perhaps you would laugh, Perez—you would say they are the words of a lunatic—but if, three days after you had said so, thy friend, thy mistress, and thy relative were dead, would you laugh then, Perez?"

"What do you mean, madam?"

"Would you laugh if the inexplicable and sud-

den death of a relative, immensely rich, to whom you were sole heir, were to let suspicion rest upon you? Would you laugh, if insinuations, cunningly devised, gave by degrees a greater appearance of truth to those calumnies? If, in fact, well contrived appearances should become sufficiently precise to point you out as the murderer, although you could not be openly accused, and thus afforded an opportunity of rebutting the charge?

"And if, by some inexplicable chance, thy friend, thy mistress, should die at the predicted time, and that because they were connected with thee ... would you laugh? then when a low rumour should run through the world and point at you with terror, seeing that all that you had either loved or envied were dead—and when, thyself, unable to comprehend the infernal secret, seeing so many circumstances united against thee wouldst be forced to acknowledge the judgment of the world, false and atrocious though it might be, nevertheless, logical, natural, and true—in seeing the reprobation and horror attached to thy name—in seeing thyself, so young, so handsome, so rich, and covered with glory —yet, neglected, almost banished from that world that lay at thy feet! .... Oh! then, would you not lose your senses in striving to unravel the inexplicable mystery of the fate that crushed thee? Would it not be a ceaseless punishment, ... a cruel and dreadful punishment?"

"Oh, yes, cruel—but it is a dream, madame."

"No! it shall not be a dream, Perez. It shall be a reality for *him*—but a reality as fearful as the most horrible dream, that ever tortured a man in the delirium of a fever. Listen—according to the information you have received, Chevalier de Lepine, his most devoted friend, his guest at the tower, pays a visit daily to Madame Valentinois, at Passy; he goes on horseback, followed by a single rider."

"Every day, madame?"

"You can obtain an interview with that girl—that Leila—she also was there."

"Yes, madame."

"His uncle, the Bishop of Surville, is about to take his nephew down to his country seat, to perfect the cure of his wound."

"Yes, madame."

"The Princess de Vaudemont gives a ball the day after to-morrow in her pleasure grounds."

"Yes, madame."

"This then is my plot. The Count de S. Germaine has made magic quite the rage—none of these fêtes are perfect without a conjuror to amuse the world by his prophecies, Find out the princess' steward, tell him that an Italian will offer himself to undertake the character."

"Yes, madame."

"I will be that Italian—my costume will be a sufficient disguise; the whole court will be at this fête. *He*, who belongs to the princesses' circle, will be there;—I do not for an instant doubt that he will apply to me to have his fortune told—this is all the fashion, and *he* is at the top of the fashion—then do you see, Perez, I will say to him—

"Thy star is fatal to all those you love or whose fortune you envy. *In three days* thy friend, Leila, and thy uncle, the bishop of Surville, will be dead, thus thy hatred killed thy brother, thy love was fatal to the duchess."

"At hearing these words you may well imagine his scornful laugh—but if thou art devoted to me, Perez, three days afterwards my prediction will be fulfilled."

"I wait your orders, madame."

"Well, then, listen;—the chevalier de Lepine—you know, Perez—his friend, an honourable gentleman, who so nobly joined in the league against a poor woman ... this chevalier, I say, when he goes to Passy to Madame de Valentinois, passes by several deep and silent quarries, he is almost always alone."

"True, madame," answered Perez, with a singular smile, he almost always leaves unattended.

"Then stroking the monstrous head of the large gray hound with long gray hair—"And here is Etrick who has seized more than one bull by the throat; believe me, madame, a single word, a single sign from me, and this brave dog will seize the horse by the throat, or the haunches—and, if, at such a moment the horse of the chevalier should be moving along a dangerous pathway, a steep quarry for instance .... there will be considerable danger, madame, and the death of the chevalier certain..."

"Oh! yes, I know that Etrick is a brave dog of the Sierra," said Rita, in a low tone, then, after a moment's silence—"But this girl, Perez, this Leila?"

"She imagines that I am a very rich Peruvian, madame; I have given her money, and have promised her so much more, that she has agreed to receive me to-morrow. And you know, madame, the poisons of Jose Ortez are certain, leave no traces, and have no effect, until after a certain time, which you may yourself fix, by increasing or diminishing the dose."

"Good," said Rita, in a pleased tone; "and as to the bishop ...." but she suddenly stopped, passed her hand across her forehead, and trembled as she exclaimed—"As to the bishop, oh! but it is horrible, Perez, this girl was at least there—she—to witness how dreadfully he had deceived me—the chevalier was also there—so that they are *his* accomplices; death and vengeance, therefore, be their lot —the lot of both—each in their turn! But he, this poor old man, what injury has he done me?—why should he be my victim? Oh! how frightful it is, dreadful to think of, Perez!"

And Rita, concealing her head with her hands, trembled violently ... then she suddenly raised her head, and with sparkling eyes, paced the room.

"Weak-hearted that I am," she exclaimed, "I speak of pity—I believe in it .... Pity! had they it for me, when abusing the purest and most devoted love they spat in my face, they trampled me underfoot? ... Pity! had I pity for myself when I made myself horrible, when I caused myself to be considered dead? And I—shall I have pity for an old man, whose death will be so fatal to *him*—because it will be remarked by all, how quickly, and at the proper moment those die whose property he is heir to. Thus they will ask themselves, also, how his elder brother died while he was in France; *he!* no, no! come what will, my vengeance shall hold its course; misfortune fall on all that stand in my way!

"So no more scruples, Perez, no, let us follow the Bishop of Surville to his country seat—once there, in the village, by means of gold, you or I can contrive to see him, and then, Perez ..."

At this instant the door of the room was stricken violently.

They heard the sound of the butt ends of muskets as they were rested on the ground—and a loud voice exclaimed—"*In the King's name open!*"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COMMISSARY.

That excellent police of Lycurgus, truly monstrous on account of its great perfection, is worthy of the most particular notice.—MONTAGUE.

RITA's little room found itself taken possession of by about twenty soldiers of the watch, and a sergeant with his halbert—some of them pointing to Rita spoke in a low voice, while others silently pointed to the various articles of furniture.

A man of a mean appearance, fat and dirty, and clothed in a black gown spattered with mud, was seated at a small table—it was the commissary.

Perez and Rita were standing before him.

"Your names?" said the man in black, in a harsh voice.

"Perez de Sibeyra," answered Perez.

"What are you?"

"A merchant."

"Oh! a merchant! that's rather high-sounding; a pretty merchant, indeed!—but let me see your papers."

"I have none, I have lost them."

"I suspected as much;" then addressing himself to Rita, "And you, my beauty—come, come, take away your hands, and don't hide your pretty face,—now then, your name?—what, will you not speak?" said the man in office rudely, and half raising himself he tried to remove the hands of the duchess, who still concealed her face.

"Wretch! lay not your hands on her, do you hear!" exclaimed Perez, flinging himself on the commissary.

"Seize this man and handcuff him," said the latter coolly.

And they placed the handcuffs on his wrists.

And the man in black addressing Rita—"And you, my lady—what, you will not let us see your face? .... Bah! you have good reason to hide it, you are no beauty: but come, your name, and what are you?"

"Rita's cheeks were on fire, and her eyes darted flame, but she answered not.

"You persist in your silence?—very well, we shall see whether the dicipline of St. Lazarus, and the correction inflicted on the obstinate, will have more power than my words. Once at the *Hôpital*, and you will decide, my girl."

"The *Hôpital!*—she—she,—Oh! it is dreadful!" exclaimed Perez, and he wept.

"Indeed, and why not for her, then, as well as for others like her! Oh, indeed! she must be handled gently, must she?—why not call her a duchess? Come, secure her hands as you have those of her accomplice, and take care of your pockets, she's a dexterous thief."

"Touch me!—you dare not," said Rita, advancing with such an air of dignity that the man of law was was for an instant thunder-struck.

Then recovering himself—"Upon my word, she gives herself the airs of a princess: come, make an end of it—secure her."

Two soldiers approached her.

Perez flung himself upon his knees and said, while tears rolled down his cheeks—"For pity's sake, madame, let them do it."

Rita grew deadly pale, stretched out her hands, and only said in a low and suppressed voice, "Oh! Henry, Henry!"

"But at least tell us of what you accuse us," said Perez.

"You are curious, then—but if you are so, the lieutenant of police has been as curious as you. When you and your companion came to Paris, you were suspected, and have been watched; you were constantly going and coming, gold was distributed in every direction, you were for ever spying into the concerns of persons of the highest consideration, in fact, everything that could declare the worst intentions—so, my little birds of St. Lazarus, we have taken you to-day.—But now give me the keys of this desk."

"I have them not."

"Open this desk," said the commissary, "I must take an inventory of all that is here, for I have a strong suspicion that this honest couple are receivers of stolen goods."

The sergeant burst the lock of the desk by a blow of his halbert.

And the commissary opened the casket that contained the immense sums Rita had realized in gold and bills on the bank of England.

"Ah! I have found the nest," he exclaimed, his eyes beaming with pleasure, "a manifest robbery,—where did you obtain this enormous sum, wretches?"

"It is my property, I am a merchant," said Perez.

"Aye, aye, your property!—here, officer, place the seals upon all you find here, and upon this casket, which I must carry to the lieutenant of police;—as for these birds, the cage is waiting for them—and perhaps the gallows, for the devil only knows where they can have obtained all this gold, unless some murder has been committed."

"For the last time, sir," said Perez, "I protest, I declare in the face of heaven, that this money honestly belongs to me; and besides, if there be a robbery, madame is innocent,—this gold is mine, mine alone. As to the proceedings that have awakened the suspicion of the authorities, they are mine alone,—keep me prisoner, but release the lady."

"Is there a coach ready?" said the commissary without answering Perez.

"Yes, commissioner," said the sergeant.

"Convey these two accomplices to a place of safety, whilst I and the officer, with the assistance of two of your people, complete the inventory of all these things."

And Rita was conveyed to the *Hôpital*, and Perez to St. Lazarus.

This was extremely cruel, I consider, when she was about to accomplish her vengeance by so excellent a plot.

But unfortunately, conspirators, lovers, poets, or dealers in vengeance, like Rita, almost always forget the simplest and most common precautions, whilst they are straying in the midst of their pleasant schemes.

But such is the excellent arrangement of the police, that they would attack the hermit on his rock to ask him for his papers, for there is an epoch in civilization when no man can become a misanthrope without permission of the authorities.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPRICE.

A woman is like a bird.

FIGURE to yourself a boudoir hung with white satin, damasked with large pink flowers, and fringed with great pearls set in a delicate border of silver. The window panes also tinged with red, in imitation of old stained glass, spread a mysterious and lovely tone

over the whole of this delightful apartment, a rosy light, like the dawn of a beautiful summer's day.

This boudoir was crowded with those useless foreign curiosities, so much in fashion at the time,—there were China vases in green and gold porcelain, filled with fresh and sweet scented flowers. Japanned ware in red and black, Japan images the most frightful you could imagine, and striped with the most violently contrasted colours.

On a porphyry mantlepiece might also be seen curious Chinese vases of painted glass, which had cost as much as a hundred louis each, and in addition to these, objects of more real utility completed the furniture of this delicious retreat. There was a magnificent harpsichord by Marchand, a harp by Legris, which at that time was considered extremely valuable.

The divinity of this temple (old style) was softly extended on a large circular couch . . . . It was the Baroness Cernan.

Never did her pretty features, so variable and capricious, exhibit so obstinate and ill-tempered an expression. You could easily see that the feelings of this sensitive lady were highly wrought up and irritated.

Dressed in a simple white robe, and a head-dress of frimas with long lappets she was perfectly charming.

She was reading in a little book, bound in red morocco and gilt.

After a few minutes she flung the book away from her.

Then Cecile arose, ran to the harpsichord, and began the new romance of M. Laborde, which was then quite the rage.

After having played a few notes she shut the harpsichord in a passion, being unable to utter a note, and her fingers strayed at random over the keys, she tore up the music book and trampled it under her feet, stamped upon it, knocked her little hand on the instrument, and running to hide her head in the cushions of the sofa, exclaimed, " How wretched I am!"

Five minutes afterwards she screamed with laughter, holding her little dog, Zerbina, in her lap—one of those tiny spaniels with long silky ears.

Madame de Cernan made a head-dress for Zerbina, with a pink ribbon, and although Zerbina was by nature pettish and snappish, she allowed it to be done without grumbling; but suddenly Cecile became angry, struck Zerbina with the back of her litte white hand, threw her to a distance, and went to seat herself at a table covered with drawing materials.

Here her proceedings assumed a new form.—I know not what design arose beneath Cecile's pencil, but after a few apparently unsuccessful attempts, the paper flew into the air, together with the box of crayons, and fell upon one of the green Chinese vases which it knocked down, the pieces rolling over the magnificent Turkey carpet.

When she saw the fragments of this precious vase, Cecile's anger was at its height, and she fell into one of those fits of mad rage very much practised by pretty and fantastic ladies, or spoilt children, who having in a fit of passion broken one object, follow it up by breaking ten, twenty—every thing that remains, only leaving off when wearied out;—as the soldier drunk with slaughter, never ceases until his arm can no longer strike a blow.

Cecile gave herself up to that rather illogical idea, that it is necessary to continue breaking because you have broken; so, when she had destroyed all she could, for want of something better to do, she fainted away.

Luckily her servants having heard the infernal noise, ran to her assistance; they unlaced her and inundated her with Hungary water, and Cecile soon recovered her senses and became gradually more quiet.

One of her women remained behind with the baroness, and then retired, after giving her, in the most mysterious manner, a little billet, which Cecile threw into the fire as soon as she saw the seal, but she soon had a desire to look at it again, and drew it from the grate at the risk of burning her fingers.

This letter, although in the first instance rejected with disdain, was nevertheless a love-letter, but of a love, although ardent, so pure, so disinterested, so full of extacy, that not only would a mother have been unoffended, but any reasonable husband would have felt himself highly flattered.

This platonic and extraordinary lover was nevertheless lieutenant colonel of the Burgundian regiment of infantry, then in garrison at Nevers. He complained of Cecile's silence for the last few days, and was longing to receive a letter, his only hope and only consolation!

Cecile crumpled the billet and again threw it into the fire.

" I am always unhappy," she said, " here is M. St. Cyr who truly loves me, one of the most elegant and amiable men I know. I never granted him any favours, and he never asked anything; he possesses humility and love without a parallel.—Ah! no, it is not that,—in spite of myself I must find something to do . . . ."

At this instant a valet de chambre entered—" A messenger from the Count de Vaudry has just brought this letter for the baroness," and he handed Cecile a letter.

" Leave the room," she said, taking the letter eagerly. She read it, it was from Henry.

" At dinner at Marshal Castries', you said, ' How I should like to know the cause of the melancholy look of that Englishman, how I long to know his secret.' These words, of little importance to you, but precious in my eyes, I remembered. The secret, I have discovered it,—when shall I communicate it to you?"

" This, then, was the cause of his duel!" exclaimed the baroness, " and it was for me,—for me who thought myself despised!—Oh, I shall become foolish with pride!"

Then running to the table, she wrote in haste the following words,—" Without an instant's delay."—rang the bell, and said to the servant, " for M. de Vaudry."

Scarcely had the servant gone when she trembled at the rash answer she had sent to Henry. This sensitive and lively woman having yielded to the first movement of joy, surprise and pleasure, when she recovered her self-possession, perceived the danger of her conduct.

And she cried with vexation, and, according to custom, concentrated all her rage on him who had led her to act as she had done.

For, by a singular contradiction, perhaps, if she loved Henry as a lover, she hated him as a man.

From this it appears we deceive ourselves when we imagine that women love a man precisely on account of the number of his treacheries to other women, they have too much of the *esprit de corps* for that.

There is, I think, more curiosity than love in their behaviour, of injured female pride, a vain hope for vengeance, or a confidence in their own superiority, that places them above the rest of their sex. In giving the traitor power, they know, or believe, that

they acquire a complete influence over him, on which they calculate to avenge the common cause. An admirable devotedness. Unfortunately, if the traitor should be amiable; and this is sometimes the case; self-love is combined with it, and the woman, forgetting the vengeance of all in her own individual happiness, flatters herself with the pleasing illusion that she will not be deceived like others, because she is more deserving than others, and one day she also is undeceived, and finds herself an injured woman.

Cecile, therefore, was in a state of cruel agony, sometimes she promised herself to receive Henry with disdain, and laugh at his impertinent confidence.

At others she decided upon being kind and condescending, and at least to thank him for the chivalrous originality, which had induced him to risk his life on account of a random word of hers, but to refuse him everything, even hope.

In the midst of these contradictory feelings M. de Vaudry was announced.

CHAPTER XX.

THE INTERVIEW.

An unforseen event.—Montaigne.

That, then, was Sir George's secret," said Cecile to Henry, who was seated by his side, "the secret you was not afraid to tear from him at the risk of your life—and that to satisfy a vain caprice, on my account also."

"Yes, on yours alone, Cecile. Oh! pardon me, but allow me to call you Cecile—madame is so distant," replied Henry, in a gentle and submissive tone, seeing the surprise of the baroness, who said to him with a distant air—

"You forget yourself, count."

"No, it was not forgetfulness, it is a habit I have acquired, and upon my word, I do not know how to avoid it—in the first place it is so pleasant, and then I have been so long accustomed to it."

"How!"

"Certainly, ever since I first saw you, since I have thought of you. For at every instant when your remembrance arose to charm me, when alone and buried in my own thoughts, I spoke to you, I supplicated you—do you imagine I could say, 'madame?' No, I said, 'Cecile.' I said, 'Cecile, do you love me?' Believe, Cecile, in a strong and faithful passion. Above all, Cecile, do not judge me by the trifling proofs I have given you—without expecting one kind look, I risked my life for you—but what is there in that? For your love I would sacrifice more than my life—I would sacrifice my tastes, my inclinations, my future prospects—but, alas! I love you so much. Oh! I love you so much, that it would be a pleasure to obey your slightest caprice; I love you so much, Cecile, that I defy you to exact any thing from me that would be a sacrifice."

"Count!" said Cecile, with an offended air, and drawing back the hand Henry had possessed himself of."

"Yes, that is what I said in your absence: why, then, would you prevent my saying the same aloud, when you are by? If you did but know how I feel your coldness; how much your disdainful air oppresses me; when happy in your condescending to ask a slight service of me, you received me with such freezing civility. It was then, Cecile, I cursed the success that had created so much envy—the reputation whose fatal *eclat* raised a dread in your soul. Perhaps, I said, she only sees a common love, in the burning passion by which I am led on, when it is, in fact, the first, the only true love I ever felt—yes, Cecile, believe . . . ."

A loud burst of laughter from the baroness interrupted the amorous speech of the count, who had seated himself on a footstool at Cecile's feet.

In spite of these immoderate fits of laughter, Henry's features expressed more astonishment than vexation, and he threw himself on a sofa, carelessly arranging the frill of his shirt.

"A burst of merriment like that, baroness, is enough to disconcert a poor lover; but really, on my honour, you are too severe—for never in my life did I make a better harrangue of first love except to a quakeress in America, and on another occasion to a burgomaster's daughter; but tell me, pray, what made you so merry?"

Cecile laughed still louder, and said—"Why is it not extremely amusing, count, that you, a man of such fatal reputation—you, the envied model of all the court libertines—you, should have so foolishly risked your life for the word of a woman, who thought not of you, who thinks not of you, and never will think of you."

"I assure you, madame," said Henry, with all the coolness imaginable, "that if our situation ought to be amusing to any one, it should be so to me."

"You assume that imperturbable air admirably," said the baroness, who began to be vexed at Henry's calmness."

"It is not assumed, indeed, and I will shew you why. Let us reason a little—first, you say, I exposed my life; as far as that goes, my reputation, I believe, is sufficiently established to give me the right of requiring no one to be astonished at that, so we will say no more on the subject. Then, I hoped you would at least have thanked me for my exertions—you refused to do so—the case is simple—I laugh at it—still more plain; for in my idea, no man, unless he is a simpleton, will be vexed at what a woman is no longer inclined to, or no longer wishes for.'"

"And what is that then, sir?" said the Baroness, impatiently.

"Adam, when he was alone in Paradise with our first mother . . . . I have now come to that which is so very amusing in this scene—this it is—hearing you the other day at M. de Castries' express a desire to know the Englishman's secret; I, on my side, induced the Marchioness de Vaillè, who scarcely thought of the subject, to express a wish of the same kind, so that a few days afterwards she received, as you did, the required note,—'Being at the house of Marshal de Castries', you expressed a wish, &c. &c. &c.' More grateful than you, madame, she promised to recompense me; I was already entitled to the gratitude of a brave man I had obliged. So that you see, an action perfectly indifferent to me, has given me the friendship of an excellent man, the hope of favors from a most enticing duchess, and the hatred of a pretty woman. For I perceive, madam, that my *sang froid* has disconcerted and vexed you. Acknowledge then that I have no reason to complain, since, in payment of a slight wound, already cured, I have excited, at the same time, friendship, love, and hatred, for I am foolish or conscientious enough to imagine that you will do me the honour of hating me, baroness."

Cecile was thunderstruck—she expected vexation or anger on the part of the count, but she found

an imperturbable gravity, or cold and calm raillery. Impression followed impression rapidly though her lively and capricious little brain; so that though she loved Henry, as we know, she had intended to torment him, to pique him, perhaps also she calculated on the embarrassment in which he would find himself, either to pardon or annoy him at her pleasure, unfortunately nothing of the kind took place —this unexpected result overthrew all her beautiful projects, and as Henry approached to kiss her hand, and take leave—

"Stay, sir," she said to him, "stay, I must speak to you—stay, it is my wish."

And Cecile's voice was broken, and betrayed her emotion.

"How happy I should have been to have received that order a short time back," said Henry, "but now . . . ."

"Well, now?"

"Why now I know it is a jest, an ill-tempered joke on your part. Again you want to deceive me, to bring me to your knees, and turn me into ridicule as you did just now—but the lesson you gave me was excellent, and I profited by it."

"I am very miserable," said Cecile, bursting into tears."

"Any one but I, madame, would be deceived by those tears," said Henry, with imperturbable *sang froid*.

"But when I tell you I am miserable, that I weep because I have cause to weep," said Cecile; "yes, to weep, for I hate myself, I despise myself, for

being so weak when I thought I was so strong—so very weak, and in your presence—weak enough to allow you to see my tears, and to guess at their cause!—it is dreadful!"

"Bravo, baroness, bravo! Mademoiselle Raucourt could not do it better—but then there is no one present but myself to enjoy such a beautiful scene, to appreciate this sudden burst of talent—so profound, so brilliant," said Henry, with cool raillery.

"Oh! I shall go mad," exclaimed Cecile, exasperated. "He says he knows womankind, and yet he cannot distinguish a true from a false tear; he could not see that the laugh was intended to conceal vexation; that a woman must be enduring much to laugh in that manner—but the women you have known were, perhaps, excellent actresses, sir, or are you so dreadfully and foolishly suspicious, that tears like these explain nothing?" And she placed Henry's hand on her burning cheeks, bathed in tears. "Does it tell you nothing—does it prove nothing? but go, sir, go—you terrify me, and make me pity you."

"That 'go,' was perfect," said Henry, "and the idea of seizing the hand to make it feel the tears, would have had a prodigious effect at the theatre—unfortunately, madame, you are performing this part for my amusement alone, and I know the play beforehand."

"You may imagine the effect an answer like this must have had upon a woman so violent, and one so impatient of contradiction as Cecile." She uttered not a word, but grew dreadfully pale—wiped her eyes, and taking Henry's hand in both hers, she trembled like an aspen leaf, and said to him in a low and broken voice—

"M. de Vaudry, I am about, without blushing, to make an avowal that ought to cause me to die with shame. From the day on which I first saw you, you made a deep impression on me! your coolness increased it, and the note you sent to me made me intoxicated with joy; can you say why I expected you with pleasure and sorrow? why I laughed, and why I wept? it would explain to me that which I do not myself understand; it would tell you, in fact, that in spite of all—I still love you—yes, I love you; is it not enough to make this acknowledgment to you, to humble myself so lowly, M. de Vaudry? it is not enough thus to expiate a moment of folly of delirium? Do you believe me, Monsieur de Vaudry? oh! say you do, in heaven's name. Why should I speak falsely?"

"Perhaps to gain some wager you have laid with yourself," replied Henry; "perhaps, while thinking of a favoured lover, you said to yourself—'If M. de Vaudry throws himself at my feet, my lover will be faithful—or else I can be faithless to him without being suspected—or perhaps . . . .'"

"Oh, heaven!" and the baroness, with an accent of grief that moved the heart of Henry, for he had a good heart after all—so he replied—

"Cecile, you have it in your power to convince me of you love—be mine—to day."

At this instant a valet de chambre announced the baron.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LOVERS' PLOT.

Demetrius. I say, I love thee more than he can do.
Lysander. If thou say so, withdraw and prove it too.—
SHAKSPEARE.

"YOUR women tell me you have been unwell," said M. de Cernan, kissing Cecile's hand,"—I am happy to see you look better; but you are still rather pale." Then bowing to Henry—"I am delighted at meeting with you, count, for I have just arrived from Versailles, and M. de Castries has requested me to deliver these despatches into your hands, he told me they required instant attention. Madame de Cernan will allow it."

"It is an order to be at my post with as little delay as possible," said Henry, "to leave, if I can do so, within eight and forty hours, and proceed to Brest, there to wait for further orders—the order for departure is rather sudden," he added, exchanging a look with the baroness.

"The devil!" said the baron, "and how am I to get ready in eight and forty hours?"

"Oh, I don't imagine we shall be under sailing orders as soon as I arrive; in this letter M. de Castries only orders me to proceed to Brest thus hastily, that I may superintend the equipment of my frigate—a new experiment is to be made, and a novel system of gunnery organised."

"Then I shall have sufficient time for preparation," said the baron, "and you will not have to wait for me. But I must leave you, madam," he observed to his wife, "for this is the time for our club at Condorcet's."

The baron left the room.

"In two days you will leave," said Cecile.

"Yes," said Henry, gaily, "I leave, and take your husband along with me—you are indebted to me on that account, at least; it is extremely generous on my side, for perhaps I shall be insuring the happiness of some favoured lover."

While uttering these words, Henry looking mechanically towards the fire place, and perceived the letter of the platonic colonel—to stoop, to seize it and to read it, were but the work of an instant.

"Egad! I guessed rightly. Well, madame, was I wrong in disbelieving your protestations?" said Henry, shewing the letter.

"Well, sir, and what does that letter say, sir, that I need be afraid to acknowledge?" answered Cecile, proudly,

"It tells me, madame, that this scene has lasted long enough, and I am afraid I am taking up your time, I will retire."

"You shall not go, sir," exclaimed Cecile, "untill you have learnt all—yes, sir, M. de St. Cyr paid attention to me before you was known to me; he has written frequently, and I have answered him; but he has never received any other proof of my affection—believe it—but no, you will not believe it, for you will not believe anything, I say," said Cecile, bursting into tears.

"Yes, Cecile, I will believe your love, if you will give me an undoubted proof of it . . . you say you love me . . . well, prove it to me. In two days I leave for a hazardous warfare—perhaps I shall never again see you. At least, Cecile, let me carry with me the remembrance of having once, at least, been certain I was loved—yes, adored—because I know it must be an immense sacrifice on your part; but then what immense affection will it not prove—and then how generous it will be to give so much for so little.—To overwhelm a man with a load of unexpected, unheard of happiness. But alas! I am asking this of you, Cecile, without any hope of obtaining it; I know that such a sacrifice is above a woman's power, that since love reigned on earth, such a proof of love has never been given; in fact, Cecile, I ask this of you as an atheist demands a miracle, that he may be converted."

And he kissed Cecile's hand . . . . and wept—at least I think he did.

"Oh, it is impossible," said Cecile, half mad, and lost in the midst of the thousand contradictory feelings by which she was so violently agitated. "Besides, the preparations for M. de Cernans' voyage will keep him at home more than ever, so that you see it cannot be."

"A mere excuse," said Henry.

"An excuse! oh, heavens! an excuse!"

"Well, Cecile, if it be not an excuse, I will show you how to reconcile every thing," said Henry, after a moment's reflection; 'you have often written to M. de St. Cyr?"

"I told you I had."

"He has your letters?"

"I believe so."

"You have his?"

"Yes."

"There is nothing to compromise you in them?"

"No, no; stay—here they are, you may read them."

"Well then, take these letters, and when your husband returns, throw yourself at his feet, acknowledge the correspondence—tell him, that at the moment he is about to leave for America, you wish to acknowledge a secret that presses heavily on your heart; tell him you have been imprudent—but that you stopped on the brink of the abyss in time to save yourself. As a proof of this, give him the letters of M. de St. Cyr, and ask him to allow you to retire to a convent, during his absence in America."

"Well!"

"What a child you are! . . . then beg of your husband to proceed, without delay, to receive *your* letters from the hands of M. de St. Cyr, and to restore to him his own. I have no doubt the baron will leave either to night or in the morning—that will give us four and twenty hours to ourselves, entirely to ourselves, Cecile; and besides, you will gain by this noble acknowledgement, the advantage of inspiring your husband with the most incredible confidence ever after."

"It is the demon that inspires thee with these ideas," said Cecile. "Oh, it is infamous! Never, no, never will I consent to that—I would sooner die—I would sooner you should doubt my love. . ."

Next morning Baron de Cernan was on the road to Nevers, and he said to himself—"Certainly, even in America, a woman of such virtue as this cannot be found—to stop at the brink of the precipice—to have sufficient courage to make such a statement to me. But I must acknowledge, also, that I am extremely happy in having so conscientious a man as M. de St. Cyr to deal with, for, truly, I cannot read the passage in his last letter without emotion."

And the baron read.

"No, madame, no; I ask nothing—I will never ask anything. Do I not possess all—do I not possess your affection? I would rather face a hundred deaths than cause you to betray your sacred duties—to endanger, in the most remote degree, your peace of mind, and the honor of a brave man, who deserves, in so many respects, to be happy. Pay him every attention, madame, and that without hypocrisy—for love like ours never degrades the soul, it ennobles it, and blushes not—we are proud of it, for there is nothing but what is pure and irreproachable, in the etherial sympathy that elevates two souls as they rise above the material passions of this world.'

"Admirable, admirable," said the baron, as he replaced the letters in his pocket book; "this M. de St. Cyr is a perfect *antique*, and I cannot be angry with him, or with my wife either."

And night came on, and the baron drew near to the town of Nevers.

CHAPTER XXII.

Three scenes during one night.

In how many different ways is time spent.—St. Augustin

SCENE THE FIRST.

This scene occurred at Paris: at the time the Baron de Cernan arrived at Nevers,—it was a dark, cold, and stormy night, the rain fell in torrents, and strong gusts of wind lashed the house tops, that were streaming with water. The passengers in the streets were few in number, and the sound of their footsteps alone interrupted the monotonous murmur of the overflowing water pipes.

At the extremity of the Faubourg St. Antoine the building then called the Hôpital was at that time situated, a place for the confinement and seclusion of girls who had lived a bad life, and women charged with robbery or other crimes.

Here the Duchess d'Almeda was confined.

On this dark and rainy night the environs of this dismal building appeared completely deserted.

A narrow and winding bye-street extended along the foot of the wall by which one of the court yards of the prison was enclosed.

In this narrow street, a man enveloped in a cloak, appeared anxiously to wait for some signal, continually looking attentively at the top of the wall, and listening to every sound.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, a stone to which a long cord was attached, fell at the foot of the man in the cloak, who, throwing his cape on one side, caught hold of the stone and pulled the cord gently; the latter was no doubt held by some one on the other side of the wall, for his signal was answered by another pull at the cord. Perez, for he it was, quickly attached to this cord a rope ladder with thin iron rods for steps, again repeated the signal, and the ladder glided over the wall.

At this instant the rain and wind appeared to redouble their fury, the water fell in sheets, so white, that it resembled a mist in the midst of the darkness, the storm whistled and howled with violence, and made the leafless branches of the few trees that surmounted the wall crackle again.

When he heard a second stone fall, Perez firmly seized the extremity of the rope ladder and clung fast to it, and by its sudden tension you might suppose that the prisoner had begun to mount on the other side of the wall.

This climbing continued for a few minutes, when suddenly the ladder received a violent jerk, Perez started, and the greatest portion of the ladder came into his hands,—he uttered a cry of horror.

You may well imagine his terror, by considering that the sudden shock by which the ladder was loosened, caused him to believe that Rita, too weak to reach the top of the wall, had fallen, had wounded herself, perhaps was killed. Imagine then what this devoted man must have felt,—there, breathless with fear, his ear applied to the wall, whose thickness separated Rita from him,—imagine the dreadful agony of this man, crouched upon the earth, and endeavouring to hear through the mute and pitiless stones the cries of the unfortunate duchess—saying to himself, "She is there, on the same ground, on the same level as I am, behind this wall, whose thickness exceeds the length of my arm,—I hear nothing, I see nothing!" It was a dreadful moment.

But a ray of hope re-animated Perez, a stone fell near him, and he saw the ladder again drawn towards the top of the wall, and become tightly strained.

He was at his post again.

Five minutes afterwards Rita, dressed as a man, appeared on the summit of the lofty wall, and cautiously descended.

The duchess was soon free, and Perez kneeling before her, kissed her hands—he could not speak, his emotion was too strong.

"Perez—Perez," said Rita, "my good and trusty Perez! has...."

She grew more feeble, staggered, and fainted.

The rain still continued, and the wind redoubled its violence, Perez was in dreadful distress for fear the watch going its rounds should discover them. He tried every possible means to bring Rita to her senses, and being unsuccessful, he determined to to carry her, and taking her in his arms he proceeded a few steps.

But the freshness produced by her wet garments, and the constant beating of the rain on her face, restored the duchess; she opened her eyes and said, "where am I?"

Perez stopped.

"Give me a little time to recover, Perez," she said, "place me against that wall, for I am very weak and dreadfully bruized—that fall was so painful; my hands are all covered with blood, and my head also,—Oh! I thought I should never have risen again. But come—courage, Perez—see you not everything favours me? even this storm is of service to us; come, Perez, hope, courage,—I told you truly we ought never to despair."

And the miserable woman recovered all her strength and all her energy by that fixed and exalting idea, resting on the arm of Perez, bruized, covered with mud, streaming with water and blood, did Rita, conducted by her squire, reach the *rue de faubourg St. Antoine*, for Perez, with exceeding prudence, had abstained from seeking a *fiacre* near the little street of the *Hôpital*, for fear of awakening suspicion. He expected to find a carriage in the faubourg St. Antoine where they were usually met with, thanks to the neighbourhood of the little dwellings of the great lords, which were nearly all situated in that quarter, for in those days they very prudently made use of *fiacres* to convey them to those mysterious abodes, being able more easily to preserve their incognito in those modest vehicles, which passed unnoticed.

Perez and the duchess began to despair of meeting with a coach, when they at length saw one at twenty paces distance, entering the little *rue de St. Marcel.*

Make haste, madame," said Perez, "perhaps that carriage is empty."

They were soon within call of the coach.

"Stop!" cried Perez, running after it.

The coachman made no answer.

"Stop, if your carriage be empty," cried Perez again, when he came up with it.

At the sound of Perez's voice one of the windows was lowered.

"My coach is full," said the coachman whipping the horses, while Perez hung on at the bridle.

"We must see that," cried the duchess, rushing to the open window.

A man suddenly thrust out his head, exclaiming, "Be off, sir, if you have any respect for your life!"

The unfortunate duchess uttered a dreadful cry and fell to the ground.

That man, it was *he*—it was Henry!—Henry with a woman enveloped in her hood.

At the cry of the duchess, Perez dropped the bridle to render her assistance.

The coachman whipped his horses, and Perez could hear these words of Henry:—"Take heart, my dear angel—be comforted Cécile—it is only a drunken man."

SCENE THE SECOND.

The boudoir of a little house, *rue St. Martin*, a gush of soft and invisible light from the centre of the domed ceiling, spread a mysterious brilliancy through the delightful room. A large, clear, and blazing fire sparkled in a granite fire-place, wreathed with gold; the well-closed windows were hidden by thick satin curtains; the air was perfumed by a parterre of flowers, which occupied one side of the boudoir, hung with white velvet, covered with blue and silver flowers. The howling of the storm, only heard through the double windows and thick draperies, was indistinct and distant.

Its plaintive murmur completed by its contrast the harmony of this scene of delight, for it is said to be, and I believe it, an inexpressible pleasure to hear the wind sigh and the rain rattle, when in a sweet little room, near a large fire, half reclining close to the woman you adore, your head resting on her kneees, you talk of love, looking forward to a delicate supper and a long night of pleasure.

And Henry enjoyed this delightful happiness, in the little dwelling we have just described.

Henry, seated amorously at Cecile's feet, his hand in hers, gazed on her with eyes beaming with love.

"How I still tremble, Henry," said Madame de Cernan, "that man with his frightful features."

"Why, my angel, do you expect to find men who wander about the streets at this time of night particularly handsome?"

"Oh! do not joke, Henry, I am too much alarmed."

"Alarmed at what, dear angel?—a drunken man stopped our carriage, there is nothing astonishing in that,—the man was very ugly—that again was very natural;—so calm thy fears, so much I love thee, yes, I love thee truly—oh, truly! there is something so unexpected, so extraordinary in our attachment, that it is impossible it can be common or vulgar."

"Henry! Henry! how often has this place heard vows of the same nature?"

"For that to have been the case, Cecile, it were needful you should have been here, that these mirrors should have reflected thy sweet eyes, thy rosy mouth, thy voluptuous form; but no, it is only now they have that felicity,—but stay, I am jealous of these mirrors—no, after all, no, on the contrary I love them, I love them as I should love the echo that repeated the sound of thy dear voice."

"In truth, Henry, it is a dream," said Cecile, her eyes half closed, "Oh! I must think it is a dream.'

"Yes, Cecile—yes, my angel—it is a dream, a golden dream, believe it to be one,—and in after times when you recal this day, glittering with pleasure and love, oh, say to yourself, 'The pleasure was too great, the love too passionate, its ardour too enervating,—yes, it was a dream!' But then do you know," said Henry smiling, "do you know, Cecile, it would be marvellously strange if so real a reality should be a dream?"

"Oh, be silent!"

"Well, I will be silent, my angel, I will be silent—my kisses shall speak for me. A long kiss, that mounting from thy beautiful fingers so delicate and slender, along thy white and rounded arm, shall say'

better than I can, 'I love this charming hand, this heavenly arm!' I will be silent, and when my lips close thy eyelids, will not the amorous pressure say to you better than my voice, 'Oh! I love—I love those bright eyes that cast upon me looks that kill?' I will be silent.

"Oh! no, speak, speak, Henry! oh, let me hear that voice I love so much, thy gentle voice;—but tell me, Henry, why do each of thy words vibrate so long in my heart after thou hast spoken?—whence comes that soft langour that enervates me?—why is it the same to me whether I die to-morrow or in an hour? for never, oh, never did I feel such felicity;—whence comes the pleasure that overcomes me? that vague and voluptuous feeling that circulates through me, and is deliciously concentrated in one of thy kisses? Yes, if you kiss my eyes, it is a pleasure; if you kiss my hands, it is still pleasing; a pleasure to die, a pleasure to make heaven jealous! Why is this?—tell me, Henry."

Why? my Cecile, said Henry, encircling Cecile's beautiful waist with both his arms and resting his head on her bosom. "Why is this? It is because you follow the instinct of thy heart, that tells thee 'He loves thee,' because two hearts, that are made for each other, always confess themselves to each other, because...."

Henry did not conclude, for at that instant the doors of the boudoir slightly grated on their hinges and opened without the appearance of any one, disclosed a small dining room, the walls of which were ornamented with paintings in scarlet and gold. A large fire blazed in a marble chimney piece loaded with flowers that mingled their varied colours with the light of the candles glittering in crystal candelabra.

The table rose by means of a moveable flooring according to the custom of the day, and two little side boards covered with every thing that was necessary for the service of the supper, dispensed with the inconvenience of servants.

"I have to make a very painful confession," said Henry, with a bashful air, and at the same time seating himself close, very close, to Cecile, "and that is, I have a most ravenous appetite."

"And I," said Cecile, more bashfully still, "I scarcely dare to say that, I am dying of hunger."

"What happiness this is, Cecile—stay, place yourself here, close to me. By heavens! love is a good thing, but an excellent supper and love at the same time are two good things."

So they supped, it must be acknowledged in the midst of bashful looks and blushes, but still they supped, and excellently too. And we are obliged to confess that by a cursed and fatal reaction of the physical on the moral attributes, their eyes became more sparkling, their cheeks more rosy; Cecile's lips glowed with a more lively carmine, her teeth were of a more dazzling whiteness.

The tinge of gentle melancholy, which had presided at the commencement of the evening, was effaced by frank and reiterated laughter, so that when the musical clock announced midnight, Henry exclaimed, "It is twelve o'clock, Cecile!"

Scarcely was the word pronounced when the folding doors of the boudoir closed, and the dining apartment was deserted.

SCENE THE THIRD.

NEARLY at the same hour and on the same night, another scene occured, at Nevers, in an apartment occupied by M. de St. Cyr.

M. de St. Cyr was thirty years of age, fair and fresh coloured, a handsome countenance, mild eyes, a noble and reserved air; he was grave and cool in his manner, and full of dignity, even when taking a pinch of stuff.

It is midnight. M. de St. Cyr had just had his hair put in paper by his valet; he had dismissed him, and seating himself near the fire had taken up a small pocket-book of green satin ornamented with a garland of forget-me-nots and *immortelles*; he drew from it a packet of letters, spread them on the table, and read them slowly.

They were Cecile's letters.

"No answer to my two last," said M. de St. Cyr, after having read over and over again his amorous correspondence. "Singular woman—yes, singular, for in the midst of the general license that bears all along with it, she remains unspotted, and, in my opinion, she is superior to a perfectly virtuous woman. *My* Cecile; yes, I can say *my* Cecile, as least my Cecile resists, strives—oh what pain and pleasure are there not in the thought that she loves me, but loves virtue more. It is a preference that charms at the same time that it distresses you. It is now nearly six months since she accepted my services and these letters are the only pledge of love I have received—what did I say—wretch that I am—the only pledge, and is not the sincere affection of an adorable and adored woman enough? No other pledge, what would I then—infamous man, dishonour her, debase her in her own eyes, and cause her to blush in her husband's presence, expose her to the sufferings of remorse and for what?....the love that unites us excuses the censure of the world, because it is not of the world—chaste love, noble and elevated love, on which we proudly smile, because we have sacrificed to it every base and miserable material idea....love....

Unfortunately this touching monologue was interrupted by the sound of a post-chaise stopping at the door of the mansion, and by the sudden entry of M. de St. Cyr's valet as pale as death, who had only time to say, "M. le Baron de Cernan, he is close behind me."

At these words the letters re-entered the green pocket-book as if by enchantment.

When M. de Cernan entered the room he found M. de St. Cyr cool and calm, standing before the fire.

M. de St. Cyr. To what chance am I indebted for a visit from M. de Cernan.

Baron. Will you have the kindness, sir, to desire your servants to withdraw.

M. de St. Cyr. You have come though a dreadful night, sir—the cause must have been most important.

Baron. Most important, sir—but stay, let us cut short all formalities and speak frankly. you have written to my wife and she has answered your letters. I know all about it.

M. de St. Cyr. Sir!

Baron (*showing a packet*). It is useless denying it, here are your letters.

M. de St. Cyr. I see now the cause of your visit; I am at your service whenever you please.

Baron. Listen to me, sir. Yesterday, my wife, hearing that I was about to proceed to America, threw herself at my feet—she did not weep; but her downcast eyes, her pale cheeks, her agitation, told me she was about to reveal an important secret. In fact, sir, she told me all, her remorse, and her fears. She told me all, sir, and gave me your letters begging I would proceed at once and return them to you, claiming a restoration of her correspondence

so that she might run no danger during my absence, and she implored as a favour that I would place her in some convent while I remained in America.

I have read your letters, sir, and, although it was an unpleasant discovery for a husband to make, I have been greatly comforted by them, in finding that my wife was still innocent, and that, instead of abusing your fatal ascendancy, you had, on the contrary, strengthened Cecile in her attachment to her duties, contenting yourself with a pure and disinterested affection; with a man like you, sir, the business is soon settled—I ought to have come here to insult you, and cut your throat, or lose my own life—With you, M. de St. Cyr, I shall act differently, here are your letters (*he throws them in the fire*). I hope that you will honourably make a sacrifice of the same kind.

M. de St. Cyr. Your behaviour is so noble, sir, that I cannot but respond in the same manner to an action so flattering and honourable to me—here are Madame de Cernan's letters (*he throws them in the fire*).

Baron. And now, sir, I thank you for your noble behaviour, which I well appreciate, for men like you are becoming rare.

M. de St. Cyr. We are friends for life or death, (*holds out his hand*), grant me your friendship, sir—I am worthy of it; I hope I shall show myself more worthy still.

(*They embrace with intense affection.*)

Baron. And now, sir, I must bid you adieu.

M. de St. Cyr. In this dreadful weather—do not think of it, to-morrow will be time enough.

Baron. To-morrow, to-morrow! and my wife, *my* Cecile expecting me; to-morrow! consider her anguish, sir. . . . to-morrow. . . . . when at this present moment she is distracted, weeping, with dishevelled hair, contemplating the result of this meeting, fancying perhaps, poor creature, that we are cutting each others' throats.

M. de St. Cyr. I comprehend your impatience, sir, I hear the arrival of your horses, once more, adieu, adieu!

Baron. Adieu, M. de St. Cyr. What I am about to say a gallant man like you will understand—come to Paris to-morrow, I will present you to Madame de Cernan—certain that during my absence she cannot have a better mentor, or a friend more worthy of my esteem and confidence.

M. de St. Cyr. (*with a conscientious dignified look.*) I reckoned on this, sir.

Baron. (*embracing him.*) All your conduct is summed up in two words—*Saint Cyr.*

M. de St. Cyr. (*again embracing him.*) You completely understand me—*Cernan.*

(*The Baron leaves the room and the post-chaise is heard to drive off.*)

M. de St. Cyr. Thus you see, thanks to my honest and virtuous behaviour, a connexion that might have overwhelmed three persons with death or despair, has had the bonds of honour and probity, by which it is united, more firmly drawn—compare this to criminal love. Well, say what you will, virtue is both beautiful and honourable, and this is a proof of it.

And M. de St. Cyr slept like a virtuous man, as he was.

At the end of this night, employed in such various ways—about six o'clock in the morning the door of M. de Vaudry's modest dwelling opened mysteriously, and Cecile prudently wrapt up, got into a fiacre.

The baron returned from Nevers at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and joyfully embraced his wife, finding her as he expected pale and depressed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TWO BROTHERS.

Man rises above the earth on two wings—simplicity and purity, simplicity should be in the intention, and purity in the affection.—THOMAS A'KEMPSIS.

NOTHING was changed in the little dwelling of St. Renan, the quiet and modest abode of the two brothers. There was the same solitude, the same calm. Sulpice had returned to his accustomed domestic duties, which had been neglected a little during the absence of Rumphius, for while the astromer was sojourning at Paris, poor Sulpice remained in an unusual state of apathy and torpor.

The minute details of the household, to which he gave himself up with so much pleasure, in the hopes of being useful to his brother, were neglected as soon as Rumphius was no longer concerned. Living upon fruit, and passing the greater part of the day in tears in the astronomer's chamber, the miserable Sulpice led so melancholy a life since his separation from Rumphius, that, properly speaking, the fifteen days ought not to be reckoned as part of his existence, for, as we have said, the only constant end of all Sulpice's endeavours was to spare his brother the least inconvenience. So, that this object being as it were the very soul of the good brother, the soul once absent, the body remained inert, and, as it were, lifeless.

But then what transports, what joy when Rumphius returned; and he had been at St. Renan now for two days. You ought to have seen how tenderly Sulpice acted towards his brother, with what veneration, scarcely venturing to speak to him, for he was aware of the silent fits of the astronomer, but watching his eyes, he strove to discover by his looks whether the journey had fatigued him, or if its results had been satisfactory.

You ought to have seen with what profound pleasure Sulpice prepared his brother's first repast, how promptly it was served up!

But the most astonishing and incomprehensible thing was, Rumphius for the first time seemed to notice his brother's actions, and that which was still more extraordinary, Rumphius, in contradiction to his usual habit, uttered not the slightest contradiction, and passed the first evening after his arrival without scolding Sulpice.

Sulpice looking upon this quiet and this unusual calm as the result of the fatigue of his journey, was not much alarmed at it, but the next day, finding the astronomer still in a good humour, and not hearing him utter one harsh or unpleasant word, or propound an ambiguous or embarrassing question, Sulpice imagined Rumphius was seriously indisposed, and began to make himself uneasy.

He made up his mind, therefore, to question his brother as to the state of his health, if on the third day he exhibited the same symptoms.

And we have now reached the third day.

It happened after the frugal repast of the two brothers, when Rumphius appeared more absorbed than usual, that suddenly he awoke from his reverie and addressed himself to Sulpice.

" At length we are once more united," he observed with a sigh.

" Ah! yes, happily united, and never to be separated again,—is it not so, brother?" replied Sulpice. For if you knew how miserable I am away from you,

—and yet I should not have been miserable if you was gratified with your journey. Pardon my selfishness, but I could not help being unhappy,—Oh! yes, brother, you must pardon me, for I endured much when away from you, and should very soon have come to you, if you had insisted on my remaining here, by myself.

And the eyes of the poor and good creature again filled with tears at the mere remembrance of those long, melancholy, and dismal days he had passed alone.

"My good Sulpice," said Rumphius much moved, for his position was cruel even for a mind dried up by analysis like that of Rumphius.

The astronomer had promised the count to go with him to India, and nothing in the world could have induced him to give up his voyage; but in spite of his selfishness, and his philosophical scorn of the limited intellect of Sulpice, Rumphius felt himself much affected when he was about to explain himself to this man of so inferior a nature.

And this fear was natural, for never did the science of a Newton, the genius of a Buonaparte, the power of a Louis XIV., protect a man from the feeling of trouble and admiration, which the quiet beams of a serene and placid soul impose on it, a childish soul, that finds such powerful arms in its resignation, such immense superiority in its simple devotion.

"My good Sulpice, at length we are re-united,—but let us think no more of that," said Rumphius mechanically, for he had not courage to tell his brother the fatal news.

"Oh! I have already forgotten my trouble, I only spoke of it because I am so happy," said Sulpice, "Oh, so very happy!—for a long time to come you will not leave me,—is it not so, brother? because your patron, the Count de Vaudry, is about to embark at Brest, and will no doubt be a long time before he returns, and so it will be long before we are again separated,—is it not so, brother?"

"Certainly, Sulpice, he sails for India,—what a delightful voyage that must be!"

"Oh! certainly, a delightful voyage," replied Sulpice with his usual submission.

"Such a voyage as I should like to have taken if I were younger; but, bah! at my age I must not think of it," said Rumphius, who was not particularly adroit at arriving at his ends by well managed transitions.

"Oh! certainly, brother, you are quite right not to think of it."

"Oh! I think no more of it, Sulpice, I only say it must be a delightful voyage,—only imagine, to see with your own eyes what the books have so imperfectly taught, to see the Brahmins, and converse with them on the *Nity Hocas*, or the morality of the Hindoo religion; to witness the sacrifices of the *Vanaprasty* Brahmins, of which we have at present such an imperfect idea, and the sacrifice of the *Ekiam*, and the little *Ekiam*, and the great *Ekiam*, and the legends of the Sanscrit, and the giant enemies of the *Vanaparsties*.

And Rumphius became by degrees more animated in as he proceeded in his speech, by degrees his ardour for science awoke, and made him less and less sensible to the fear of wounding his brother's feelings by informing him of his project in so unexpected a manner.

"At length," exclaimed Rumphius with increasing excitement, "at length to see with my own eyes, Sulpice, to see and hear a true Brahmin, a Brahmin in flesh and blood, perform the *Sandia!* to see him with his thumb and index finger press his two nostrils, and pronounce the word *Ron* six times, holding his breath and thinking of fire, and in that manner symbolically burning his body! Will you not envy me, Sulpice? you cannot comprehend my happiness. I shall read in the Talmud—penetrate the mystery of symbols—understand the allegory, among others, of the giant *Ravana*, the hairs of whose body resembled the trees of a mighty forest, and who, when at war with the gods, fixed a rock to the extremity of each of these hairs, and advancing armed in this manner into the midst of the hostile army, had but to shake himself thus, br-r-r, and by the violent action cause the rocks to fly to the right and left, falling thick as hail, and crushing his enemies even to the last man! But what is that to the hope of penetrating the symbol of Rama, who had ten heads and three hundred and sixty-five arms!—only consider, I shall find out these and a hundred others. Will it not delight you—will it not make you even tremble with joy? The very idea of my voyage will fill you with transport!"

"I do not understand you, brother," said Sulpice

"True, True, you are right,—well, then, since we must come to it at last," said Rumphius with the resolution of despair, "the Count de Vaudry has proposed that I should accompany him to India—I have accepted his offer, and in eight days I rejoin him at Brest, that I may proceed along with him."

At this unexpected and overwhelming information the blood of Sulpice was checked in its course, he became pale as death, and stammered out in accents of despair, while his eyes were filled with tears—

"Leave! leave!—and I, brother, I?"

And he was on his knees before Rumphius, and grasped his hands.

"You? well, you," murmured Rumphius, "you will wait here for my return,—you have been without me for fifteen days and you are not dead."

"Oh! it is impossible, it is impossible!—go alone! it must not be, brother," said Sulpice, his hands joined.

"It is possible, and it shall be so, because I desire it. After all I have no need of you," said Rumphius in a tone of voice he intended should be harsh, but which the emotion of his features belied.

At these cruel words Sulpice stood up, calm and noble . . . he wiped his tears, and for the first time in his life, said, with extraordinary decision, such as you could not expect in a man usually so submissive and timid.

"Whether you wish or not, if you go to India, brother, I accompany you."

"What madness," said the Astronomer.

"It ought not to be called madness, brother. Listen!" And the voice of Sulpice became almost threatening. "It is not madness, it is a right I have acquired by my devotion to you, now of twenty years standing—it is a right I have also acquired by the promise I made our father on his death-bed, that I would never leave you—and I am determined to make use of my privilege. Do you hear, brother?"

Rumphius was silent, unable to bear the imposing and almost inspired look of Sulpice, who every instant became more animated.

"How, brother, did you imagine that, knowing you to be in the midst of the thousand dangers of a voyage by sea, I would remain here breathing useless prayers for you! Did you believe, that when here on dry land, in this solitude, I have scarcely been able to prevent some privation, some imprudent act, injuring your health, or deranging your studies. You imagined I would let you be alone, on board ship, wandering over foreign lands, and

occupying yourself with details of which you have not the least idea. Who would take care of you, brother? who would lead you? who would put the bread into your hand, and the wine to your lips? who would come during the night, while you, half undressed, was watching the stars? who would come and protect you from cold? Did you believe it, brother? You thought that, knowing you buried in the midst of an existence so new to you, I should leave you alone! No, no! whether you consent or not, once again—I will follow you! Listen to me, brother—have I bound my life to yours for the purpose of seeing the fruit of twenty years of brotherly affection annihilated in an hour? I will follow you—once again, whether you will or no, I will follow you, brother."

This simple, determined, and noble language confounded Rumphius—the philosopher was completely beaten, it was pitiful to see him, he sobbed like a detected school-boy, and not knowing how to answer, he thought of asking the mediation of Henry, and in his turn said, in a submissive tone, and with much emotion—

"But I do not know whether Count de Vaudry will consent to your following me, Sulpice."

"Whether he will consent! brother, do you doubt it? You are insulting the count; oh, I promise you he will consent, when I say to him—Count, my brother can no more do without me than he can feel without hands, or see without eyes, while my brother is thinking, I am acting for him. His labours are precious to the country, count; and in order that he may devote himself more entirely to science which claims him, his life must be freed from all those miserable material cares that would disturb him in his labours; who then could fulfil these duties with regard to him, better than myself? who will dare dispute the task with me? But, count, I only request that I may be with my brother, that is all, to be in the same vessel with him, —the rest is of no moment, you may put me among the sailors, you may treat me the same as them; what I want, count, is to be near my brother, and you cannot, you will not, refuse me that."

"Well, well then, make it your business to speak to him, Sulpice; I will not meddle with it."

"Oh, leave it to me, brother—all I require is you approbation," said Sulpice, too happy in the astronomer's acquiescence, and again becoming humble and submissive.

For, by a curious psycological phenomenon, the transitory excitement to which Sulpice was indebted for his eloquence, disappeared at once, when its end was gained.

It would be useless to endeavour to penetrate the mysterious cause of this, let us content ourselves then with saying, that after this scene, the good Sulpice became what he ever had been, calm, patient, negative — and that Rumphius, having delivered himself of his secret, again became a dreamer, and scolded and argued, according to custom, and that life of the two brothers went on much in the usual manner, and was but little changed by the preparations for their departure, which Sulpice made with his ordinary patience and care.

Three days afterwards, Rumphius received a letter from Paris, to the following effect:—

"Sir,—The count, my master, has charged me with the honor of informing you that he will be at Brest the second day after you receive this letter, and he requests you will make your preparations as speedily as possible, for the count must leave Brest at the beginning of January, at the latest.

I have the honour to be, &c.

GERMEAU,

December, 1780. Valet de Chambre."

At the bottom of the letter the following words, written in haste, were in the hand-writing of Henry.

"*Hasten your arrival my good Rumphius, a devil of an adventure obliges me to leave without the least delay.*"

"A devil of an adventure," said Rumphius, thoughtfully. "Ah, I understand it—it must be the duel with M. de Cernan, it was to have taken place the day after I left . . . and I forgot my uneasiness!"

"Fight, brother! should he be killed!"

In this involuntary exclamation of the gentle Sulpice might be found the germ of this homicidal idea, *Should he be killed, my brother would remain with me, and avoid the dangers into which he is perhaps running.*

Rumphius replied—"Wounded, it is not unlikely —for the baron was much wronged."

"How so, brother?" said Sulpice.

"Oh, for reasons you cannot understand," answered Rumphius, with a ridiculously mysterious air.

Two days afterwards, the two brothers arrived at Brest, followed by their slight baggage, and the little house of St. Renan remained under the care of an aged woman.

Sulpice shed, in secret, a few tears, which the recollection of former days spent in that retreat drew from him, but he said nothing to his brother, and even endeavoured to appear to be more lively than usual.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BREST.

There are among them unhappy men who are consoled by no one—these are jealous husbands: there are those that all the world hates—these are jealous husbands: there are those that all the world despise—these are jealous husbands.

MONTESQUIEU.

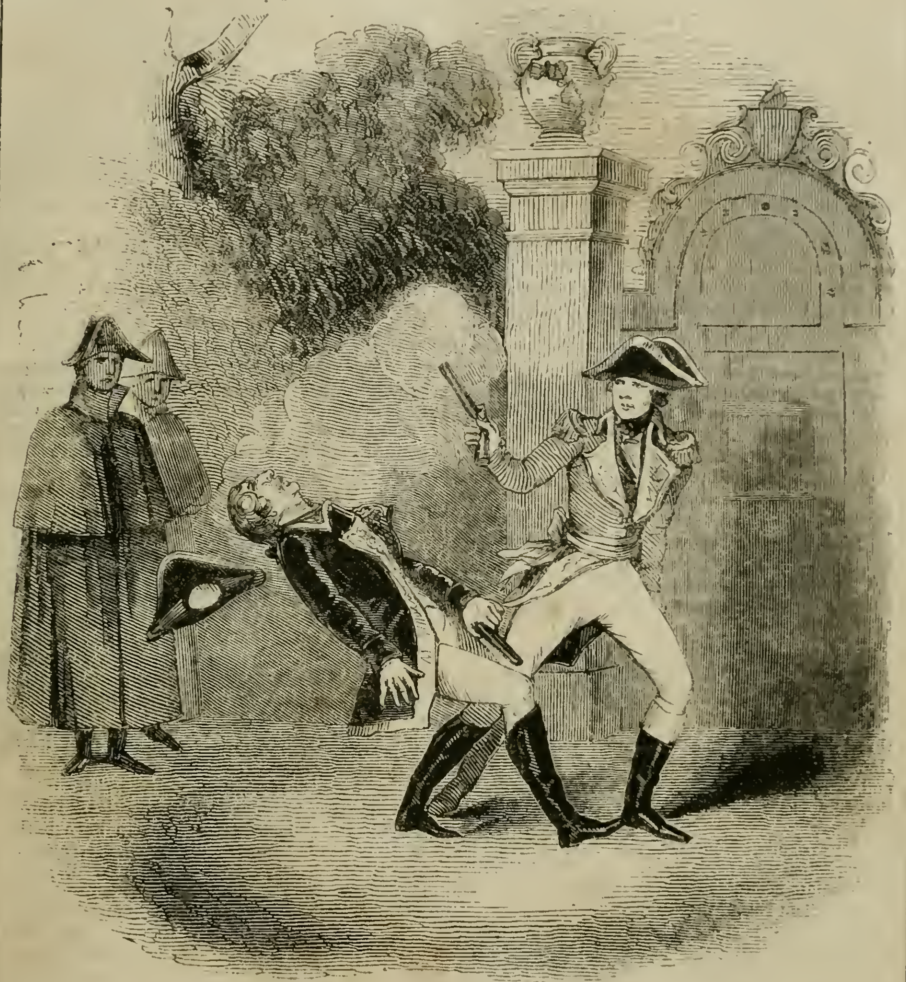
It is worthy of notice that our people place valour in the first rank of the virtues.—MONTAIGNE.

IN 1780, as in 1830, the life of a naval officer at a fortified port, has always been monotonous.

But it is particularly for those, who being strangers to the town, and without family connexions, that the days drag on so long and wearisome, for but little variety can be found in what is called *society;* this society, like all society in provincial towns, being only amusing to those, who constantly living in their own circle, are *au fait* to the sempiternal lies, jokes, and rivalries on which the wits of the neighbourhood usually revolve. But, in fact, it would all appear foolish enough to a poor devil just arrived from Versailles, Paris, or Chili.—So you have to choose between the beer and smoke of the *estaminets*, the falsettos of a paltry theatre, or the most complete solitude.

Thus the three officers of the frigate, commanded by Captain Vaudry, would have had to make this embarrassing choice, for they were perfect strangers at Brest, if they had not hit upon the notable idea of meeting every evening at the house of one or other of their party, and there getting-up for the occasion, a little Paris, in the foggy atmosphere of Brittany.

In this manner they lived on their mutual reminiscences, communicating to each other the letters they received from the court, and thus renovating,



in a small degree the happy life of Paris or Versailles for which they sighed so deeply.

These three intimates, as they were called, were the Marquis de Miran, the Chevalier de Monval, both ensigns on board the vessel, and the Baron de Saint Sauveur, *garde du pavillon*, performing the duties of an officer on board.

Every evening after dinner they assembled round a blazing fire, before which an immense vessel of hot water was simmering, intended as a component for punch and coffee, or tea (the use of which was beginning to become established among the aristocracy.)

The three friends held long conversations on voyages, battles, Versailles, Paris, and the Indies, played a little, and read the letters they received from their numerous correspondents. They had met this evening at the Marquis de Miran's.

The Chevalier de Monval had arrived, and they waited for the Baron de Saint-Sauveur.

The apartment of M. de Miran consisted of three of those large furnished rooms which have, in my mind, so sad and singular an appearance.

The two young men had established themselves in the least extensive of these apartments, which was called a *salon*, but thanks to an immense sparkling fire, a thick carpet and large curtains, by which the windows were hidden here you might well pass a winter's evening reclining on one of those three couches with which the room was furnished, sipping from time to time a glass of reeking punch, or a cup of *caravane* tea.

"What the devil can make that simpleton Saint-Sauveur so late," said Monval, "I hope to heaven he will not disappoint us, we are quite out of news, and must reckon on his bringing us some."

"Faith, Monval, that was an unlucky courier today," said M. de Miran, "and to mend the matter

we had to pass ten hours in the equipment of that cursed frigate."

"Without reckoning the mortal fatigue of having that devil of a lieutenant at our heels," said Monval.

"Oh; confound him, the *blue** that he is," replied Miran, "he is so proud of proving he understands his business, a matter that no one disputes. And then he is so coarse and insolent in his manners, luckily for him, only when in service, however, if that were not the case, my dear fellow, there would be blood spilt."

"Bah!" said Monval, "he is half mad. We ought to amuse ourselves with him. I, for my part, am so submissive in the performance of my duties, that I make him half wild, but, once out of the frigate, and I'll make this worthy M. Thomas answer for his impertinence, who I rather suspect to be vext because he is only called Thomas, although he and his friend Gédeon, our worthy doctor, are constantly snarling at the *noblesse*."

"Gédeon," said the Marquis de Miran, "what a brute, an ass that is—but I hear Saint-Sauveur"—and Saint-Sauveur entered the room. He might have been about eighteen years of age, his two friends appeared rather older.

"Good day," said Saint-Sauveur, as he entered; "good day, and good evening—I have letters."

"Bravo, let us see them."

"No! first of all give me my robe-de-chambre Miran, I think, like M. Jourdan, I shall read better in my robe-de-chambre."

"Here then, simpleton that you are," said his host, throwing him the garment which he took out of a clothes-press.

Saint Sauveur doffed his blue uniform, bound with gold lace, *a la Burgogne*, but kept on his waistcoat, his breeches, and his scarlet stockings, Scarlet, because the *gardes du pavillon* belonged to the king's service) unclasped his doe-skin belt, threw his sword on the table, put on his robe de chambre, stretched himself on one of the couches, and, at last, said to his two friends, who awaited the completion of his installation with intense curiosity,

"My friends, I have letters from Paris, and among others one from the Marquis de La Jaille, the intimate friend of our new commander."

"Excellent! read that to us."

"I believe it is excellent, for it treats of a most extraordinary adventure—quite a romance—the denouement of which was lately accomplished by the Count de Vaudry."

"Read it, you confounded babbler," said his companions.

"Well, here it is; listen to what La Jaille says."

"My dear friend, you generally complain that my letters are short, here is one with which I think you will not find the same fault; I shall be prolix, because it regards one of my most intimate friends, under whose orders you will soon find yourselves, and I wish to omit nothing in an adventure that envy and falsehood will misrepresent, in the case of my excellent and worthy friend the Count de Vaudry. This is the affair.

"I told you in my former letter of the very novel hoax Vaudry played off on the Spanish duchess; his disguise; his abode in a lonely tower; his joke, although quite innocent in the first instance, to the great regret of my friend, I assure you, ended in a very serious manner. But, then, in our times, who the devil would have expected to see a woman carry matters to such an extreme, and be such a child as to die of love, what would you have! it was a misfortune; but you must acknowledge it was impossible for Vaudry to have foreseen it."

"As you may well imagine, this adventure made Vaudry more the rage than ever, and among the women it interested, I will notice the Baroness de Cernan, whom you have seen, I believe, at the Princess de Loraine's, where she remained for some months."

"Zounds, I know her," said Monval, "a very pretty woman, but a dreadful prude as they told me; and she also; hah! hah! hah! if I had but known that—"

"Be quiet then," said Miran.

Saint Sauveur continued—

"It appears that a M. de St. Cyr, a lieutenant-colonel in the regiment of Burgundy, also paid attention to Madame de Cernan, that she even received his letters, but he, like many others, had obtained nothing; in fact, he is said to have been strictly and purely platonic.

"And yet," cried Monval, "you wish me not to have a supreme contempt for the infantry."

"Another interruption and I will leave off reading," said Saint Sauveur, who then continued—

"I know not why, nor in what manner Vaudry got rid of the husband, and sent him to M. St. Cyr, at Nevers, where the latter was in garrison; but that which is certain, and is now well known by all in Paris, is, that while the husband and the platonic lover were saying I know not what at Nevers, the count passed the night with the baroness, at his little residence.

"Bravo!" cried Monval; "an excellent lesson for the platonist of the infantry."

"By some unaccountable chance," continued Saint Sauveur, "although the precautions taken by the count and the baroness, ought to have buried the adventure in the most profound secrecy, two anonymous letters, sent, as it is imagined, by the Marchioness de Vaille, who found herself sacrificed by Henry to Madame de Cernan, informed M. de St. Cyr and M. de Cernan, that they had both been tricked, and that, during the husband's journey to Nevers, the wife had given a meeting to Vaudry. The fact was proved by one of the women of the baroness, who until then had appeared devoted to her mistress, but probably corrupted by the wretches, who were the instruments of all these horrors, acknowledged all to the baron.

"Thus far, my friend, I have merely filled the part of a narrator, now let me tell you how I became an actor in this tragi comedy.

"Three days since I received a note from Henry, who begged of me instantly to repair to the hotel Vaudry—I hastened there, and found him much agitated—'I sent for you,' he said, 'because I have a sad affair in hand. For myself I care not, but poor Madame de Cernan will be in despair. But, after all, never mind, I wrote to you to beg you would be one of my seconds, Crussol will be the other. I meet M. M. Cernan and St. Cyr this morning at the *Porte Maillot*. 'Two duels at once,' I said, 'it is not a fair arrangement. What they call the *insult* has been equal, my dear

* The sea service was at this time distinguished as the blue and the red, The officers of the red were generally nobles, and appointed from the GARDES MARINES or volunteers. The officers of the blue only served as auxiliaries, and came from the merchant service

boy.' said Vaudry, 'and the reparation ought to be so also.'

"We left, in his carriage, Vaudry, myself, Crussol, and the surgeon.

"At the entrance to the wood we met our adversaries, M. de Cernan and M. M. de St. Cyr, and de Maupas, who acted as seconds.

"We bribed the guards heavily, who promised us silence, and soon gained a thickly shaded alley.

"M. de Cernan had chosen pistols, his excessive corpulence rendeing the small sword inconvenient. Vaudry and he were to advance towards each other, and fire when they thought fit, but they were not to approach each other nearer than ten paces.

"We placed them at five and twenty paces; Vaudry was cool and calm, as he always is."

"M. de Cernan was extremely pale, and although it was bitter cold, large drops of perspiration rolled down his forehead.

"About fifteen paces from Henry the baron fired his first shot, and the ball grazed Vaudry's ear, who turned suddenly, but I swear, on my honour, he took no aim at M. de Cernan.

"He was always a good fellow," said the Chevalier de Monval, interrupting the reading.

St. Sauveur, after an impatient gesture, continued—

"When the two opponents were ten paces distant, the baron trembled with rage to such an extent, that his pistol shook fearfully in his hand, —'You have not your usual *sang froid* baron,' said Henry to him; 'recover yourself, I will wait'—then addressing himself to M. de St. Cyr—'If you are inclined, sir, I am at your orders, for I have an affair with you also.'

"This behaviour, so noble, so unexpected, and generous, so much astonished us, that at first, no one answered; but M. de St. Cyr, thanking Henry, at the same time for his delicate behaviour, would not accept of the offer without the consent of M. de Cernan.'

"'And I oppose it,' cried the baron in a fury—'the villain shall only die by my hand—once again I oppose it—perhaps St. Cyr wishes to kill him for me," added the headstrong man.

"'You are right, baron, to every one his own, said Henry, tranquilly; 'then I shall wait without acting.'

"These words appeared to double the rage of the baron, but at the same time made him, to outward appearance, calm; from an agitated passion he fell into a cool rage, and his arm was extended as stiff as a rod of iron, when he said to Henry, with a frightful smile—'Now, sir, you see I tremble no longer; place yourself there that I may slay you.'

"Henry said nothing, but saluting me with his hand, looked stedfastly at the baron, his pistol was discharged, but it missed Henry, who fired, as in the first instance, at random.

"The baron, instead of appreciating this honourable conduct, flung himself upon Henry in a paroxysm of inexpressible rage, and struck him on the face, exclaiming—'It is not concluded, remember, I leave not this spot until you or I are dead.'

"At this action of the baron, knowing Henry's violent temper, I imagined M. de Cernan was lost; Vaudry still had in his hand his two pistols, discharged it is true, but capable still of being used as terrible weapons.

"I cannot tell you how astonished I was, my friend, at seeing Henry remain almost calm, only by the contraction of his cheeks, I could perceive that he ground his teeth against each other.

"I, Crussol, and M. de St. Cyr restrained the baron reproaching him for his outrageous behaviour.

"'Baron,' said Henry with the same *sang froid*, —'Your insult changes our situations, or at least, equalizes them; to finish the business, I propose we take two pistols, one only of which shall be loaded, place them against our breasts, and all will be over, for really this is child's play, and we are abusing the complaisance of these gentlemen.'

"'I agree,' said the baron.

"Our intervention to prevent such a project was in vain.

"What Henry proposed was done, each of them took the corner of a handkerchief between his teeth—we gave the signal—one pistol only was discharged; it was Vaudry's; the baron turned once round, stretched out his arms, and fell on his side without uttering a cry—he was dead.

"The devil!" said Monval.

"Confusion!" added Miran.

Saint Sauveur continued—

"'I swear to you, La Jaille,' said Henry to me, with extraordinary emotion, 'I would have given everything in the world to have avoided this frightful necessity; but, twice did I spare the life of the madman, and I did not wish to suffer myself to be killed like a dog, without discovering whether chance might assist me.'

"'Now I'm at your orders, sir, said Henry to St Cyr.

"Truly, my friend, it was a cruel sight to see two men combatting near a dead body. After ten minutes fighting M. de St. Cyr was wounded and disarmed—he declared himself satisfied. They say he has left his regiment and turned Trappist. The Baroness de Cernan has retired for the present to a convent.

"That, my friend, is the whole of the adventure, and I preferred informing you of the minutest details, to guard you against the scandal that ill-nature might circulate. You see it is impossible for conduct to have been more delicate and honourable than that of Vaudry, and yet envy has endeavoured to vilify his character. But these odious manœuvres have failed, to the confusion of their authors. For I know not how, it was for an instant reported, that the count was dangerously wounded. Well, the court and the town have been decrying him, and there has been scarcely a fête at which his life was not in danger. Yesterday he received his orders from the king and the ministry. His Majesty parted with him rather severely, it is true—saying to him—'It is against the enemies of France, sir, we wish to see you employ your valour, Go sir—and let me soon hear of one of those deeds of arms related to us, for which you are so famed. It is the only way to cause us to forget your unhappy adventure, and restore you to our favour.'

"This mercurial need not astonish you; the king is so austere in his life, that Vaudry's conduct must necessarily have appeared to him more blameable than it really is.

"Adieu, my friend; I sincerely congratulate you in serving under the orders of the count; let them say what they will: I have spoken to him concerning you, and have introduced him to your father, towards whom he behaved with so much respect,

that the old general is in extacies with him, and points him out as the model of a perfect gentleman.

"Adieu! yours entirely,

MARQUIS DE LA JAILLE.

"The devil!" said Miran; "our future commandant does not employ his time badly."

"It is a singular affair though," said Monval, "That M. de Vaudry, after having dishonoured M. de Cernan, killed him without defence, in the presence of five persons, is much excused and very excuseable, while, if he had killed him without witnesses, he would have been looked upon as an assassin—yet nevertheless the fact would have been the same.

"Certainly," replied St. Sauveur, "but that arises, my dear boy, from our living in society, we are not savages."

"But, after all," added Monval, "M. de Cernan took the affair in a very serious light."

"Listen, then," said Miran; "I know life as well a any one, but, in his place, I should have done the same, not on account of my wife, but for the scurvy trick of sending me to Nevers in a pouring rain—while, zounds, there is always a proper way of doing things."

"But, what could you expect," replied Saint Sauveur. "There is an attachment, in spite of every precaution the husband finds it out, and is angry; he kills you, or is killed himself. Such has been the case, is the case, and will be so for ever. You cannot make yourself a monk any the more."

"Zounds," said Miran, "I do not wish to to justify M. de Cernan at the expense of M. de Vaudry."

"Well, for my part," observed Monval, "I am more severe, I say there were faults on both sides."

"Aye, but you are twice a Cato," said Saint Sauveur.

And the three friends finished the evening in varied recitals which carried them far into the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

RECOUVRANCE.

If you have chosen this savage life to chastise your pride, good. But you have only done so perforce. You would be a courtier were you not a beggar."..SHAKSPEARE.

THE town of Brest was then, and is still divided into two quarters, distinct from each other, by the canal that forms the port, and traverses the arsenal.

Recouvrance, the quarter usually inhabited by sea-faring men and pilots, is a mass of low dingy houses, narrow streets, and blind alleys.

The *Rue des poutres* is one of the most comfortable in this miserable quarter. In the middle of this street a small low house might be seen, whose shutters of a lively green, and whitened walls, contrasted, by its exquisite neatness, with the neighbouring dirty tenements.

This house belonged to Madame Thomas, widow of M. Thomas, chief of the *cannoniers bourgeois*, and mother of M. Jean Thomas, captain of the fire ship, officer of the *blues*, and lieutenant of the Sylphid frigate, commanded as we know, by Count Henry de Vaudry.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and the widow Thomas, seated in a large, old-fashioned armchair, of gray Genoese velvet, with wide red stripes, was reading the work of Thomas a Kempis, with great attention, her feet resting on a little footstool, covered with the same material as the arm-chair. A spinning-wheel and a distaff were placed near to her, and showed that the pious woman had just interrupted her labours, to devote a short time to her holy reading.

Widow Thomas was about seventy years of age, and according to the fashion of Brittany, she wore a brown woollen gown, and her head was covered with a white beguin cap, fitting closely, and concealing the whole of her hair.

Her mild and gentle physiognomy declared the resignation of her soul; and the light falling upon her austere features, through the latticed windows, produced a beautiful Rembrant-like effect.

The walls of the chamber, although bare, were clean; and the floor, carefully washed and rubbed, was of a dazzling whiteness. In addition to this, at the extremity of the room, was one of those old-fashioned beds, of extraordinary size, with a cornice and four cushions, of gray and red serge, like that on the arm-chair. To conclude: above a huge chimney, containing a stove, was a bad portrait of the late M. Thomas, in the uniform of a master of canonniers; and below the picture hung a short, straight sword, with a large copper hilt, embossed with two anchors and the royal crown—it was the sword of the deceased.

Presently, the street-door opened; footsteps were heard on the staircase; and the son of the late Jean Thomas entered in haste.

Jean Thomas was a man of about forty years of age of a middling height, and broad and square shoulders. There was nothing remarkable in his features, except a strongly-marked knitting of his red eyebrows. His eyes were of a dull blue; and his ruddy face announced a vigorous and sanguine temperament.

Jean Thomas, lieutenant of the Sylphid frigate, wore powder, and was in the undress of the navy; his coat, waistcoat, and breeches, being blue, bound with Burgundy lace: white stockings, and shoes with large buckles, completed his costume.

When he entered, he threw his embroidered hat on a chair, unbuckled his belt, took off his sword, and approaching his mother, said, in a short, quick voice—"Good day, mother!"

"Good day, Jean!" said the widow, who, with her book in one hand, and spectacles in the other, seemed distressed at the silence which her son had only that instant broken.

"Good day, Jean!" she replied; "but what is the matter with you?—I can see, by the knitting of your brows, that you are in a bad humour."

"Yes, I am; and I have a right to be so."

"Ah, my dear boy!" said the widow, shaking her head sorrowfully; "my dear boy! you are always the same; never content with the lot bestowed on you by heaven. Have you not arrived, by its mercy, at a position in society unlooked for by people of our grade? Think of that, Jean, and thank heaven."

Jean rose; his hands were clenched, and his face purple

"People of our grade—our grade indeed—our grade! Is a gentleman made otherwise than I am? can his voice, more than mine, calm the fury of the tempest? when I say to my men at their guns, fire, are the balls less heavy or do they move more slowly against the enemy's ship, than if a gentleman had given the order?"

"Who has put that into your head, my son, of what do you complain? Since by your courage you have gained a rank far above what you could

have expected ; have you not even gentlemen under your orders ?"

"Yes, I have; and, by heavens, they obey me without speaking a word."

"Well, Jean, what more would you wish ?"

"You will drive me mad, mother! what I wish is, that they should obey me without appearing merely to obey my rank. What I wish for is quite another thing to that passive, cold, and insolent obedience, which tells me that they look on me as a *parvenu*, an intruder on their noble body !"

"You talk foolishly, Jean," said the widow with severity, "and you are quite right, you are a poor madman, an incurable madman, a madman devoured by envy and vanity, and that, my son, is the most miserable folly, for remember this, Jean, that were you to-morrow high-admiral of France, you would be none the less the son of Thomas, master of the *Canonniers Bourgeois*, that you would not be able to forget, that your father sold fish on the jetty."

"In the name of heaven ! in heaven's name! say not that mother ?"

"But I wish to say it to you," replied the widow, with an imposing air. "I wish to recall to your remembrance your origin, as humble as it is honest; to show you how vain and foolish are those sorrows that prevent your enjoying what you possess, by envying that you have not ; which the whole world cannot bestow on you a noble origin."

"I! I envy the nobles!—I despise them most heartily. Nobility, a hollow term, a stupid prejudice useful for the purpose of imposing on fool- and children. Nobility ! something extremely desirable, certainly ! titles obtained by baseness, prostitution, or infamy!"

"Be silent, sir, be silent." said the widow, sharply, "go, you are a convincing proof that envy is the mother of every vice, for it leads you to ingratitude ; are you not indebted, for the rank you now hold, to one of the nobility ? Is it not to the goodness of the late Marquis de Menneval to whom I was confidential domestic, that you owe your education and advancement ? Once more, Jean. I say be silent, for I read sad truths at the bottom of your heart, which you strive in vain to conceal, while they poison your existence," said the widow, gazing on her son with a sad and disheartened look.

"Ah, well, yes !" cried Jean, impetuously; "yes, I envy them, I abhor them, I detest them ; and, if anything is more odious to me than another, it is the necessity of being grateful to one of these insolent nobles, whose only use is to humble us, and to have the power of saying, 'look at that man, he is my creature, he was in the mud and I dragged him out of it.'"

"Oh, miserable man, it is horrible to hear you say so ! It is the most detestable pride, the bitterest envy, that causes you to hold language of such black ingratitude ; but once more consider what would have been your condition, considering your origin ? all your ambition would have consisted in being able to die, *masters*, like your father."

"Then why did they remove me from that condition. Curses on those who raised feelings in me that ought to have slept ; curses on those who did not allow me to be confounded with the rest of my *class*! as you call it; curses on those who raised up in me wants and ideas I can never satisfy, and which, as you have said truly, poison my existence, were it as great and glorious as that of Jean Bart! Curses at length on you, for not having smothered me in my cradle, rather than launching me into a life of regret and despair."

And Jean Thomas, mad, excited, and beside himself, paced the chamber with long strides.

At these last cruel words, the poor mother stood erect, calm, and imposing, and resting one hand on the arm-chair, she stretched out the other towards the door.

"Leave, sir," she said to her son, "the anger of heaven will fall on this house, for a son has cursed his mother—his mother!"—she repeated in heart-broken accents.

And a tear rolled down the furrowed cheeks of the widow.

It was unnoticed by Jean, and he continued to pace the chamber in an agitated manner.

But a third personage broke in upon this sad and solemn scene.

It was doctor Gedeon, surgeon major on board the Sylphid.

A fat little man, well powdered, with a red and shining face, dressed in an iron-grey coat turned up with crimson velvet, a waistcoat, also of velvet, and breeches the same as the coat.

Seeing the doctor, the widow seated herself, and took up her wheel, unwilling to make a stranger a witness to these family jars.

Jean, repressing a slight movement of impatience, approached the doctor and held out his hand.

"Good day doctor, what news?"

"None, excepting the arrival of our monster of a commander, he will be here, they say, to-day, or to-morrow."

This news seemed to produce a disagreeable effect on Jean Thomas.

"Why do you call the commander a monster?" asked the widow, without leaving her wheel.

"I call him a monster, first, because he is commander, and then again because he is a noble, a privileged person---an abuse---as the philosophers say, because he is one of those persons who sustain the priesthood, another description of monsters."

At these words the widow rose, put her wheel on one side, and said to her son, "I must leave you, Jean, I have business close by."

"But, mother, I am going out with the doctor," replied Jean, taking up his hat and sword.

"Ah!" said Gedeon, approaching the widow with a foolish and insolent laugh, ah! mamma Thomas, we shall always jangle when the priests are in question. I attack fanaticism wherever I meet with it."

"Come on, Gideon," said Jean, taking the doctor by the arm. "Good bye, mother," he added, drawing near to his mother to embrace her.

But the widow drew back with an offended look, saying only, "Good bye, my son."

Jean went out with the doctor.

It was at the beginning of January, the air was cold and sharp, the sky was blue, and the weather dry.

"What is the matter with your mother?" said Gedeon.

"Ah! bah!" replied Jean, "always the same thing, her infatuation for everything that is noble and priestly."

"What folly, my dear boy, why not tread these people under foot as I do. What say you, Jean, shall we go along the Paris road?"

"With all my heart," said Jean, who appeared wrapt in thought, and they moved towards the gates of Brest.

Doctor Gedeon was a dull parody of the un-

happy character of Jean Thomas, who was, at least, possessed of a rude and frank originality of envy and bitterness against all who were above him.

But Doctor Gedeon was one of those little and vulgar beings who instinctively cherish against all that is superior to them, that morose and cowardly enmity by which the poodle dog is characterized.

I beg pardon for this common place simile, but this comparison alone could explain the constant snarling of the doctor, at all exalted above him.

It was a fine day, and our two pedestrians, having reached the outer boulevards, met a sufficient number of people, chiefly sea-faring men, and soldiers. Jean Thomas, who was dressed in the insignia of his office, cast his eagle eye in every direction to see that every soldier and sailor saluted him in proper style, of these salutes Doctor Gedeon appropriated one to himself, deluding his imagination with these marks of subordination, which, in fact, where only addressed to his companion.

Jean Thomas, inflexible in the case of discipline, was more than any one strict in regard to the honours and prerogatives of his rank.

Two drunken sailors, holding each other according to custom, by the last joint of the little finger, and swinging their arms, came on singing in a loud voice, in the opposite direction to our two pedestrians.

It was delightful to view their good looking rosy faces expanded by wine and merriment, and their broad shoulders heaving with the chorus of some simple Breton song.

Jean Thomas was insensible to all this, and when he heard and saw them at a distance,

"Those rascals sing well," said he to Gedeon; "is it possible they don't see us?"

"I hope they do," said the doctor consequentially, "and that they intend to salute *us*."

"Salute *me*, you mean, doctor, the military salute is not due to you—it is allowed---but that is all."

"Why look you," said Gedeon, "I am ranked as an officer.

Before he could say more the two sailors were close upon them, and their huge lungs heaved with their sonorous voices.

Jean Thomas stopped short, bit his lips, looked furiously at the singers, and waited while they passed.

But the chaunters had their hearts too full of mirth and pleasure to notice the angry looks of the officer, and the poor devils passed him without uncovering.

"Do you not see me, you blackguards," said Jean Thomas, striking off the cap of one the dillettanti, with the back of his hand.

"Do you not see us, you blackguards?" said the doctor, imitating Jean Thomas.

"I beg your pardon, lieutenant," said one of the sailors, picking up his cap, "we did not see you, but it was all the same, for a gust of wind took off my cap for me."

"Yes, it was a comical breeze," said the other; "but it must not blow again, or a terrible storm will be raised."

"What do you say? you rascal," exclaimed Jean Thomas, rushing at the sailor to strike him.

"I say that I will—"

Jean Thomas interrupted him by a hearty box on the ear.

At the first words of this quarrel, a circle was made round the two sailors, the tumult increasing, and a crowd assembled, while two or three charitable souls went to fetch the sergeant of artillery.

At this instant, a courier, dressed in green, and covered with silver lace, appeared at the top of the road, which at this spot had a considerable descent, that prevented its whole length being seen.

The courier moderated his speed, and put his horse into a walking pace, as he passed through the crowd.

"Ho, ho!" he exclaimed, "room there for the equipage of the Count de Vaudry, captain of the frigate."

Soon afterwards the cracking of the whips of the postilions, who drove a large berlin with six horses, was heard; followed by luggage carriages, and two post-chaises, containing Henry's servants and baggage.

Scarcely had this little train of equipages reached the middle of the crowd, when the sergeant of artillery arrived with four soldiers, to arrest the delinquents.

Jean Thomas was more furious than ever, and the doctor, if possible, more angry still.

Seeing the disturbance, Vaudry ordered his carriage to stop, and leaning out of the window, asked the sergeant, what was the matter.

"Captain," said the serjeant, touching his hat, and seeing the cross of St. Louis, Henry wore; "they are two drunken sailors, who have insulted their superior officers.

"And that is the business of no one but their superior officer, sir," said Thomas arrogantly, and turning towards the count; "and I am their superior officer, first lieutenant of the Sylphid frigate, so go on, sir."

"Then sir," said Henry, smiling, "allow me to congratulate myself on this meeting, since it enables me to become acquainted with my lieutenant, whom I perceive perfectly understands discipline. Sir, I am commander of the Sylphid, Count Henry de Vaudry."

Jean Thomas looked displeased, but he saluted Henry, and said coolly to the serjeant, "See these men are put in irons."

"Lieutenant," said Henry, kindly, "will you excuse these poor devils. When a condemned man meets the carriage of the king he is pardoned; I, who am, I must acknowledge, somewhat of a king when afloat, am anxious just now to enjoy one of my most precious prerogatives, that of doing an act of mercy."

"If it is because these men have insulted me, captain, you wish to pardon them, you can do so, but I must have your order in writing," said Thomas with bitterness.

"I give no orders, I ask a favour, but we'll say no more about it; drive on, postilion," said Henry, throwing himself back in his carriage, and the equipages were soon out of sight.

Ten minutes after the last of the count's train had past, a post chaise appeared at the top of the hill, driving in the same direction.

In this chaise were Perez and Rita.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE RECEPTION,

Egmont. Well?
Richard. I am ready. and three messengers are waiting.
Egmont. Perhaps you think I have been too long? your face is a yard in length.
Richard. I have been waiting a long while for you, according to your directions.

THE day after the arrival of the couut at Brest, the clock of the arsenal struck eleven o'clock and three quarters, when lieutenant Jean Thomas, followed by Dr. Gedeon, knocked gently at the door of one of the handsomest houses in the Place d' Armes.

The lieutenaut was dressed in the full uniform of the royal service, a blue coat, with a double edging of gold lace on the sleeves, scarlet waistcoat, breeches, and stockings, and gold buckles.

The uniform of the doctor was plainer; it consisted of an iron-grey coat, turned up with crimson velvet, with lace at the button-holes only, crimson waistcoat and breeches, and blue stockings.

"Those rascals of valets he has in his suite have not heard us," said lieutenant Thomas angrily, and knocking a second time.

"They are deaf to common people like us," said Gedeon, with a malicious smile, and again knocking.

The door opened; and the lieutenant disdainfully shrugged his shoulders, at the sight of four or five footmen, in full livery, drawn up in an antechamber of the dwelling usually occupied by Count de Vaudry when he was at Brest; his fortune enabling him to keep a house in each of the three ports where his duties might call him.

One of the servants opened the door of a small room, where they found two valets-de-ch 'mbre, dressed in black, who asked Jean Thomas, if he was not the lieutenant of the Count de Vaudry.

"I am lieutenant of the Sylphid frigate," answered Thomas, sharply.

At this anwer, the servant introduced him and the doctor into a tolerably-sized room, telling them, that the count, who was engaged at present, would not keep them waiting long.

"On my hononr, he is worse than a minister," said the lieutenant, scornfully.

"These are the men who live upon the sweat of the people:—as if they could not open their doors themselves!" added Gedeon.

"Look here, doctor!" said Thomas, pointing out the furniture, the richness of which exceeded everything known in the provinces; "look at this luxury!—and all this for the purpose of passing two or three weeks in port. It is very ridiculous!"

"It is infamous!—atrocious!" replied Gedeon. "Without reckoning seven or eight rascally flunkies, he has the audacity to support, instead of making them members of society. Ah! if I were king, I would make these great lords find some trade for their valets—make them worthy locksmiths virtuous masons, or good shoemakers, to work gratis for the people, and still find time to attend upon their masters in their leisure hours. I like the dress of a mechanic much better than the livery of a courtier," cried the doctor, with a burst of philanthropy.

The lieutenant did not appear to pay the least attention to the doctor's systems of economy and philosophy; but he looked at his watch with malicious joy.

"Good: twelve o'clock," he exclaimed; "and I ordered the *etat major* to be at the commandant's precisely at noon. The officers are not here: they must be placed under arrest. Ah, my gentlemen! you will pay dearly for your insolent submission."

"Did you not inform the chaplain, lieutenant?" said the doctor.

"The Abbe de Cilby?" certainly.

"Will he be placed in arrest also?"

"No! as always is the case they are out of our reach."

"Leave it to me lieutenant, I will avenge you," said the doctor, gravely, "you shall see we will have a good laugh. I will embarrass him a little, I am an atheist by right, for I have studied anatomy, yes, let him talk his religious nonsense to me, I w ll say to him, Abbe, can you tell in what part of the body that which you call hope and charity are to be found—Oh! leave me alone, we will have a good laugh—bye the bye: do you know that thief Tartuffe?"

"Not at all, I never saw him, he came after my time, and they say he never goes out."

"A gouty fellow like the other," said the doctor.

At this instant the valet de chambre announced.

"The Abbe de Cilly."

"Here is the Tartuffe," said Gedeon, sneeringly, touching the lieutenant's elbow

But when the two comrades saw the man who entered, their features changed from an expression of merry scorn, to that of deep astonishment.

The Abbe de Cilly was a man about thirty years of age, of a lofty and noble figure, his face, though pale, had in it a severe kind of beauty, and his black costume of an ecclesiastic, was of the most approved cut.

But that which above all distinguished the man, was his penetrating look, the steadiness of which was embarrasing at times, darting like lighning from his large eyes, half veiled by their long eyelashes.

The easy and unembarrassed manner of the abbe, and the boldness in which he bore himself, declared that he had not been confined to the society of a seminary, for you saw none of that simple timidity in his actions, that affecting awkwardness, possessed by young priests, who have always been confined to a holy and chaste retreat.

The most striking expression of the abbe's features was an austere and disdainful gravity, and an air of conscious superiority that of itself overpowered those who looked on him.

This exterior, so opposite to that with which Doctor Gedeon had invested the future chaplain, stupified the two sailors.

The priest seated himself, without appearing to notice them, and once seated, he rested his forehead on his hand, and was buried in deep thought.

The doctor touched the lieutenant's elbow, as if he wished to say—

"You are a bold man, speak."

The lieutenant, overcoming the shock produced by the unexpected apparition, said in a sharp quick tone,

"Abbe, my orders were, we should meet here before twelve o'clock, it is now twenty minutes past, be more exact in future. Do you hear me, abbe?"

The abbe did not move, but kept his forehead still pressed on his haed.

"Abbe, the lieutenant speaks to you," said the doctor, emboldened by a look from Thomas, and gently touching the abbe's sleeve.

The latter slowly raised his head, and fixed on the doctor, one of his steady piercing looks, which seemed as if it would penetrate the very soul of him on whom it fell, and said in a calm voice—

"What is it? sir."

"This gentleman wished you to observe that I spoke to you, to say that I had given orders to meet-here at mid-day, I was astonished that you was not here, until twenty minutes past twelve," said Thomas.

The beginning of this speech of Thomas's was uttered in a clear sharp voice but as he concluded, the steady look of the abbe produced its usual effect, and in spite of his vexation and confidence, the lieutenant was obliged to lower his eyes, and hesitate as he uttered his last words.

"Well, sir?" said the abbe.

"Well, abbe," said Thomas, recovering himself, "I expect it will not happen again.

The abbe replied mildly—

"I was closing the eyes of a dying man, sir.

Then again resting his forehead on his hand, he relapsed into deep thought.

At this instant confused sounds were heard outside the door, and a valet de chambre announced successively—

"The Marquis de Miran!"

"The Chevalier de Monval!"

"The Baron de Saint Sauveur!"

"Faith," said the Marquis de Miran, "you must excuse us lieutenant, we have just left the inn where we took leave of the officers of the Brilliant, that puts to sea along with the Jusant."

"You are under arrest, gentlemen, for four-and twenty hours, my orders were for twelve o'clock."

The Marquis de Miran made a sign to his comrades, and they all three saluted the lieutenant without uttering a single word, and instantly began talking merrily to each other.

When the half-hour struck, the lieutenant could no longer restrain his impatience, and half-opening the door of the anti-chamber, addressed the valet, haughtily—

"The commander will not be visible then, today?"

"The count is engaged," said the servant.

The lieutenant closed the door violently, saying,

"There he is, shut up with some girl, his tailor, or his cook, while bold and hearty sailors are allowed to kick their heels in an anti-chamber, like so many lackeys. This is the extent to which he carries the insolence of rank and title."

These violent declamations were interrupted by the arrival of the count.

As soon as Henry entered, all the officers rose, and two new-comers were seen added to the etat-major of the frigate, Rumphius and his brother Sulpice.

Rumphius, according to custom, was immersed in his calculations, and buried in an arm-chair. Poor Sulpice, overcome with shame, and full of confusion at finding himself in such society, seeing also his brother's absense of mind, vainly pulled him by the sleeve, and said in a whisper, "Brother, here is the count de Vandry; brother, get up." But his trouble and his words were fruitless. Sulpice then contented himself by remaining near Rumphius, while the officers formed a circle round Henry.

"Gentlemen," said the count with gracious affability, "a thousand pardons for having kept you waiting, but I had some business to conclude, and you may judge of its importance, since it prevented my having the honour of seeing you sooner."

"It is true, commandant, we have waited for you half an hour," said Thomas, drily.

"Ah sir!" said Henry, smiling, "you ought rather to pity those who made you wait, than those who were kept waiting, is it not so? gentlemen," he added gaily.

"Zounds, commandant," said Saint-Sauveur, "you are addressing convertites, for we have this instant been placed under arrest for having made you wait."

"Ah, sir," said Henry, to the lieutenant, with an air of friendly reproach, "I hope I shall be more fortunate this time than in the first instance, and that you will not refuse me the pardon of these gentlemen."

"All men are equal, commandant, and I see not why I should extend my indulgence to a noble officer, rather than a poor sailor."

"The poor sailors are treated with particular kindness," said Saint Sauveur, in a whisper.

"Enough, sir," said Henry with cold politeness. "Be kind enough to introduce these gentlemen to me."

The lieutenant bowed, and began.

"M. de Miran, ensign of the vessel."

"De Miran bowed."

"It is a happy presage for me, M. de Miran," said Henry, "to have on board my vessel one of those officers who so bravely commenced the war by the immortal combat of the Belle Poule, and I am certain, Monsieur de Miran, the Sylphid will have no need to envy her glorious rival, and that she will finish the war as the Belle Poule commenced it."

Miran bowed and passed on.

M. Monval, ensign of the vessel.

"We are old acquaintances, M. de Monval, although we have never before seen each other,' said Henry, "and yet I always could tell where you were, be it board whatever ship it might, by the manner in which your guns were served: during the battle of the 17th of April, Admiral Guichen, whose aide de camp I was, said to me, when he pointed out the fire of the lower decks of the Robuste, which was so well supported that it appeared a continuous stream of fire, 'do you notice that battery, Vandry? I will lay a wager it is under the command of Chevalier Monval, nobody can work the guns like him.' It was you! Was it not?"

"Yes, commandant."

"I was certain of it. So that with you on board, M. Monval, I shall make many envious, but I cannot avoid telling you, I shall be delighted at it, for you make me selfish, sir."

Monval bowed and passed on.

"M. Saint Sauveur, garde du pavillon."

"I had the honour of seeing your father, the Viscount de Saint Sauveur, sir, at Versailles, he wished to recommend you to my notice, but unfortunately his recommendations were useless, for after the brilliant part you took in the fight between the Aigle and the Sandwich, you already appeared in my eyes as one of the most promising young officers in the Navy."

St. Sauveur bowed and passed on.

"Doctor Gedeon, surgeon-major," said the lieutenant.

"Doctor," said Vandry, "I reckon much on your services in peace, but in war you are our pro-

vidence, reckon upon me at all times, I beg of you, for any thing that can be useful for the benefit of the men."

Doctor Gedeon made an awkward bow, and was nearly falling, sword and all, among the legs of the officers.

"M. the Abbé de Cilly, chaplain," said the lieutenant, finally.

At sight of the abbé, Henry could not restrain a movement of surprise, for usually the office of chaplain was filled by members of the lower class of the clergy, whose behaviour and conduct were frequently little in harmony with the august duties they had to perform on board.

Henry, by means of his knowledge of the world, was able to classify a man in an instant, by his bow, his walk, or bearing, so that when he saw a chaplain of so novel a description, Henry was surprised: and when he addressed him, his voice had a tone of respectful consideration, which it had not possessed until that instant.

"Abbé," said Henry, saluting him, "I have always admired the sublime self-denial of those ministers of religion who condescend to partake of our dangers, and to dare the same perils as ourselves, in the admirable intention of soothing our last moments; allow me to assure you of my perfect respect and devotion for the holy mission with which you are entrusted."

The abbé made a slight bow, and said to Henry, "My time, count, is not my own; will you spare me if I retire?"

"Once for all, abbé," said Henry, "understand that I wish, while you are on board, that no one should have the right of calling you to account for a single instant of time so nobly employed."

And the count respectfully conducted him to the ante-chamber.

When Henry again entered the room, he saw that his officers were assembled round the unhappy Sulpice, who became pale, red, and purple, and all colours by turns, perspired terribly, and knew not how to look when he saw himself the object of the notice of every body.

"What! is it you, Sulpice?" said Henry to him kindly—"by heavens, I did not see you!—and you also, Rumphius—Rumphius!"

These words being pronounced in another voice than that of Sulpice, which appeared no longer to make an impression on the tympanum of the astronomer. These words, I say, recalled him to himself; he rose and looked round with extraordinary *sang froid.*

"A good day, Count; I was busy calculating the approximation of the curve of the little bear, called by the Hindoos, the feast of Maniwah—then turning towards his brother—"Really, Sulpice, you must have been extremely stupid not to have informed me of the presence of the Count."

"He did tell you," said Henry—"he told you, my old and worthy friend, but you were absorbed in the approximation."

"It is true enough that sometimes happens," said Rumphius, "for I am alone here among mankind, like the Brahmin Kidday."

"Gentlemen," said Henry, "allow me to introduce M. Bernard Rumphius to you, one of the most learned of our astronomers, he will perform the voyage along with us. Now, gentlemen, we are acquainted with each other. Your lieutenant is the bravest officer in the service. Yes, M. Thomas, I am acquainted with all your actions, from that of the Cerf lugger, by which you began your maritime career, to that sustained against the brig Alacrity, and for which you were so justly rewarded with the rank of captain of the fire-ship. I am now certain, gentlemen, that the name of our frigate will become one of the glories of our navy, and that the standard of France could not be confided to braver officers. This conviction makes me as happy as it does proud; for to have the command over you is more than rank—it is an honour."

"We all will perform our duty, commandant, for by the law, recompenses and promotion ought to be equal, for all, punishment or reward to every man, according to his merit," said Thomas, drily.

"So I understand it, sir," said the Count, smiling, "and to put it to the proof, I now again beg you will pardon these gentlemen, for I also made you wait, and yet I am not punished; I request there may be equality for all."

"The commandant well knows that I have no right to punish him, should he even keep me waiting at his door for six hours: I am under his orders, as these gentlemen are under mine, the punishment to which they are subjected is just, and they must submit to it, at least, unless the commandant gives me a formal order to raise their arrests; in that case, I will execute that order."

"Well, sir," said Henry impatiently, "since in spite of all you will have an order, I will give you one." Then addressing the young men, "May I hope, gentlemen, you will do me the honour of supping with me to-night, since you are no longer under arrest?"

The young men bowed.

"Of course I reckon on your company, sir," said Henry to Thomas, who had been previously invited.

"I cannot have that honour, commandant; I always sup with my mother."

"So much the better," said the officers, in a whisper.

"A praiseworthy motive, and I appreciate it, being at the same time sorry it will deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you one of our party."

"And you, doctor?"

"I cannot have that honour, commandant,' repeated Jean Thomas's echo. "I always sup with —with my clarionet master," said the doctor ingenuously, after having looked out for a probable excuse.

"Good heavens!" said Henry with a terrified look, "do you play the clarionet, doctor?"

"It is I believe allowable for every human being, considering the equality of mankind——"

"To play the clarionet—an incontestible fact, doctor, but it is not *allowable* for every human being to understand how to play; in that, nature is unjust, and I am very sorry for you, doctor."

"This evening, then, gentlemen."

And Henry, having dismissed his officers, retired to his apartment.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CABARET.

"You retired, very suddenly," said the innkeeper to his guest.

"And time it was when the devil seated himself amongst us."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

SIX days after the arrival of Count de Vaudry at Brest, two men were seated quietly opposite to each other, in a modest cabaret in the *Rue de la Souris* at Recouvrance.

The room was of a tolerable size, and furnished with long tables and oak benches being lighted by means of iron lamps attached to the wall, and warmed from an immense fireplace, that threw its vivifying heat and red glare almost to the extremity of the chamber.

Our two men had complacently drawn their little table close to the chimney, and there, with their feet upon the handirons, and their elbows on the table, they appeared to be in friendly conversation, having as a third party a large pewter pot full of some kind of foaming liquor. The eldest of the two might have been about fifty years of age, but his strongly built frame, well-marked features, and happy and healthy looks, bespoke a green old age, still full of nerve and strength.

This personage was carefully powdered, but wore no bag, his hair being fastened behind by a circle of leather; on which were seen two cannon, and an anchor embossed in copper, and surmounted by a royal crown. With the exception of this trifling warlike symbol, his costume was perfectly citizenlike. A coat of maroon-coloured cloth, chamois waistcoat, and grey breeches and stockings. To this you may add a deep white cravat, in which he every now and then buried his face, and nose and all, so that nothing could be seen at these times but his two little black eyes, and rough, pimpled forehead, the colour of which was heightened by contrast with his powdered hair.

As to his appearance, he possessed a most oracular look, and an assuming and often incomprehen-

sible mode of speaking, for he was in the habit of larding his conversation with a crowd of words, whose meaning he did not understand, although he himself imagined that his language was sublime and beautiful. Above all things, this man was dreadfully alarmed at appearing like a sailor, either in words, dress, or behaviour.

This personage, called Ivan Kergouet, was a native of Ploermel, master of the *cannoniers bourgeois*, on board the Sylphide. His companion was Perez; Perez was plainly dressed in grey cloth, but his thin and tawny features still bore the marks of his recent sorrows, and of the cruel emotions by which he had been agitated.

Master Kergouet, who was smoking a long pipe, was enveloped in such dense clouds of fume that he was completely concealed behind its thick veil, and the presence of the connonier bourgeois was only ascertained by the words, sententiously pronounced, that issued from the cloud, like the voice of an invisible oracle.

"You are completely wrong in not smoking, M. Charles [Perez had been obliged to change his name]. It is a false, a too scrupulous delicacy, for throughout nature, every thing has received the power of smoking, from the volcano, even to snow itself, with which I was particularly smitten in my last voyage to the North Pole, in 1768, on board the *Folle*, under the command of Captain Kerguelen. So, M. Charles, since snow smokes, which of all other things seems likely to do so, it appears to me that you commit a gross impropriety in not imitating it.

A dreadful fit of coughing, that almost strangled Perez, interrupted the speech of the gunner.

"You are right, M. Kergouet," said Perez, "but I cough because I am not accustomed to tobacco, I shall soon, however, learn to do so among you sailors."

"I have already told you, M. Charles," said Kergouet, issuing from his cloud in a great rage," "that I am not a seaman, but a citizen gunner, do you understand me, citizen, citizen, particularly diametrically, citizen."

You may understand this apostrophe of Master Kergouet, when you know that he was the true type of his corporation, a corporation, the members of which were horrified at the idea of passing for fighting men, not that they fought the less for all that but they were prodigiously particular as to their rights of citizenship.

"I forgot it, M. Kergouet."

"Enough; but remember you must not call people sailors, when they are not so. There is nothing less warlike than our duties—what is it we have to do? We clean our guns on board, I hope this is citizen-like enough; for to clean a gun or a counter is all the same thing. If there should be a battle, what then? Because we place a ball in our guns, on the top of so much powder; in the same manner as a grocer puts raisins or pepper into a screw of paper, and because we then set fire to it—just as we light a lantern—because we do this, they want to call us sailors, it is false, we are citizens, and our allowing ourselves to be present at a battle, has nothing in it but what is perfectly citizen-like."

"But when you board another vessel, M. Kergouet?"

"Board a vessel! board a vessel!" said the gunner, burying half his face in his cravat, as if in search of an argument, in which he was doubtless successful, for he continued with more animation than ever to assert his right to a *civil* position. "In boarding a vessel—well, what does that prove?"

"Listen, a clear case in point. Suppose you are quietly resting in your own house, well! All on a sudden a set of wretches attempt to drive you out forcibly, then you seize a sabre, a pike, a boarding pike, the first thing in fact that comes to your hand, and you fall upon the villains—very well, boarding an enemy is the same thing; the ship is the house in which we citizens dwell, they wish to drive us out of it, we have no inclination to be driven out; there is nothing very warlike in that, on the contrary it is extremely citizen-like, because, and you will not deny it, every citizen will protect his house, besides when you find yourself once on board—"

"Certainly, M. Kergouet," replied Perez. "But say, your commander, Count de Vaudry; is he a good man—a brave officer?"

"As far as a citizen like me can judge, M. Charles a good man, no; a brave officer, certainly; but he is confoundedly severe on board. On one occasion, as I am told, for I did not see it myself, he had a cannonier bourgeois flogged at the capstan, you understand me, a cannonier bourgeois—in defiance of our rights and privileges—this of course produced a commotion among the gunners, sir, and as the mutineers advanced against the commander, he killed one with his own hand, and wounded two others."

"And did the crew remain neuter, M. Kergouet?"

"Certainly, for although the commander is as hard as a connon ball, and although he has them flogged and put into irons every day, his crew are devoted to him, either through fear or affection, I don't exactly know which; it so happened on this occasion, they helped him to put down the connonier bourgeois."

"Then how can you make up your mind to serve on board, M. Kergouet?"

"Why, sir, we must serve here, or elsewhere—— and then it is a good frigate, the commander is a brave man, and after all, in war time, there is prize-money."

"What! have you a right to a share of the prize-money?"

"Are you having a joke with me? certainly, and so have you; as purser you have a share of one three hundred and ninety-seventh part; but this is not the only affair out of which you will get some nice pickings; there are the provisions."

"I swear to you, M. Kergouet, I never thought of making any thing by it."

"Why, it is simple enough, my dear fellow; look you, you find the head of the victualling-office, you say to him—'Sir, I wish you to purchase an interest in the victualling department, on condition of my having a situation as purser on board the Sylphide.' The chief of the office will say to you, 'for ten thousand livres, you shall have the situation. 'Agreed, sir,' you say, and you are made at once purser on board of our frigate, an excellent situation; you lodge in the cabose, and are ranked as a petty officer. After a citizen, it is the best berth on board the ship, for there are some people who are so superstitiously fond of being called sailors."

"Apropos of superstition, M. Kergouet, is it true that the sailors are still as deeply plunged as ever in gross and stupid error, as to believe in fate and omens?"

At these words the gunner buried his features so suddenly in his cravat, that nothing was to be seen excepting his eyes, which almost might be said to have darted lightning.

"What is the matter, M. Kergouet?"

Cavernous and inarticulate sounds, whose expression, however, was angry and threatening, were all that issued from the cravat, in which the face of the respectable gunner was engulphed.

"But pray tell me, M. Kergouet, have I offended you?"

"Well then, yes, you have," said the gunner, pulling down his cravat, and showing his features, purple with rage—"you have offended me; for what you call gross error, I believe in myself; I believe in it, for I have facts, examples; and when I hear a man with a grey beard, who ought to have a little more wit than a child, ask such questions, I am excited, I feel myself excited."

"But, M. Kergouet, be calm."

"Be calm! when I hear respectable opinions, in which I believe, treated as errors! Is it an error to consider it unlucky to sail on a Friday? Is the omen of the fire of St. Elmo an error? Is it an error to believe that when the curse of God is attached to a man, it is easy enough to cause the whole crew to be lost, if that man is not punished for his fault in some exemplary manner?"

"M. Kergouet! It is not M. Kergouet," cried the gunner in a rage. "Errors! well, I, Sir, I, will tell you of what perhaps you will call an error, an error I witnessed myself. Sir, do you hear me, I witnessed it; listen, but don 't vex me with your obstinate contradiction. It was during the voyage to the North Pole on board the *Folle*, a beautiful evening in August, about 77 deg. N. latitude, we found ourselves overtaken, completely overtaken by calms in the middle of a kind of basin surrounded by a chain of icebergs, all that my eye could discover in the distance was filled with mountains of ice, which said to us, or at least seemed to say, 'Unhappy mariners, the ocean has been long closed in this spot.'"

"As there was not sufficient wind to move the streamers on a fine lady's head-dress, the commander made up his mind to pass the night in the calm, when, about midnight, the wind got up and blew in gusts: it snowed dreadfully, and a crackling sound, six times louder than thunder, astonished us exceedingly, for it warned us that the ice was in motion, and that the enormous icebergs, riven by the wind, were beginning to travel as we say in our rivers; the fog was dreadful, and it was impossible at the moment, to devise any plan to get out of this tun, while every instant we ran the risk of being crushed between two mountains of ice, like a flea between your nails. All night long there were dreadful crashes; at each blow we expected to be engulphed; happily, towards the morning the wind fell, and at sunrise, we could distinguish mountains, which at first appeared as if leaning against each other, like novices in their first battle. But these mountains, separated by the wind, formed a kind of archipelago, in the midst of which was seen an open canal, almost free from ice, stretching out to a great distance.

The captain directed our course towards this canal, and we had sailed nearly three miles, when we perceived beneath one of those enormous cliffs of ice that bounded the canal, the top of the masts of a vessel that went floating—floating along——"

Here the voice of the gunner became more faint, his features assumed a look of terror, and his words were less high sounding.

"But, alas, sir, never had vessel masts and rigging like it; never were sails set in such a manner. For some minutes we saw this vessel fly before the freshening breeze, when suddenly it struck against a bank of ice, and stopped short.

"And our captain, would you believe it, sir? had the confounded curiosity to examine it more closely! he steered across the canal, manned the yauel, fixed upon me as one of the crew, and off we started.

"As we drew near this strange craft, I had not a drop of blood in my veins. Only imagine—its timbers looked as if they had been devoured by time, or destroyed by contact with the ice, no one was on deck, and it was covered with snow to an amazing height.

"The captain hailed the crew, several times. No one answered."

And Kergouet was silent, as if for the purpose of giving more solemnity to his story.

Perez was singularly interested at the simple manner in which the tale was told, the mysterious history also gained something by being related in a large and dismal room, feebly lighted by the half extinguished fire, and the flickering lights of the lamps.

The shadows of the two speakers appeared collossal as they stretched out upon the floor. Perez, excitable, like every Spaniard, could not avoid partaking of the species of terror which appeared to have taken possession of Kergouet, as he proceeded in his tale.

"No one answered," continued Kergouet, after a tolerably long silence. "The captain was about to mount the deck, when I thought of looking through one of the port-holes into the cabin, and I saw—I saw——"

Here Kergouet passed his hand across his pale forehead, and wiped away a few drops of perspiration.

"Well, what did you see?" cried Perez, whose heart beat in spite of himself.

"Well; I saw, as plainly as I see you, a man seated before a little table, on which lay a book and pens.

"I hailed him—ship-a-hoy!

"Nothing—he answered not, but remained motionless.

"The captain could contain himself no longer; he mounted the deck, and we removed the snow by which the entrance to the cabin that held the motionless man was hidden, who still made no answer.

"We entered the cabin, he did not move, at length I went up to him; he was dead, sir; a green moss covered his cheeks and forehead, and veiled his eyes. The unfortunate man was dead, frozen up by the horrid cold of those latitudes, he still held the pen in his hand, and his book was open before him. I never shall forget the last entry he had made:—

"11th Nov. *We have this day been shut up in the ice for seventy days.* The fire went out yesterday, and our captain, who has been the cause of all our misfortunes, *because he is accursed by God, has in vain endeavoured to rekindle the fire! his wife died this morning. No more, no——*"

"That is all, sir," said Kergouet, with an indefinable sentiment of fear. "The cold had seized on these unfortunate men, in the between-decks, we saw the bodies of the sailors, stiff and inanimate, but not disfigured by death, for the intense frost had preserved them, and by the side of the corpse of a woman was the captain seated on the floor; he held in one hand a flint, in the other a steel, and beside him lay some tinder.

"As you may well believe, there was but one cry

and that was, that the captain should remain no longer on board the accursed vessel, so we returned at once to the *Folle*. Well, sir, thus you see the effect of the divine curse upon a man; even the last chance of safety failed in his hands; there was steel, a flint, tinder; but this accursed man could not produce a single spark; cursed, cursed! oh, that they had but known of the curse before they sailed."

" What had he done, then?" said Perez.

" What had he done? twenty years since he was in the squadron of Marshal Conflans; he was a fated captain, as they call it, no one would sail with him the crews mutinied, and he was obliged at length to; leave the royal navy; his name was the Marquis de Verriac, a good officer, with this exception."

"This is very singular," said Perez, thoughtfully; and he remained silent for some time.

" My masters," said the innkeeper, " the curfew has rung, and I must close my house."

" Quite right," said Kergouet, paying for his liquor; " come come on, M. Charles," he exclaimed, shaking Perez by the arm.

" I follow you, M. Kergouet, and I will see you to your quarters."

" Come along; well, good night; and don't dream of the man with a green visage; but it was a dreadful story, was it not?"

" Oh, terrible," said Perez. Then he cordially shook his new friend by the hand, and said as he retired, " To-morrow I will introduce you to the Sylphide."

And Perez went to look after Rita, who was impatiently awaiting his return.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WOMAN WITHOUT A NAME.

"There I again met with that fatality which pursued me every where through my social life."—DUCHESS DE DUMAS.

IN a modest lodging in the Rue de L'Arsenal, Rita, in the attire of a man, waited for her attendant Perez soon made his appearance; he had just parted with the cannonier bourgeois, and related the whole conversation to the duchess, without omitting any thing, not even the history of the ship enclosed in the ice, and the victim of the anger of heaven.

The tale particularly attracted the notice of the duchess, who, rising quickly, looked for the book of José Ortéz on poisons, and turned it over eagerly.

After a few minutes she made a sign to Perez to read the passage she pointed out with her finger. This passage was as follows:—" And their features became livid, and their sleep was disturbed by horrible dreams, and they lost their strength and gaiety, and from brave men they became cowards, and the hands of the young trembled like the hands of age, and they grew meagre, and became like spectres, and their wandering eyes rolled in their orbits, and they soon afterwards died, in the midst of a horrible delirium."

" Yes, by Habb'ay it was true, brother, for the Heppa'yshad had sprinkled the powder Tshettik,* of Java, over their festival. And the mortal powder, when it fell on it, changed their merry feast into a funeral repast."

Then, looking at Perez, Rita said to him, " The situation you hold on board is to serve out their rations to the crew, is it not, Perez?"

" Yes, madame."

"Well, listen to me. Can not you, also, Perez, change their merry feasts into funeral repasts, and make this crew, now so brave, so strong, and so young—cowardly, weak, and fearful?—so that if they fall in with an enemy, they will refuse to fight and thus dishonour *him*, and seeing their captain free from the mortality that decimates them, the superstitious sailors will imagine him the cursed man, who draws the vengeance of heaven upon them. For, according to your account, *he* does not partake of the provisions of the crew—only imagine then the discontent we shall be able to create, also, by relating his murderous duels, and his infamous seductions. Do you not already see him dishonoured by a shameful flight, exposed to the rage of his sailors; and after that, I know not, but I can calculate on his suffering, a long and horrible agony —Perez——"

" It is a mad project, madame," said Perez, with severity.

" Mad, Perez?"

" Yes, madame, mad; for it resembles that you formed in Paris, which so desperate and cruel a fatality overthrew. Mad, because every project thus imagined in the delirium of a hatred that would be terrible, if it were content with that which is possible, becomes powerless when you seek too much. —Pardon, pardon my freedom, madame; but you know I am devoted to your vengeance, body and soul, because my family has been devoted to yours for three centuries—because it is an inheritance of devotion, of which I felt the instinct before I could reason on it—because it is impossible for me to separate myself from your joys or sorrows—because to strike you, is to strike me—because to insult you is to insult me, for those who have resigned themselves to servitude, have no other honour but that of their master, madame—and it is because I look upon your vengeance as my own, that I say to you, you behave strangely to this man; for, consider, that, by wishing to render your vengeance complete, he will perhaps escape you entirely. Besides the dangers and chances of war may anticipate your revenge, and if he should meet with a glorious death in honourable fight, before you could execute your project, would you not afterwards reproach yourself for having sacrificed so much to gain so little, and then, again, you would have no hand in his death—would you not bitterly grieve at not having smote him yourself, and more than all, because life is everthing to this man, madame—believe me, he is happy."

" But you do not understand me, Perez; it is because I know that he will be unhappy. I wish him to live—and while unhappy, is there any pleasure in life? Perez! Suppose I killed him to-day—he would suffer pain for an instant, and that would be all; on the contrary, let me make his whole existence miserable, and the life I leave him will be the cruel instrument of his punishment."

" But, madame, should he be killed in battle—it is a time of war.

" It is impossible, Perez, I hear a voice, a conscience, a conviction, that tells me he will not die, which tells me, I shall be avenged, as I wish to be avenged.

* The Upas Zinti, called the Tshettik at Java, is found in the Indian archipelago. This poison is of a gummy nature; like hydrocyanic acid, it produces in the animal system the phenomena we have just described.

"Zounds! madame, it is as bad as breaking your own head against the wall, to build your vengeance on so weak a foundation, when you have only to say one word, to see this man dead to-morrow, in an hour—in an instant!"

"This man dead! this man dead! excellent vengeance, by Satan!—why this man once dead, how should I pass my life, I, miserable wretch! And you believed I would blot myself out of the world, descend into the tomb before I was dead, feel, in the extremest manner, every thing that is ignominious and abject, in a life of the greatest infamy, and that, for the purpose of seeing this man suffer, while I was able to plunge a dagger into his heart? Truly, Perez, your head wanders—I am sorry for you."

"Oh, curses on the day when I listened to your prayers, madame, curses on the day on which you precipitated yourself for ever into an abyss of sorrow and despair. Curses on myself, for not having killed this man—curses on myself, for not having been able to say to you—'You are avenged, Madame la Duchesse. Misery, misery upon me, for your hatred will never be assuaged, madame, and all return towards the past is impossible."

"And that is what I wished, feeble and timid man—that is what I wished, that all return towards the past should be impossible, and so it is, and I bless Satan for it; for I feel a belief within me, that supports a hope that leads me on. After all, Perez, if this vengeance appears foolish to you, take no part in it—let the Duchesse d'Almeda be dead to you, as to the rest of the world. Return to Spain. You can live happily in our duchy, Perez, for you will find in my last will, I have not forgotten your good and faithful services. Go, Perez, go. I shall part with you without anger, for you have suffered much for me, and it was noble and excellent in you, Perez."

"Oh, madame, madame," said the Spaniard, heartbroken, and feeling his eyes fill with tears.

"No, no! pardon me, Perez, my good and faithful servitor. No, I have wronged you; you will not leave me, I know—you will die at your mistress's feet. I am sure that your death will complete a life of devotion and sacrifices. And besides, I cannot make you comprehend, what I feel within me, all the force and power of that revelation, for which I cannot account, but which exalts, inspires me, and gives me the certainty of success. It is foolish, superhuman, if you like, but it exists. And then has not the past given me a right to trust in the future, for has it not always seconded my efforts? Perez, observe, he has fought two duels—in one he killed his antagonist, and he escaped untouched in both. Then again—they arrested us, they took our gold from us, but I was able to conceal my diamonds, and place them in your hands. They imprisoned us—you helped me to escape, but we were able to leave Paris without interruption. Has not all this, Perez, something marvellous in it? Does it not all tell us, that fate protects and watches over me. And then that faith I have within me—tell me, is it not faith such as this that makes great events and great men? Is it not this faith that causes the success of the most gigantic projects? And while a stupid crowd rails and laughs at it. Perez, those who are inspired by this faith, follow the mysterious symbol that guides them: invisible to all others, but blazing forth for them alone;—it was faith like this, Perez, that made Columbus so strong when in the midst of the cries of his furious crew, calm and serene, he said to them—'America is there.' Who revealed that to him, Perez? What gave him that incredible confidence, if it were not that deep, internal, and inexplicable voice, I feel—but not more inexplicable than other mysteries of our nature. No, believe me, Perez, my project is good, and my vengeance certain; but you must swear to me, by the life of thy mother, to do whatever I ask you."

"Madame, I have said all that a true servitor could say; since such is your belief follow it; I swear to obey your orders."

"Well, then, Perez, promise me to make no attempt upon *his* life—*his* life, unless I direct you—agree to that; promise to execute all my orders, be they what they may."

"I swear it, Madame."

"I still find you my loyal squire," said Rita, and they separated.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JEAN THOMAS.

"Oh! it is sad and shameful, go! you are but a brute, and possesssed with insensation, to imagine I would quit my prey. If I had to go barefoot to meet thee at the extreme boundary, far as it is, and bidden as you might be, I would go. Dread my love, Garue, it is as the sea.—ALFRED DE MUSEL.

THE coach to Lambesclcq was about to leave Brest, when a tall man, enveloped in a long sailor's cloak, accompanied by Jean Thomas, placed his hand on the door, exclaiming, "One instant there; you are in a great hurry to start; you devil's own coachman."

"Ah, sir, I was going to start; we did not expect you, captain," said the *automedon*, touching his fox-skin cap.

"Well, here I am; wait an instant," said the captain. Then, turning to Thomas, "It is understood then, Thomas, you look after my wife, and take care of the corn."

"I make you no promise of preventing any thing occurring, for I am no match for the cunning and falsehood of a woman; but what I know you shall know, what I see you shall be told of, whether good or evil; on the faith of Thomas I will hide nothing from you."

"That is agreed, then, Thomas; if she behaves well I'll treat her rarely; if ill, my name is Jacques-le-Rouge; that says every thing; adieu, Thomas," added the captain, at the same time throwing himself into the coach, which moved off heavily.

Jean Thomas, after seeing the lumbering vehicle depart, bent his steps towards the ramparts.

As he crossed the court-yard he fell in with Doctor Gedeon. "Egad, Thomas, I was looking after you," said the Doctor.

"What for?"

"To ask you to render me a service."

"Well, go on."

"It's a vexing affair; Thomas, the *monster* has ordered me."

"Well, what is it, what monster?"

"The commandant."

"Go on."

"Well, then, the monster has ordered me to pay a daily visit to the frigate, to ascertain the state of health of the crew, and as it was a piece of folly on the part of this vile courtier, why, I—I—'

"It was his order, and you must execute it, he is your superior officer, and you must obey," said Thomas, harshly, interrupting the doctor.

"Oh, certainly, so I do obey him—only yesterday, by accident,—only consider—but I hardly know how to tell you—you have such strange notions about love."

"Well, go on."

"Well, then, yesterday, I had a rendezvous with a little *bit of muslin* at Recouvrance—a girl who adores me."

"You—you old, and ugly ass,—she adore thee! why you have lost your senses, or else you pay rather high—but go on."

"You are so full of your jokes, Thomas," said the doctor, hiding his vexation under an air of raillery, "always something to laugh about—but it is not that. Not to miss my appointment, I have neglected two visits on board, and the *monster* is so fond of discipline, that perhaps he will place me under arrest, and then I shall not be able to keep my appointment to-morrow; but if you would only just tell the commander, that you ordered me to go to the hospital at Kerlo, three leagues from hence, to visit the sailors who are to be sent to us as recruits, I shall not be punished,—and then——"

"Are you not asking me to tell a lie?"

"It is not telling a lie, Thomas, it is obliging a friend."

"Is it not a lie, and that to enable you to excuse one folly, and give you an opportunity of committing others?—never——"

"But, Thomas——"

"Never! you have deserved your punishment, and you must submit to it."

"But friendship——"

"I do not know what friendship is when in service."

"But——"

"Adieu!"

And Jean Thomas left the doctor, disappointed but not much surprised, for he had long known the intractable and inflexible character of the lieutenant.

In fact, Jean Thomas was a man of severe and rigid virtue, and almost fabulous austerity of manners, his probity was undoubted, his value above all proof; but if his soul was as pure as steel, it was also as cold and hard.

Incapable of weakness, he exposed and attacked, without mercy, the faults of others; no human consideration could prevent his doing his *duty*, as he called it, and fulfilling his mission, by pursuing vice or wickedness in all men, and in every place.

Owing to his merit alone, the rank he held, a rank of considerable elevation for one of his class, the only fault of Jean Thomas was a deeply rooted envy, and a detestable hatred of all those who were superior to him by birth. And yet, had Jean Thomas been born a nobleman, his aristocratic pride would have been pitiless, and this he also proved by the severity with which he treated his subordinates.

But, after all, this fault really injured no one but himself; like an evil conscience his concentrated envy devoured him. But he never committed himself in any part of his duties, for, brutally as he behaved towards the sailors and officers under his orders, he was incapable of perpetrating the least injustice; but at the same time, they never needed to expect the least favour, if they failed in their duty.

Even when not on actual service, his strict and imperious virtue gave way before nothing; neither expediency nor common custom were looked upon by him as an excuse.

Irreproachable in his life, he wished others to be so also. Looking upon indulgence as weakness, he considered those who tolerated a crime as accomplices; he would have made no distinction between a murderer and the man who did not give the murderer up to justice.

To sum up all, Jean Thomas was the type of a rigorously virtuous man, virtuous without conscience, virtuous to the very letter, if I may use such a phrase, as it alone can paint with truth the intractable virtue of the lieutenant.

Thomas consequently could not calculate on a single friend, if we except Captain Jacques Lerouge, for a kind of similarity of character had brought them together.

Jacques Lerouge, captain of a privateer, commenced his maritime career in the merchant service, and thus many years previously he became acquainted with Jean Thomas. Without equalling the lieutenant in rigour, Captain Lerouge was a brave sailor, acting with scrupulous probity on board a privateer in time of war, and as captain of a merchantman during peace.

As an instance of this, during the late war, Lerouge commanded a beautiful privateer, a brig of twenty guns; he gave chase, and overtook a superb English three-masted vessel laden with spice, and on her return from the Indies. Finding herself taken, the vessel hoisted a flag of truce, and sent an officer on board the brig, to tell Captain Lerouge that a neutral vessel coming from Spain, had brought word that peace had been signed. The only proof of the truth of this assertion was the word of honour of the officer, and with this Captain Lerouge was satisfied, and allowing the English vessel to proceed on her course. The ship and cargo were worth a million, and she was taken by a brother commander less scrupulous than Jacques Lerouge.

Such was the only friend Jean Thomas possessed; for in the royal navy he could not reckon a single instance; his behaviour was so austere, his manner so taciturn, and his language so coarse, that after the expiration of a week or ten days, he found himself at *Coventry*, no one would speak to him.

His connection with the sailors was even still more unpleasant; excessively severe, overlooking nothing, treating them with hauteur and brutality, he was heartily execrated: but the influence of his bravery and firmness was so great, that it enabled him to keep them in complete subjection.

It was to *this* Jean Thomas Lerouge had confided the surveillance of his wife.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SHOWING HOW TRADE IS THE BOND OF MANKIND.

VALERIA. O' my word, the father's son; I'll swear 'tis a very pretty boy.—SHAKSPEARE.

IT was shortly after the Count's arrival at Brest, he occupied, as we know, a small house in the *Place d' Armes;* on the day of which we are speaking, Henry was engaged with his upholsterer, who had to fit up the balcony of the cabin of the Sylphide.

"This *artiste*, a sworn master of his corporation, was called M. Doquin; he had the most perfect air of good-nature, intelligence, and honesty, but his eyes exhibited the signs of recent tears: he might

have seen some fifty years, and he now stood respectfully before the count, to receive his last instructions.

"As to the Chinese goods," said Henry, "you ought to receive them from Paris by to-morrow at the latest, as well as the Indian stuffs for window-curtains. I Beg you will be as expeditious as possible, for we may be under orders for sailing every instant."

"The count may rely on my diligence."

"Apropos. I shall want a swinging chain to suspend a vase of scent by in the little bath-chamber I have on board; and do n't forget to put some flower-pots between the windows."

"Allow me to observe, M. Le Count, that the flower-pots have been there since the morning."

"Quite right, M. Doquin; but have you brought with you that little account I have so often asked for?"

"Since M. le Count condescends to speak of it, here it is; it amounts to three thousand two hundred livres; but if I might deign to ask a favour of M. le Count——"

"Do so, M. Doquin."

"I am on the very brink of ruin, M. le Count, the victim of a dreadful bankruptcy; and if, between this and to-morrow, I am unable to raise ten thousand livres, I shall be dishonoured; and worse than all, M. le Count, I shall be obliged to discharge twenty workmen; and in the midst of so much distress and cold weather, it is dreadful to contemplate the consequences."

There was such a deep expression of sorrow in the accent of the poor man that the count was touched; for it was evident the misfortune was real, that he was an unfortunate honest man, who would not cry out for help excepting at the moment of perishing.

Henry wrote a few words on a piece of paper, folded it, and handed it to M. Doquin, saying to him, "Here is a cheque for five hundred louis on M. Gerard, my banker at Brest; you can put it down to the account of anything you may supply for the future. I feel too happy in obliging a man like you, M. Doquin."

"They did not deceive me when they spoke of your generosity, M. le Count; my poor little child will be indebted to you for more than his life—for his honour; and my workmen for their daily bread," said the upholsterer, full of gratitude, and with his eyes swimming in tears, throwing himself at the same time on his knees before Henry, who could scarcely repress his laughter.

Scarcely had the upholsterer left the room, when the count could contain himself no longer.

"It is enough to kill me," said Henry, bursting with laughter—"His child indebted to *me* for his life! He has no notion how truly he speaks. But after all," said Henry, with a more serious air, "this rogue perhaps knows all about it. His ruin, his bankruptcy, may be only a trick to obtain five hundred louis from me. Zounds! Madame Doquin is rather expensive; I could have for the same sum two opera girls, and one from the *Italiens*—but after all, I am certain, Madame Doquin is a very respectable woman, and her husband is not without taste; so considering all things, it is not too dear, and certainly my cabin will be charming; and Doquin had a very good notion when he placed mirrors in the shutters, so that when they are closed, they reflect every thing in the place. At all events, I must endeavour to render my prison as agreeable as possible: not that I am weary on board during a gale or a battle; but in calm weather it is diabolical; happily I have some resource, I think, in my officers, the young men appear very well. That abbé, also, I like his appearance; he has all the manners of a man accustomed to the best company, but he seems rather proud, and would hardly reciprocate my advances; and then there is something about him that mystifies me completely—he has a gun-shot wound on his left hand—it must be a gun-shot wound—I knew it well by experience. But how the devil should an abbé come by a gun-shot wound on his left hand? Perhaps, indeed, he has not always been an abbé—I should think, from his manner, that was the case. But then again, he does not appear above thirty years of age, and at that age it is a strange profession, if he is sincere. His appearance is excellent—but why does he wear no powder? it gives him a very singular air. Why, however, should I trouble myself about it? I shall, have plenty of time to find out this living riddle, when once we are on board."

At this instant the faithful Germaux appeared at a little secret door, and said mysteriously to Henry:

"M. le Count, may some one come in?"

"Ah!" cried Henry, "she could not have arrived at a better time—let her come in."

Scarcely had the count spoken, before the little door was closed. Germaux had disappeared, leaving in his place a female enveloped in her hood, under which could be seen merely a pair of large black sparkling eyes.

"Take this off, Georgette," said the count, removing the mantle from the female, "by the by your husband has just been here."

And seating Georgette on his knee, he removed the cloak that concealed her pretty, round, and healthy face, rather too large and highly coloured, it is true.

"What! has he just left here?" said Madame Doquin.

"Ah, M. Henry, he has not told you of his misfortune."

"Yes, yes, he has told me all, and I know all; and it is all remedied too; "we'll talk no more of that, that's over," said the count, chafing Georgette's fat but rather red hands between his own.

"Ah! M. Henry, I know Doquin is far from obstinate, and that is a pleasure, for all men are not so quiet as he is. Oh, if you did but know what has happened at Recouvrance; it is enough to turn your blood to think that people could be so wicked.',

"Explain yourself, my dear," said Henry, passing his arm rather too familiarly round the ample waist of Madame Doquin.

"Then this is it, M. Henry; perhaps you don't know Jacques le Rouge? Now do listen, Henry."

"I am listening."

"Well, then, Jaques le Rouge is the captain of a privateer, who made a great deal of money in the course of the last war. Two years ago he married the daughter of Madame Binan, the dress-maker, as charming a little woman as I know, fair and pretty as a hart. But alas! to-day—"

"Well," said Henry interrupting her, "has Jacques le Rouge (the *Red*) become Jacques le Jaune (the *yellow*), Jacques le Doquin? Jacques le—"

"Be quiet, M. Henry, how wrong it is of you to say that of poor Doquin, one who respects you so much."

"Well, go on; the pretty *blonde* and Jacques le Rouge, what have they been doing?"

"Well, Madame le Rouge, who was a thousand times too good to be married to such a monster as the captain, a downright brute, forty years old, ugly stingy, and then for manners—ah!"

"Well, but what has happened?"

"Well, then, M. Henry, that villain Jacques le Rouge tormented his wife to such an extent, that the unortunate woman—Died on account of it?"

"No, M. Henry, she did not die on account of it; but she was so very miserable that she was obliged, after the atrocious behaviour of that tiger; obliged to take a lover—oh! was he not a dreadful man!"

"A monster, he ought to be expelled society," said Henry, with an admirably serious look.

"And the unfortunate Madame le Rouge, did she meet with the consolation she sought after?"

For two months every thing went on well, M. Henry; but yesterday, it seems, all was discovered. The lover is a solicitor's clerk, a very handsome lad, and always so well dressed that you might take him for a secretary; his name is Boniface Zeblot; his father farms the salt duties."

"Zounds, Madame Doquin, you are very circumstantial; so many particulars about M. Boniface—Sabot—Cablot! what's his name?"

"Oh! M. Henry, I swear I would rather die than be unfaithful to you—don't be vexed at what I said."

"Oh! as for that, my dear," said Henry, scornfully, and rather piqued, "I hope you do not presume to imagine that I am jealous of you. You may take M. Cablot from Madame le Rouge, if you feel inclined; you are quite welcome to folks of that kind. Only love me when we are together that is all I require." Then, noticing her tears, he conti-

nued, "Nay, don't cry, Georgette, but why did you say you was faithful to me? who was talking any such nonsense to you? Come, go on with your story, Jacques le Rouge discovered all, then?"

"Yes, M. Henry," said Georgette, wiping her eyes, "that is, *he* has not discovered it, but one of his friends; one you know very well, M. Jean Thomas."

"My worthy lieutenant?"

"Yes, M. Henry, and, as he is a great friend of the captain's, they are afraid he will tell him when he comes back."

"The captain is not here, then?"

"No, M. Henry, he has gone to Lambeseleq for five days; and during that time the poor woman and her lover were seen outside the town. Your M. Jean Thomas played them this beautiful trick. And it is whispered all over Recouvrance, that he will inform Captain le Rouge, who is expected every hour. Ah! poor women! who would marry after this!"

A slight sound was heard at the secret door.

"Who is there?" said Henry.

"A letter for the Count, to be delivered immediately," said Germeau's voice.

"Put it under the door."

And a letter appeared on the carpet. Henry opened the letter and read:—

"Monsieur le Comte,—An old servant of a friend of your father, the late count, begs in the name of all that is most sacred, you will come to her to prevent a dreadful occurrence. It is a case of life and death. M. le Comte. The person who has taken the liberty of making this request, is the mother of your lieutenant, the widow Thomas. In the name of heaven, count, come—every minute's delay may be the cause of a most dreadful event."—The Widow Thomas. Rue des poutres, No. 7, Recouvrance.

"What the devil can all this mean?" said Henry. "Certainly I will go, and without delay. Adieu, Georgette,—come to-night—here, quick—put on your mantle, and go down the back stairs."

"Oh, heavens! perhaps it is concerning poor Madame Lerouge," said Georgette, terrified, as she hastily put on her cloak.

"It is on that account, child, I must leave you. Adieu."

Then ringing for Germeau, who soon made his appearance.

"Show madame the way out, send for a chair, and bring me my things. I must go this instant."

CHAPTER XXXI.

VIRTUE.

"Truth never changes:—who is it has changed, you or us?
The Abbe de Mennais.

The reader has certainly not forgotten the description of the modest lodging of the widow Thomas, it was in that apartment the scene we are about to relate took place.

The features of the widow, usually so gentle and calm, betrayed an extraordinary state of agitation. Burning tears rolled down her furrowed cheeks; her hands trembled; and the wheel overturned close by her side, testified the violence of the altercation that had taken place.

Before her, on her knees, embracing her with both her arms, and hiding her head in the widow's bosom, a young female with dishevelled hair uttering half smothered sobs, was bending.

It was Pauline, the wife of Captain Lerouge.

At the other end of the chamber, seated in a chair, was Jean Thomas, with his arms crossed, affecting an appearance of ease which his paleness falsified.

"Calm yourself," said the widow to the disconsolate woman, "calm yourself, my dear child, my son is not cruel enough for that, believe me. And besides," she added, in a whisper, "I have written to the commandant—he is coming, and he can easily prevent his committing such an atrocity."

"Oh, madame," said the miserable woman, lifting up her handsome features, bathed in tears,—"oh, madame, my husband will kill me—he will kill me I am sure."

"Then your crime will be punished as it ought to be," said Thomas in a hollow voice."

"Oh God! M. Thomas, why do you wish me so much harm? I never did you any wrong;" said Pauline, in a supplicatory tone.

"I wish you no harm. You have committed a crime, and I must tell my friend of it: it is my duty, and I will do so."

"How cruel you are, Thomas," said the widow. "You have no compassion, if the sight of so much sorrow does not touch you—if you are cruel enough to deliver up this poor creature to her husband's vengeance."

"Courage. mother—courage, mother! this is excellent from you—you, who always have heaven's name in your mouth," said Jean Thomas, "defend her crime, and attack a virtuous man who performs his duty!"

"Your duty, Thomas—your duty! Is there no medium between the stern intolerance you proclaim, and a criminal complicity? Who disputes your right to lead your friend's wife into a better train of thought? Try, sir; but do not cause this poor girl to be assassinated, without allowing her time to repent. If you have a heart in your breast, this consideration will affect you."

"I never truckle with my duty, mother."

"Your mother? Yes, your mother—but she blushes at imagining she has given birth to so unnatural a being as you!"

"Blush, then, that your son is an honest man;—blush that he possesses stern and unshaken truth. I am the grandson of an itinerant dealer in fish, am I not, mother!" with a bold and bitter laugh. "Well, for a low bred fellow, for a worthless plebeian, virtue is nobility, and by heaven I can say, after this manner—I am as noble as a Montmorency. If they do not call me Thomas the gentleman or Thomas 'the lord, they can say, 'Thomas the honest man.' It is a misfortune for you, mother, but still it is so."

"And I tell you, it is not the love of virtue that makes you act in this manner, but a dreadful hatred you cherish against every thing, because you envy all.—Yes, your rage requires a victim. It is because your pride tortures you. Some one must feel the sufferings you endure, and virtue answers as a pretext. Yes, I tell you, you profane the word."

"My conscience dictates my duty to me, mother," said Thomas, "a fault has been committed, and the guilty shall be exposed. The honour and happiness of my friend before all, mother!"

"But, miserable man! you do not think of th happiness of your friend by acting thus; for if he

knows nothing of it, if he has confidence in his wife......why should you reveal this dreadful secret to him? Go, sir, and believe that, sufficiently punished by this terrible lesson, the poor child will return to her duty—to her home.—I promise it to you; so say nothing, and the peace of this family will not be broken—Thomas—my son, your mother beseeches you—save this unhappy woman from death, her husband from crime, and yourself from fearful remorse."

"You are joking, mother; remorse? When I defy any one, be he who he may, to prove to me that my conduct is not in every respect that of a rigid but upright man."

"Oh, Monsieur Thomas," said Pauline, crawling on her knees towards the sailor, "Monsieur Thomas, I was wrong, I know, very wrong—my fault is inexcusable; yes, I am a wretch, and deserve to be despised, but not to die. A little pity, Monsieur Thomas! Do not tell him; I swear by heaven, by your mother, that I will pass my life—all my life, in repentance, and in making my husband as happy as I can. I will bear every thing from him without complaint. Oh, M. Thomas, pity—pity!"

"No pity for crime. You should have remained innocent, and spared yourself these fits of terror; but it is too late," said Thomas harshly.

"But M. Thomas, it is never too late to save a poor creature from death," cried Pauline, in broken-hearted tones, and clasping her hands together, "for you know when he hears it he will kill me."

"You have been criminal, and my friend shall be informed of it. As to the consequences, that is no business of mine: your supplications are useless. Once again—I will do my duty."

"Oh God, there is nothing left me, then, but death!" said the captain's wife; and she fell to the ground in a state of insensibility.

The widow, notwithstanding her great age, flew to the assistance of the poor woman, and exclaimed, as she raised her hands to heaven,—"oh, pardon this madman! who has been the cause of all this?"

"Madman, a virtuous man! Ah, that itru e enough, so the world thinks; but I am not one of the world," said Thomas bitterly.

"Leave, leave this place, do you hear me? leave my home, sir!" cried the widow, pointing to the door."

"I am here, in my father's house," said the lieutenant.

"If you do not leave this instant, I will call for help, unworthy boy."

"Unworthy, mother, for having said to crime 'thou art crime?' Unworthy, for having done my duty as an honest man! But really mother, your great age has made you—

"My great age has injured my reason—my great age has made me foolish? Is that what you mean to say?" cried the widow, interrupting him. "What, you insult your mother! Alas, alas! I curse you, wretch: oh, be thou cursed.'

At this instant the door opened—the Count entered.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SACRILEGE.

"It is a sacrilegious act.,"—MEYERBEER.

THE noise made by the door in opening, when the Count made his appearance, brought back Pauline to her senses; for the unhappy woman, imagining she heard her husband, threw herself at the widow's feet, exclaiming, "he will kill me—oh madame—oh, save me!"

But soon perceiving her mistake, still kneeling, she put back her hair from her forehead, aud, fixing her look upon the stranger who had just entered, instinctively perceived it was the Count. Then, tears rolling down her cheeks, she seized his hands and kissed them. "Oh save me, Count, for heaven's sake save me, my only hope is in you.' And then she relapsed into a kind of convulsive spasm, and shook in every limb.

Jean Thomas, astonished beyond measure, looked on his superior officer with a stupified air.

"Monsieur le Comte has not then despised the prayer of a poor widow," said Thomas's mother, respectfully saluting Henry.

"No. Madame; and I shall feel too happy in rendering myself useful. But will you explain what all this means? How can I save this lady?"

"By preventing my son betraying the secret of this poor child, who is very culpable, for she forgot her duty for an instant, Count, but she is repentant: observe her tears. Oh, it is enough to break one s heart—would you believe it? my son intends to tell her husband the whole story; and if he tells him, what will become of her? So pray, Count, desire my son not to stir in the business: you are his superior officer; and we will both of us bless you."

"Oh, yes, Monsieur le Comte, my life will not be long enough to prove my gratitude," said Pauline.

"How beautiful she is," thought the Count, contemplating the figure of Madame Lerouge, as she knelt at his feet. Then, addressing himself to Jean Thomas, "I hope, sir—"

"I hope, sir," said Thomas, interrupting the Count, "I hope you have sufficient respect for yourself not to interfere in a business in which the service is not concerned."

"I am here in the house of Madame Thomas sir," said Henry, bowing to the widow, "and no one has a right to ask my intentions."

"Well, sir," said Thomas arrogantly, "I am in my own house, and I will tell you mine:—My intention is to disclose all to Captain Lerouge, and that without delay. I am aware, sir, that, in my situation, a man of the court would be more tolerant—or more weak. But I am not a man of the court, I belong to another class; I am one of the people: I am an honest man."

"You are a miserable fellow to talk thus to a gentleman, to a nobleman, who does honour to your father's house by entering it," cried the widow, thus imprudently redoubling Thomas's anger. "Beg his pardon this instant," she said.

"Mother!" cried Thomas, impetuously.

"Let me intreat you, madame," said the count, in his usual quiet manner. "Forget, as I have done, all this gentleman has just said." Then turning to Thomas, "you treat people of my class, sir, with great sincerity, I have a better opinion of those belonging to yours, since this distinction has

been established by you; I should never have thought of making it. but because I know you to be a true and honest man, I have ventured to join with your mother, to obtain your promise of silence on this melancholy affair. You must be aware, sir, that it would be folly on my part to imagine that my influence as your commander could in any way have power over you; so let us forget our different rank, and look upon me merely as one hearty fellow asking a favour of another.—Let me beg of you, M. Thomas, not to follow up your intention; really you will go beyond the object you aim at."

"Thomas answered not a word, but looked at the count with a sardonic smile, and then pulling out his watch, he said—"Twelve o'clock, at that hour the coach arrives from Lambeseleq, my friend will no doubt come by it: I will go and meet him.

And he disappeared.

"My son! my son!" cried the widow, in a supplicatory tone.

"Oh, sir," cried Pauline, he has gone to fetch my executioner.

"In heaven's name, M. Thomas, you will not do that," said Henry, running after his lieutenant.

He was too late.

The three actors in this strange scene looked at each other with a stupified air.

"Alas! alas! it is all over with me!" cried Pauline. "I shall die, I shall die."

"What is to be done, count?" said the widow, in dreadful perplexity.

Henry reflected for an instant, scarcely concealed a smile, and said boldly to Madame Lerouge,—"With the exception of what happened yesterday, that devil of a lieutenant of mine has no other proof against you."

"No, count—no, I swear he has not."

"Well then, if your husband comes, deny it all boldly; and you, Madame Thomas, since your son can only speak of what happened yesterday, declare that yesterday, from break of day until the evening, madame never quitted you for a single instant; but you must maintain it boldly—no weakness. In that case, do you see, my dear madame," said the count, still smiling—"in that case, and not an uncommon one, either, the husband would rather believe good than evil, and I am certain your testimony will overthrow that of the lieutenant."

"But it would be uttering a falsehood, count," said the widow, gravely.

"You would sacrifice your neighbour's life," said the count.

"To lie," repeated the widow, with an expression of sorrow and doubt, then casting her eyes on the work of Thomas à Kempis, that lay open on the the table; she read some words in the work of that celebrated author, which seemed to have some mysterious effect upon her mind, already weakened by grief and age.

"Heaven's will be done," said the widow, closing the book.

At this instant, a noise was heard behind the door, and the voices of the lieutenant and another were recognised.

"It is my husband," murmured Pauline, "I feel as if I should die. Oh, I am lost."

"Zounds! you must show no weakness," said Henry, whose heart beat loudly.

The door opened.

It was in fact the captain and Thomas.

The captain was forty years of age, his frame was athletic, his brown and strongly marked features were pale, his brows contracted, and his lips white and closely compressed; his eye was glassy, and the calm demeanour he bore was more dreadful than the transports of rage.

He advanced with a firm step towards Pauline, who had taken refuge in the widow's arms.

Touching his wife's shoulder, Jacques Lerouge said quietly,—

"What are you doing here, madame?"

"Captain," said Henry, the only one who retained his self-possession, "I am Count de Vaudry, and Madame Thomas has imposed upon me the task of explaining why this lady," and he pointed to Pauline, "is here. M. Jean Thomas, deceived by false appearances, by which his imagination has been led astray, has perhaps told you that yesterday, about two o'clock, your wife was seen out of the town in company with——"

"Yes, I have said it, and it is true: who dares to say I have spoken falsely?" exclaimed Thomas.

"I, my son," said the widow slowly, and with a sigh; "for madame passed the whole of yesterday in my house, from eight o'clock in the morning until nine at night."

"By heavens! this is infamous," exclaimed Thomas, almost mad.

The captain looked steadily at Thomas, without uttering a word, at length,—

"Thomas, is it possible,—you—my friend—one I at least believed to be so—that you have deceived me?" and stamping violently on the ground, he added, "Yes, wretch, you have calumniated my wife, for never, never, would your mother utter a falsehood."

And his savage form appeared to struggle between doubt, anger, and hope.

"I never left this place the whole of yesterday, and know not why M. Thomas has believed these charges against me," said Pauline, who feeling a ray of hope arise in her breast, partially recovered her courage.

"Oh, woman! woman!" thought Henry, smiling in his sleeve.

A momentary silence, impossible to describe, followed.

At length, the Captain said in a hurried tone, and scarcely able to conceal his dreadful state of agitation,—

"I cannot, therefore, for an instant, change with regard to you, and look upon you as an infamous man, as an alien, no! that is impossible; again I say it is impossible. Tell me the truth, Thomas. Some one told you of this—is it not so? Then you, like a faithful friend, told it all to me, but you saw nothing yourself, did you, Thomas? You saw nothing; and you thought you was rendering me a service in telling me what was said—you saw nothing yourself!"

"Yesterday, at two o'clock in the afternoon I, Thomas, *saw* your wife on the ramparts, arm in arm with a young man dressed in blue. I saw them clasp each other's hands arm in arm, and at a turning of the rampart, where they believed themselves not overlooked, I saw them embrace."

"I saw them," continued Thomas, without pity. "I saw them, and it is my mother speaks falsely, yes, by heaven! she lies."

"You saw them, saw them well,' said Lerouge again, in broken accents."

"I saw them."

"Ah!" said the captain, passing his hands over his eyes, and making a last effort, for his voice was almost inarticulate. "Hear me, Thomas," he mur-

mured, "swear to me, swear to me on the honour of a sailor, on the faith of an honest man, and by the memory of thy father, that you saw them, swear that to me and I will believe you.'

When at the moment Thomas was about to speak, the captain seized his hand, and said in an imposing tone. "You know me Thomas ? it is a sentence you are about to pass, a sentence of death."

"Death, understand me well," repeated the captain, his voice trembling convulsively, and pressing the lieutenant's arm.

"Sir !" cried Henry, the widow, and Pauline at the same time, and in a loud tone, while they held out their arms to Jean Thomas.

"I swear by the faith of an honest man, by the memory of my father, by my honour as a sailor, that I saw them !"

"It is nough, vile woman," said the captain, in a low tone, at the same time drawing a dagger from beneath his jacket, and before the count could interfere to check his fury, he sprang like a tiger upon his wife, and seized her by the hair.

The point of the blade touched Pauline's bosom, and no human power could have saved her from a dreadful death.

"Stop sir," cried the widow, with such an accent of authority, that the captain's arm, now raised against his wife, suddenly fell.

Then standing upright, calm and imposing, she stretched out her hands towards the crucifix, and in solemn tones again swore that what she had already said was true.

"Oh, mother ! mother !" cried Thomas, raising his hands to heaven.

"Wretch !" cried Lerouge, threatening Thomas with his dagger ; for the captain believed the widow. The sincerity of the good woman was so well known at Recouvrance, that no one in the world would have ever suspected her capable of so sacriligeous an act.

"Poor dupe," replied Thomas, coolly, looking without change of countenance at the uplifted dagger.

But Lerouge, throwing the weapon on the ground, said to Thomas, "the blood of a vile reptile like thee would soil my dagger, go, I despise you, liar."

Then falling at the feet of his wife.

"Pauline, pardon ! oh pardon ! I who love thee so much, and then .. but no, I am mad, it was a dream .. a frightful dream, but thou art innocent, and this wretch has spoken falsely. Oh! pardon!"

And the savage figure of the rude sailor, had an admirable expression of grief and kindness. He cried like a child, he embraced his wife, kissed the widow's hands, laughed, danced, and thanked the count It was nothing but a confusion of unconnected words, sobs, and bursts of joy and then, as if words were not sufficient to express what he felt, before the actors in this strange scene could utter a single word, he took his wife in his arms, and carried her off as if she had been a child.

Thomas was thunderstruck, he saw nothing, he heard nothing ; the unheard of conduct of his mother paralyzed all his faculties ; it was like a dream to him.

At length, placing his hand on his forehead, and forcibly pressing it, he could only say "oh, I shall go mad !

And he rushed out, with precipitation, without hat or sword.

The widow also, unable to resist the violent shock, closed her eyes and fainted.

The count, having called for assistance, placed widow Thomas in the hands of her neighbours, and left the house, saying to himself. "On the honour of a gentleman, all this is extremely curious, a devotee has perjured herself ; an honest man been treated as a villain ; another honest man been made a fool of, and all this to save the life of an abandoned woman, quite ready to begin her games again ; by heaven the life of man is a strange affair. I must see whether I can't have this Pauline, she is a beautiful figure, excellent M. Lerouge.

* * * * * *

Eight days after this scene, Widow Thomas was no more.

The day after the death of his mother, Jean Thomas had the following communicatfon from Captain Lerouge.

I have just learnt that your mother is dead ; this new misfortune entitles you to some pity. I called you a liar, and I must consider it was an insult on my part—I am willing to give you satisfaction. Choose the place, the arms, and the day."

"LEROUGE."

Jean Thomas answered as follows :—

"I am not a liar, but I refuse the satisfaction you offer me, because I swore to my mother never to draw my sword in a duel—I have sworn it, and I repeated the oath before she died. You know me—you know, whether it be fear has made me decline, or whether I ever broke an oath I had taken.

"THOMAS."

"No! it is not through fear he refuses," cried Captain Lerouge, as he read these words—"it is not through fear, I have seen him in battle, but it is decidedly unfortunate."

Madame Lerouge, to avoid scandal, obtained the consent of her excellent husband to live at Rennes instead of Brest, and the captain having agreed to it, established himself in that town, along with his virtuous wife, as he called her.

By a kind of tacit agreement, the count and his lieutenant never afterwards uttered a word respecting this strange occurrence, only Henry, in order that Jean Thomas might be more at his ease, offered to procure him a berth on board some other vessel. The lieutenant asked him if he had failed in his duty, in the idea of his superior officers.

Jean Thomas therefore remained on board as before the occurrence.

About the same time, Perez embarked himself on board the Sylphid, as delegate of the chief-officer of the victualling department.

Rita, dressed as a man, was in his company, and passed for his clerk.

But few of the sailors knew of her presence on board, for she embarked at night.

One evening the count came on board, rather excited, for he had just left some pleasant supper party, in this mood Henry seeing Rita and Perez standing in the shadow of the caboose, asked who they were ?"

He was answered, "It is the purser and his clerk, commandant."

The count after a disdainful look, descended into his sumptuous and gilded cabin.

Rita and Perez went down also, into the hold, to the dark and humid retreat allotted to them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE NAVY, (1781.)

"Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the water's wide,
The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way!"
BYRON.

Women are thy lot—dogs and horses—to thee the sword of war, sparkling and verdant youth, oh, happy age, so free from care; strength and bravery! happy times! when life appears so long, it is thrown away on any one.

"Love! the chase! war!—noble, though merciless games. A desolate girl, a bleeding stag, an enemy slain. Hark, to the winding horn, one charge of powder, a fresh horse, a new sword, and again begin!

Happy Henry, such was thy life! Forget Versailles and its women, thy wood, thy dogs and huntsmen. Now we have war, Henry, it is war time now. The star of America is rising, the two worlds are in flames, the sea roars from north to south. The cannon thunders—hark! Still the old flag of France sweeps over the ocean, with its crest of flame and the music of its artillery.

And those who maintain this snow white flag have hands both rude and firm. There is Destaing, and Mothe-Piquet, and Grasse, and Suffren, Detouches, Dessais, high on the waves, or deep within the bosom of the deep; still they would have it thus. And these, Henry, you also know are thy masters.

Noble masters, of whom you are about to show yourself a worthy pupil, for after a certain time, we get weary of the land. Is not that the case? After you are worn out by excess, that devouring, feverish restlessness, that makes you heap feast on feast, intrigue upon intrigue, and that enables you to enjoy all, to embrace all.

Does not this golden, libertine, and sensual life, found in the midst of the light of candles, reddening on silks, in the midst of the sweetest scents, does it not become wearisome after a time? Do we not feel the imperative necessity of breathing the fresh breezes of the ocean? Does not your heart expand when, treading your frigate's deck, you say to yourself, here my laws and my will are absolute; here by a word—a sign, three hundred men obey as if they were but one; for, full of reliance on me, they tacitly place their life in my hands, and say to me, take it, and employ it for the glory of the king of France?

Does it not appear excellent to you, also, that you are answerable for the glory of the king and of France? But this important duty troubles thee little, Henry; for you have sails, and powder, and steel; because if you should be overpowered by numbers, you know that the loyal ocean always affords a retreat in the depths of its abysses, to those who will not allow their flag to become a trophy to a conquering enemy.

Finally, do you not feel a lively emotion—a vague anxiety—a burning curiosity, when arriving at Brest, full of impatience, you run to the harbour to see your frigate—your Sylphid.

But to see it in this manner—what is it? I know your quick and penetrating glance can perceive at once, and judge before-hand, its faults and its merits. But alas, alas! to see a frigate in port is to look at a race horse in its box.

Look at that noble horse, see how sad, how melancholy, how dull it is, its ears drooping, its eye dull; for air, light, and space are wanting—space, above all; in it consists its courage, its ardour: space, in that consists its beauty, its grace its power.

But lead it from its box, let the light pour in upon it, let it see the sky, the woods, the fruits, the barriers of the course, the endless plain before it; let him feel the air ruffle his glossy mane, and wave his undulating tail; observe him, then, observe him, how his skin glistens with the golden reflections of a pure and noble blood; observe him, he arches his neck, his veins swell, his eye is lighted up, his nostrils expand, his ear raised erect and full of impatience, he neighs, rears up, paws the ground, champs his bit, and covers it with silvery foam.

Then, if you put in action the overpowering feelings that inspire him, he runs, he runs, and with increasing ardour, full of fury, he pursues the unattainable horizon, that seems to fly before the efforts of the brave courser. He flies, he swims in space, but let him hear his master's voice, suddenly he stops, becomes calm, and restrains himself. Then you no longer see that impetuous and enervating action, as rapid as the flight of an arrow launched by a vigorous bowman: his motions are as gentle as those of a Canadian cradle, suspended by the flowery branches of the Euphorbium.

So it was, when Henry saw his frigate in the harbour, half hidden by the lofty walls of the arsenal, alone, in the shade, touched on every side by wood or stone, and half concealed by the huge tarpaulins, that covered its gaudy colours, motionless, in foul and stagnant water, without a breath of air to unfurl the noble flag that hung by the mast. Henry could not perceive how beautiful, how lively, and how proud the Sylphid was.

But afterwards, when on some beautiful day in January with a fresh and whistling breeze; she had been moved to the centre of the immense roadstead of Brest. How all had changed! How well did space improve the frigate, how beautifully her dark rigging was traced upon the silvery grey sky. How free, alert, and impatient she seemed in that sheet of green waves, that threw their emerald tints upon her copper-sheathed sides.

And when, spreading her white sails, she stood on her course through the ample roads; the count, like a skilful seaman trying the sailing qualities of his frigate, as the qualities of a war-horse are put to the proof before the battle. How seriously and pensively uneasy he was in studying them, and calculating their rapidity and precision, and then how he leaped for joy, how proud he was of the minute care that had been taken in attending to the trim of the Sylphid, when he found her so supple and pliant in her timbers, beating well up against the wind, carrying a heavy press of sail, quick, light, and lively, leaping up in the gale like a rearing courser. I know in some men's minds this is almost a fault, but Henry delighted in faults of this description.

And how he made her fly to windward, wear, and luff with all sails set. How he observed their effect upon her course and bearing, that he might discover her qualities for battles, chase, or retreat.

Then, increasing the speed of his frigate by every known method, and looking with pride at the mark of her rapid track in the water, he would steer in shore and then, after almost making the oldest sailors turn pale, at the instant her bowsprit was about to touch the rock, thanks to the quickness o

the excellent vessel, and the precision with which his crew worked her, she would go upon another tack and bravely spurn the coast, as if she were playing wlth the frightful danger she had braved.

Then reefing the lower sails, and neutralizing the effect of the topsails, Henry would arrest the impetus of the Sylphid and allow her to rock voluptuously at the caprice of the caressing waves as if to rest herself after her rapid course.

Thus, at times, the Arab of the desert boldly urges his horse towards the edge of the precipice; and seeing it arrive there at full speed. in the midst of a cloud of dust, you tremble, but he playfully stops his courser on the very brink of the frightful abyss, and rearing gracefully with a slight hound it regains the plain.

Such was the Sylphid.

So that when, at night, Henry bringing back his frigate to her moorings had learnt all the good points of the excellent vessel and her crew, he felt I know not what instinctive foreknowledge of a glorious future and noble combats, that made him long with terrible impatience for the moment of leaving the port, and tempting that fortune he imagined would be so auspicious to his arms.

In expectation of this much desired day his time was occupied in the exercise of his crew and the performance of all the manœuvres of a real action, or in the completion of the armament of his vessel with the most minute care, and also, according to the fashion of the day, covering it profusely with ornament.

For the Sylphid no more resembled a frigate of the present day than the costume of the fair sex of our times does that of their grandmother.

The Sylphid instead of being plainly painted in black with a white stripe, its round and heavy bows, without ornament or gilding, as every brave and modest frigate of our economical and constitutional times ought to be.

The Sylphid, say, had a gentlemanly appearance which seemed to tell of her royal patronage; she possessed a kind of Louis the fifteenth air, which, in my opinion became her well.

You ought to have seen the magnificent decorations of her glittering poop, gold upon a white ground, whose reflection in the clear and blue water, were spread out like a mantle of gold upon an azure carpt.

Then, again its upper part was carved in the most exquisite manner with the representation of two Naiades, reclining on sea-horses, each of the divinities holding a trident in one hand. and with the other supporting the royal arms of France; all this was carved in alto-relievo, gilt and inclosed in a border of the leaves-of the acanthus.

In addition to this there were five golden sirens. like tall and graceful Caryatides, who with raised arms and clasping each other's hands, formed the arches and frame work of the four cabin windows, that were also supported upon a golden and sculptured basement. where Tritons, in trowsers, were struggling with Naiades in hoops, in the midst of a crowd of dolphins and other monsters sporting in the foam.

What shall we say also of those splendid *bouteilles* resting upon eagles with expanding wings, grasping thunder-bolts, and crowned by two figures of fame with their long trumpets.

And the glittering gunwale, so beautifully carvedthat e ncircled the vessel like a golden scarf, admet at the bows to support a graceful Sylphid, also gilt, and clearly from the chisel of Lemoine.

I well know that all this splendour, that all these carvings had not a very bold or warrior-like appearance, but, nevertheless, it was a delightful thing to look upon this beautiful frigate, so elegantly attired in white and gold, as proud and superb as a duchess, its glittering poop answering for a diadem.

I know also well enough, there was nothing very dreadful in her appearance; I know it might have been mistaken for a coquettish, voluptuous gondola, fond of admiring herself in a river with flowery banks, rather than a rude engine of war, doomed to brave the tempest.

For how could you ever imagine, that the mouth of a cannon could gape in the midst of those ornaments, those nymphs and golden syrens, entwined together in so playful manner.

But there were cannon on board the Sylphid, and many of them too: who however would have thought that in the midst of their bronzed mouldings, worked with so much taste and beauty, that their Gorgon mouths, so grotesquely formed, flame and iron would issue! Iron to slay, and fire to burn!

Yet, still such was the case—The Sylphid could blaze away when necessary, and sometimes more than was necessary; she could keep up an infernal fire—as well-maintained a fire as the dingiest and most sober-looking frigate of the present day.

And her officers, so delicate, so voluptuous, so bespangled, how often with their white hands, half hidden in diamonds and lace, have they not given the signal for a sanguinary conflict, a deadly battle, and yet were afraid of one thing alone; the disarrangement of their powdered wigs. For these gentlemen went into battle as they would to a ball, they dressed themselves for the occasion, they poured their broadsides into the enemy with so much coquettry, and boarded sword in hand so gracefully, and in such good taste.

But, in fact, when they drew their blue swords from the embroidered velvet scabbard, the English discovered that their temper was as good, as if they had been drawn from a villainous iron sheath. And believe me, in the day of battle, or the tempestuous night, their red heeled shoes trod as firmly on the splendid decks of the *Sceptre* or the *Royal Louis*, as at a later day, the wooden shoes trod the filthy boards of the *Droit de l'Homme* or the *Sans-Culotte*.

Such was the Sylphid, and now you are acquainted with her and her officers, both as to their physical and moral attributes.

As to the sailors, they were much the same as those of the present day. For there as in other cases, the more the social scale is elevated, the more its salient angles are effaced. The officers of the eighteenth century, living part of their time on shore, brought on board with them the customs and habits, and the characters of their age. It is the same with the sailors of the present day.

"But in the case of the common men—the true sailors, who are seldom on shore, they are much the same now as formerly. In the eighteenth century, as in the sixteenth; in the nineteenth, as in the eighteenth: for the revolutions that have overthrown nations, and society itself, lost their force as they reached the ocean.

Alas! on shore, idle news, envy, riches, misery, and knowledge, so soon change a race: traditions are forgotten, temples crumble in the dust, the earth

takes a thousand aspects by turns. Civilization is at hand, constantly casting to the wind the belief and all that remains of olden times, to deposit in their place the lively germs of a new state of society, which grows up that it may die in its turn. Civilization, that ardent and implacable enemy of nationality!

Thus different ages have been obliged to form mankind after their own type, and place a new mark on the forehead of each generation. But the fraction of men who live upon the ocean, long remain free and independent of the peculiar mark of the age. The light of devouring civilization is slightly cast upon the rude exterior of these simple men; but it cannot penetrate beyond the bark.

For has not the ocean been the ocean even from the creation!

Always the same, with its boundless horizon, its lonely waves, and its religious silence, which cause a man to meditate!

Thus the men of the same element preserve their original physiognomy—the prominent parts of their character; the effect of the constant contemplation of this primitive form of nature, and the dreadful battles they are constantly waging with her.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ROADSTEAD.

"Alphonso, welcome, for thy presence, and for the good news thou bringest."—SCHILLER.

THE roadstead of Brest, at the beginning of the month of January, 1781, offered an imposing spectacle, for twenty ships of the line were riding there, nine frigates, and a vast number of small craft.

Surely there is nothing more magnificent than these vessels, with their lofty sides, their ponderous masses of wood and iron, resting heavily on the waters with their wide and heavy stern, their enormous masts, and triple range of heavy guns.

And in the morning, when these huge vessels hang out their sails to dry, you should see them majestically unroll their immense canvass, and expand it as a gull expands its wings, wet with dew, to the first rays of the sun.

And then, what a contrast between these gigantic vessels, and those lively frigates, tall corvettes, and slender brigs; those luggers and cutters, that softly cradle themselves in the shadow of the floating citadels, like the young kingfisher flitting round its mother's nest.

What numberless craft of every kind, coming, and going, and sailing, in every direction.

See, here comes a yawl, splendidly gilt the royal standard at her stern, its field embroidered with fleur-de-lis. She flies through the water, urged on by twelve rowers with scarlet belts; the coxwain is decorated with a silver chain; it is the admiral's yawl.

There, slowly advances a long sloop, its deck encumbered with fruit and verdure. You might say it was one of the floating islands of some American river sailing along, covered with flowers and climbing plants. This boat—a precious painstaker—is returning to the vessel with the day's provisions and the culinary apparatus of the cook.

Sometimes you may see a Plougastel boat, with her large, square sail, manned by long-haired sailors, whose picturesque costume puts you in mind of the Greeks of the Archipelago. This boat contains some score of women from Chateaulin or Ptouineck, returning to the town, with healthy and smiling faces, reddened by the sharp air, well wrapped up in their brown mantles, and exchanging in their own *patois* a few merry words with the sailors of the ships of war, as their boat passed by.

Further off the clanking of chains is heard, mingled with the fall of oars, announcing the approach of a gang of galley slaves in their red dresses. They are, with great labour, towing a vessel out of port; some singing vulgar songs, others blaspheming, or writhing beneath the lash of their task-masters: looking at their debased and haggard features, and hearing their cries of rage and ferocious joy, you shudder, as if you saw a boatload of the condemned, in the Inferno of Dante.

To complete this varied spectacle, you must add thousands of small boats, moving in every direction, some bearing noblemen, officers in the king's service, others elegantly dressed ladies; and then there is the rolling of drums, the noise of musketry the sound of whistles, the creaking of ropes, and the rude harmony of warlike preparation; and the, colours of a thousand flags—white, green, yellow red, standing out against the blue sky, like so many aeriai prisoners.

Last of all, the imposing murmur and grandeur of the waves bounding upon the shore, whose sonorous and continued noise is heard above every other, and unites them all into one, as grand and imposing as its own.

In the midst of this forest of masts—this cloud of sails, let us look for the Sylphid.

There she is, always elegant, sparkling; there she is heaving on the wave, near two huge seventy-fours, with black sides and white streaks; there, there she heaves, like the Dorado, with its gold and azure scales, between two immense whales, with their dark brown backs.

On this day, the 6th of January, 1781, Count de Vaudry had gone on shore to receive his orders from Marshal de Castries, who had recently arrived at Brest.

Lieutenant Jean-Thomas commanded the frigate in the absence of Henry, and was walking aft with his intimate friend Dr. Gedeon, thundering forth, according to his custom, against everything that was noble, priestly, or privileged. Baron de Saint Sauveur had accompanied Henry on shore, Morval was on deck, and Miran asleep in his berth.

In the forepart of the vessel, several of the petty officers and sailors were talking in a low tone, but the most animated manner, for they expected to get ready for sea from day to day.

Master Kergouet, the canonnier bourgois, whom the reader, perhaps, has not yet forgotten, seated on a bundle of spars, was chatting with the master, a little man, called Frank, full of life, thick-set, and fresh coloured, dressed in a blue jacket with a gold laced collar, slighty powdered, and wearing immense ear-rings.

A tall lad of about eighteen years of age, square built and robust, but as fair as a girl, was standing motionless before Master Frank, with a contrite expression of countenance and downcast eyes. Notwithstanding the cold weather, this sailor had nothing on but a pair of pantaloons and a worsted shirt striped with blue, which set off to advantage his athletic form. He held his cap in his hand,

and kept turning it round and round incessantly, in a confused and embarrassed manner.

This sailor was Daniel, nephew of Master Frank, a real Breton, and that says all—an *Abrevack* boy.

"Answer me, why don't you speak! hoist sail, you lubber, and don't look so like a fool," said Master Frank with his usual vivacity shaking his nephew by one of his shirt sleeves.

"You only make him more obstinate, Master Frank," observed the canonnier bourgois, "leave him alone."

"What is this fresh quarrel about?" said the uncle to his nephew, whose gentle, timid, and quiet look seemed to deny the accusation.

"Come, come, speak out, my boy," said the gunner; "the fact is, you have given Losophe a multiplicity of fisticuffs : what was it for, Daniel, what was it for?"

Master Kerg—"

"I am not master, I have told you that frequently, Daniel; I am, in citizen-phrase, M. Kergouet," said the gunner, who more than ever laid claim to a civil position.

"Well, M. Kergouet," said the sailor, in a tremulous voice, "it was because Losophe took my rosary, and tied it to his dog's tail, which he has most horribly called St. Medard;" and Daniel crossed himself at the mere recollection of the profanation.

"Baptize a dog St. Medard! that was hardly right," said M. Kergouet, in a tone of disapprobation.

"If that is the case," added Master Frank, "you

were in the right; for that Losophe is a rascal, who does mischief wherever he can. And you were quite right in thrashing him, Daniel."

"If what you say is correct, Daniel," said M. Kergouet, "your blows were well bestowed, my boy."

"As to that, you know I never tell a lie, Monsieur Kergouet," said Daniel. By our Lady of Recouvrance, that rosary belonged to my poor dead mother, and was so holy that it saved me from half the blow of an axe, when we boarded the black cutter; you recollect that, uncle? So that when I saw my blessed rosary tied in that manner to a dog's tail, I said to Losophe, as I held him fast between my knees: 'Look you, Losophe, you shall have as many punches as there are beads in my rosary;' and so I counted my *paters* and my *aves* with my fist upon Losophe's hide; that was all, uncle," added Losophe, turning as red as a cherry.

"Very well," said Frank; "as it was on account of religion, and my sister's rosary," and Frank took off his varnished hat, "you were right; but don't repeat it, or if you do, let it be a little at a time, and often, for you have half killed him."

"The fact is," said M. Kergouet, "that Losophe may brag of having been for a quarter of an hour in the skin of a man who was learning a new dance, and that was too long, for—"

But the noise of a violin, horribly out of tune, that no doubt was attempting to execute the air,

"All among the French guards,
My lover true....."

interrupted the gunner, "Was I wrong in pitying that animal Losophe? Hark! he is still making bad music on his violin although you forbad him, my dear Frank."

"Be silent there, or I'll come down to you; take care of your neck if you begin again, Losophe," cried Master Frank, stooping at the opening of a small hatchway, at the foot of the mizenmast.

But the confounded violin, as if it would not give up without opposing an obstinate resistance to the brutal order, the violin, I say, still continued the air by snatches, and then luckily it was silent; for a loud oath proved that Master Frank was about to descend.

Then the barking of a dog commenced from the same quarter as the violin, and seemed to protest, in another manner, against the tyranny of this new order.

"What! they will not be quiet, neither that rascal nor his confounded dog?' cried Frank; "you might quarter them before the vermin would go without the last word," added the master, who appeared to be addressing himself indifferently to the biped and quadruped, to the philosopher and his dog.

Losophe, who scraped his violin so well, and whose dog protested with so much energy against the despotic orders of the master—Losophe was born at Paris, and called Pierre Landry; he had been a hair-dresser, a lacquey, a printer, soldier, shoe-maker, and weaver; and as, amongst his other acquirements, his skill in handling the needle, whether in leather, linen, or cloth, was very remarkable, he was employed on board, for the two years during which he had been in the service, as an assistant sail-maker. In his leisure moments Losophe dressed hair, shaved, and gave lessons in dancing, singing, polite behaviour, philosophy, magic, or atheism, according to the taste of his scholars. The name by which he was called was bestowed on him by the sailors; it was an abbreviation of Philosophe (philosopher).

The unbridled independence of his religious and political opinions acquired for him the name of philosopher, which he bore on board the Sylphid, where he was a favourite of the sailors on account of his abilities, his gossip, his lies, and his comical tales; but on the other hand, Losophe was generally disliked by the petty officers on account of his insolence, his insubordination, his violin, and his dog.

A dog and a violin appear at first sight rather out of place on board so well ordered a vessel as a king's frigate at that time of day; but as to the dog, thus it was:—People purchase impunity for the future, for a host of faults, by some good action often accidentally performed. The dog, on one occasion, brought a child out of the water, who had fallen overboard from a small boat. From that day St. Medard was a privileged dog on board the Sylphid; and notwithstanding his excessive severity, Jean Thomas himself yielded to the entreaties of the crew, who had asked for the admission of this philanthropic and canonized animal.

As to the violin, it is explained in this manner. Losophe, as we have already said, dealt in magic, was an atheist, a philosopher, and a hair-dresser; he was also a dancing-master; so that the kit, which was necessary in his last profession, could not be well dispensed with; for at that time, as at the present, they encouraged all kinds of amusements to keep up the spirits of the sailors during a long cruize. But, excepting at the time set apart for the purpose, the use of the instrument was strictly forbidden to the professor.

Such is the history of Losophe's dog and violin.

As to Losophe himself, if we may be allowed to separate him from his violin and dog, he was just entering the twenty-fifth year of his age; his figure was like a weazel, and his small yellow eyes sparkled with cunning and malice. He was thin, weak, and nervous, but light and active, full of mockery, impertinent, but tolerably courageous; in fact, to sum up all, his agility contrasted strangely with the good and simple Breton sailors, square built, vigorous, and strong limbed. He looked like a fox in the midst of a number of bull-dogs.

This digression has made us rather forgetful of the other personages who are walking at the after part of the vessel; that is to say, the lieutenant and the doctor. Instead of elevating their minds to the loftiest moral and political speculations, our two friends were attentively considering a correspondence by signals, which had for some time been passing between the telegraph on the tower of Brest and a watch-tower on the coast, forming the north-west part of Berthaume.

"They are signalising some ship of war in the offing," said the lieutenant; "but listen—listen, doctor! a gun, it is a gun!"

In fact, a dull and distant rumbling sound in the distance was repeated regularly by the echos of the harbour.

"I'll lay a wager it is the Minerva returning from her cruize," cried Jean Thomas, listening attentively.

"The Minerva, the frigate commanded by the Chevalier de Grimonard?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, yes! but listen! silence there, forward," cried Thomas in a loud voice.

And the forecastle was profoundly silent.

Although incidents of this nature had been common enough ever since the commencement of the war; and many actions had been fought almost within sight of the port, the whole of the Sylphid's crew were as attentive as their officers, and the sailors only communicated their fears and hopes to each other in whispers.

Master Kergouet and Master Frank, taking advantage of the prerogative of their rank, drew as near as possible to the after part of the vessel, where the lieutenant, Monval, and the doctor were in company.

The firing still continued, and appeared to become louder and better supported as it approached the coast.

"If we had but been ready to-day, as we might have been," said Monval, we might have had this good luck; we might have entered into action directly after leaving the port, without the least trouble in the world; how pleasant that would have been!"

"If it is pleasant to have to fight an enemy of much superior force," said the lieutenant, seriously; "for according to all appearance, it is the Minerva closely engaged with an enemy of imposing force."

"It is different," answered Monval, disdainfully, "if it is not pleasant still it is glorious; but I don't weigh my words."

Jean Thomas repressed a movement of anger, and answered ironically, "This ambition belongs to your age, sir, and it does you honour; but this beautiful ardour generally leads to defeat, and the sacrifice both of men and ships. So that, in my opinion, it is a bad method of serving one's country; it is acting like a child or a madman, and not like a man. Excuse me, sir, for speaking thus freely to you, but it is my custom. I am rude, they say."

Monval was about to reply sharply, when the lieutenant suddenly interrupted him by exclaiming,

"Listen, listen! the chase approaches the coast; and if I am not deceived, the action is taking place to the windward of Ouessant."

"That is very probable," said Monval, forgetting the angry discussion he just held with the lieutenant, to consult the vane, which indicated a strong breeze from the north-west, "we hear the guns as if we were close by."

In fact the noise of the artillery was very distinctly heard.

"What do you say to that, Master Kergouet?" demanded Monval of the canonnier bourgeois, who not being able to exact from his superiors the civil appellation he so pitilessly required of his inferiors, answered with an appearance of vexation, but at the same time taking off his hat,

"I think, sir, it is some poor frigate chased by a superior force—for, stay—stay—that was her broadside, did you hear it? And now hold—one—two other broadsides, at a greater distance, but much more prolonged—they are those of the enemy who has the wind, and that is why we hear them so plainly; and if I am not deceived, the frigate is engaged with two vessels."

"The poor frigate," said Master Frank, "if she could only sail close to the wind, and run to the north of Ouessant, double *Point Corbeaux*, and enter the *Passage des du Four*, and then beat up under her top-sails, she would be saved. For if it be the Minerva, old Karadek is her pilot, and he could steer with his eyes shut through the *Glenans*, or in the bay of the *Trepassés*."

"You are right, Master Frank," answered Monval; but it is devilish inconvenient to take soundings while you are firing broadsides; and I had rather have to do with eighty long guns on the water, than with those cowardly black rocks that hide themselves deceitfully under the waves, like sharks waiting for their prey; so that it is only in the very last extremity I would attempt so dangerous a passage."

"Still, sir," said Master Kergouet, "if you will allow me, I will confirm the advice of my colleague, Master Frank."

"Confirm, Master Kergouet, confirm," said Monval, smiling.

"Well, then, sir, although I am not a sworn pilot," here the master took off his hat, "during the war of '71, I moored the brig Ruby under Belle-isle, passing through the channel of the islands of Houac and Hedic; we could congratulate ourselves upon being put upon our mettle by the Charleston, a sixty-four, that kept up an infernal fire upon us; but when she saw us enter this passage, she suddenly altered her course, looking as foolish as a cat when she sees a dabchick dive, after having sent after us a volley by way of adieu, their shot scarcely reaching our track, and that was all. So that since this occurrence, I never would allow anything disobliging to be said of sunken rocks."

"But see, the telegraph is still at work," said the doctor, interrupting Kergouet, "perhaps they can perceive what is going on at sea, and are signalling the port the chances of the action."

At this instant the guard on duty exclaimed,—"The commandant's boat!"

In fact, occupied as they had been by the telegraph and its signals, they did not perceive the boat until it was within two cables' length of the vessel.

"The devil! there is something in the wind," said Monval; "the commandant is in great haste, I never saw the men row in this manner before; they generally balance their oars so gracefully in the air; they are rowing hand over hand like men in the merchant service."

"Now, then, we have our compliment," said the doctor, "for the commandant brings with him M. de St. Sauveur, the abbe, and the astronomer, and his shadow, sometimes called his brother."

The boat approached the starboard side of the vessel, and before they had time to throw over the man-lines, Henry sprang lightly on board the vessel, exclaiming, "Get under weigh, gentlemen, get under weigh; they have signalled a French frigate maintaining an action against two English frigates. To sea, gentlemen, the marshal has also given orders to the Vengeur and Tonnant to get ready. Come, come, make haste, or we shall be too late; see! the commander of the Tonnant is already mustering all his hands."

This he said as he mounted the ladder, with great energy and excitement; but the instant he put his foot on board, Henry recovered the quiet demeanour that befitted his station.

"My speaking trumpet," he said to the helmsman, who went below deck to seek it.

Then addressing himself to the lieutenant,

"The breeze is good, and we have the ebb in our favour, let a large knot be made on the cable, passing a hawser from starboard to larboard, and

make it fast, and we will cut our cables, for time presses.

"Cut our cables," said the lieutenant, "and where shall we find others, commandant?"

"The English are always well provided," said Henry, gaily.

Jean Thomas proceeded to execute these orders, and Henry having received his speaking trumpet, mounted the quarter deck. M. de Miran was his attendant officer.

At the boatswain's whistle every one took his post, and not another word was heard.

"Commandant, the hawser is passed and made fast to the capstan," said St. Sauveur, to Henry.

"Prepare to hoist the jib, and unfurl the topsails," cried Henry, in a loud voice.

Then seeing the frigate had sufficiently caught the wind, "Hoist the top-gallant-sail, and cut the cable—cut."

And the blow of the axe produced a dull sound.

"Cut the hawser—cut it!" cried Henry, with a sonorous voice, whose tone proved with what joy he gave the order.

A second blow of the axe was heard.

And then the Sylphid, being no longer restrained, bent lightly before the breeze, sailed close to the wind, and made a tack towards the rock Mingan, on her way out of the roads.

This manœuvre had been executed so well and so quickly, that the Tonnant still swung at her anchors when the Sylphid was near the pass.

On this the ship, as if piqued at the alacrity with which the frigate had executed the marshal's orders, made a signal for her to bring to, and wait for her; for the commander of that vessel being the oldest captain belonging to the three ships, carried the broad pendant at the mast head.

"The Tonnant makes a signal to bring to," said Mirvan to Henry, whose back was turned as if he did not wish to notice the signal.

But it was necessary he should take notice of it, and he submitted, although with a bad grace.

"Do we want the help of these two large vessels?" said the Count; "really two ships of the line and a frigate are rather too much to equalise the party, as the marshal says."

While the frigate remained stationary, Henry cast a rapid glance at the appearance of his crew, who must needs be astonished at this sudden departure.

He found his sailors calm and cool, as usual; merely read a slight appearance of curiosity in their careless countenances.

Henry augured well at this self denial; and exclaimed with great joy, as soon as he saw the Tonnant, now under weigh, give the signal to chase,

"At last we are allowed to get a head of these slow sailers, that's lucky."

Then hoisting the standing jib, and bracing up the main-top-sail, he again put the Sylphid on her course.

"Clear the decks for action," cried the Count, addressing the crew; 'now, my boys, bid adieu to France; after the English! and long live the king!"

"Long live the king!" cried the crew, lustily.

"Steer the frigate through the channel, sir," said Henry, giving the speaking trumpet to the lieutenant, "I must pay a visit to the guns and the forecastle."

"Cut the cables, a mad-brained fop!" said the lieutenant, as soon as the Count was out of hearing.

Then he added, with concentrated spite, speaking to himself, "And yet it must be acknowledged he has got us under weigh cleverly; the tone of command of this puppy is a proof he has had much practice. Curses upon him, he receives all, does he?

"And yet I have as much courage and science as he has; but I remain in obscurity. But then he is Count de Vaudry—Monsieur le Comte!" repeated the lieutenant, with bitter irony, "Monsieur le Comte! while I, I am Jean Thomas, an officer of the blues! Jean Thomas, the grandson of an itinerant dealer in fish at the port. They despise me—confusion! Should he despise me! but he is polite to me; but then, what politeness! I should prefer insolence; we kill or are killed for insolence, death and furies! I shsll become mad on board this cursed ship! Oh, this Count! this Count! But I shall see him in action; my hope lies all in that.

"But what am I thinking of? I must be lucky to see that; and when did Jean Thomas ever have any good fortune? If I do a good action, it is turned against me: if I denounce a crime to a friend; if I tell him his wife deceives him, and that I have seen it—there is my mother to tell the first lie she perhaps ever told in her life, and I, I am considered a perjurer and a fool; and I am cursed by my mother, who soon afterwards dies. And shall I love the world? Shall I smile upon gentlemen, and close my eyes to the weaknesses of others? No, no, every one has his right, come what will. by acting in this manner I possess a conscience; and, by heaven, of what use is conscience, if it has no power to remain implacable against those who fail in their duties?—so—what would I not give for this gentleman commander to lose his wits in the action. Very often these officers, so good in working a vessel, so calm, so tranquil, turn pale at the noise of the guns. But, no, perhaps this Count is brave. And after all, should he be so, what would that prove? He does but his duty, true; but I shall not have the right to despise him; and how much I should like to despise him! to pay him in his own coin; for I know he inwardly despises me, not me myself, but my birth. Despise me, the ass! as if all men were not equal, noble and ignoble. As if a man had the right to despise another because he has an armorial bearing or a grade the more," said Jean Thomas, in a passion; then perceiving that the sails were hardly filled, "Luff then, you lubber," he said to the man at the helm, giving him a push with his usual rudeness.

The helmsman obeyed his orders with alacrity, saying to himself, "Ah! here is another *de* lieutenant, brought up in the same manner as our last brute."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE INSPECTION.

'This is the decisive hour."—SCHILLER

We know that the two ships that left Brest, for the assistance of the Minerva, were the Vengeur, a seventy-four, and the Tonnant a sixty-four, the latter carrying the broad pendant, because it had on board the elder captain of the two vessels.

The Sylphid had received orders to chase, and

to lead the little squadron, for the cannonade on the coast was still well supported.

While Henry was inspecting the guns and the manœuvres of the crew they were waiting to receive him in the battery, commanded by M. de Monval,

The master of the canonniers bourgeois was haranguing his men with his accustomed assumption.

"Gentlemen," he said, to them, with his usual pretensions to a civil capacity, "it seems we shall have some business to do in our shop, for our battery is a shop to us, as much as a draper's shop is his shop, 'tis exactly the same thing, and let us behave ourselves like good shopmen, as we are. "Now, Monsieur Rapin," he said to his second in command, who had no share of the citizen ambition of his superior, thinking himself as much a fighting man, and as much a sailor as any one else, "you Monsieur Rapin, will watch over the transport of the powder, look carefully after the cartridge bags, and see there is no spark left in them."

"As to you, gentlemen," addressing the rest of the gunners, I beg that for your own individual interests, you will each of you, from time to time, refresh the interior of your guns with a wet sponge, for the throat of a cannon long in use is like the throat of a man, it gets dry by two much talking, but the cannon is very inconsiderate, inasmuch as when its throat is heated, it speaks before its turn, which is extremely unpleasant for those who hold the rammer. I have no necessity to tell you, that, if the first man should be killed, the first on the right takes his place, and that he is replaced by the first on the left and so on. But it may be all done in a citizen-like manner, quietly, as in any other shop, in a grocer's shop for instance, for it is all the same, suppose the first shopman leaves the counter, well! the second takes his place, and so on for the rest, for I again tell you it is exactly the same thing. For example, if, as in the action of the Redoubtable, some rascally discharge of small shot should carry off all the men from one gun, then you must take a man from each of the guns not in action. If you are only fighting one side of the ship, you may thus fit up the dismantled piece, but it must be all done quietly, for af er all we are only citizens and cannot enforce that principle too much.'

"If as citizens," hazarded counter master Rapin, "if as citizens we have our hands carried away by the cannon balls, and a head broken by the blow of a battle axe, it is my opinion that these matters are not very citizen-like."

"My dear friend" replied Master Kergouet, "I tell you, but with all the politeness that ought to exist between canonniers bourgois, that you are an ass, and a brute. What do crushed hands and broken heads signify? Cannot a trader, a member of the corporation of tanners, of Romorantin for ins ance, break a leg by a fall? have his head fractured by a tile? is there any thing warlike in that? once for all, is he any the less a citizen, because he is a l g or a head the less?"

"But." said M. Rapin. "but, M. Kergouet, you are talking nonsense; sacre dieu! it is not the same thing, for... "

"What you wish to put me in a passion, have the goodness to be silent and attend to the transport of the powder, without saying a word, as a workman does when ordered by his syndic," replied Master Kergouet, in a severe tone.

At this instant the steersman came to say that the commander was making his inspection.

Monval, who commanded the artillery also made his appearance, and soon afterwards Henry, followed by Saint Sauveur, de Miran and the captain's clerk.

The men remained motionless and silent at their guns. Monval approached Henry hat in hand and appeared to wait his orders.

The Count's features were unruffled, but his eyes sparkled, and a slight colour animated his usually pale cheeks, his whole appearance expressed a depth of joy, and a constrained excitement, visible in spite of the power he experienced over his feelings.

The Count advanced, splendidly attired in a superbly embroidered uniform, covered with magnificent lace, the lower part of his dress being of the most elegant fashion, white silk stockings, shining black shoes, with red heels, and golden buckles; well powdered with sweet scented powder his embroidered hat under his arm, his right hand in the pocket of his scarlet and gold waistcoat which partially concealed a portion of the rich hilt of his sword, and its blue velvet scabbard.

He walked round the battery without uttering a syllable, but his penetrating glance, after having carefully examined each gun, and noticed everything in detail was turned upon the faces of the gunners, which he examined with the same fixed attention.

"*Sarprejeu*!" said the second master, Rapin, opening his large nostrils, and inhaling the perfume Henry left behind him, "*Sarprejeu*! if the commandant would be good fellow enough only to place himself for one hour a day in the steerage it would become as sweet as a nut.

Henry continued his inspection:

"What makes you so pale?" he said sharply to the second man on the left of the third gun on the larboard side, who was partly resting himself on his gun.

"Commandant," said the man without being disconcerted. "I have just recovered from a fit of sickness."

"What sickness?"

"This, commandant." and he opened his jacket and shirt, and showed Henry a large and deep wound scarcely healed.

"Why did you not remain in the hospital?"

"Because the principal surgeon told me that nothing but exercise would cure me, commandant, on that account I chose that of the guns, because I was used to it, and besides it will give me the chance of having a brush with the English."

"You are not strong enough."

"Oh yes! commandant, and the surgeon told me nothing but that would cure me."

"Your name?"

"Lucas, commandant."

And Henry, after having looked long at the gunner, clapped him lightly on the shoulder, with an approving air, continued his round and having completed the circuit of the battery said in a loud and firm voice,

"Your guns are in good order, my boys, but when you fire on the English it will be superb, and I hope you will give them a taste of it presently"

Then addressing Monval, "Above all, sir, do not fire without orders, and if, as I hope, we engage them at pistol-shot distance, bleed the cartridges, the ball will be heavier and have great r effect upon the timbers."

Then addressing himself to Master Kergouet, "I hope, master, you have not taken on board

any of that rascally ammunition of nails and pieces of broken iron, which makes the wounds it inflicts incurable?"

"Yes commandant, one fourth part of that kind" said the master.

"Well sir," said Henry to Monval, "I never wish it to be used on board my vessel, except in the last extremity; this kind of shot is no better than any other during the battle, but it leaves such horrible wounds afterwards. It is quite necessary to kill as many as you can during the action, but to calculate on the wounds you can inflict and purposely to render them incurable, is a speculation or rather an act of cowardice I have never allowed, you understand me, M. de Monval?"

"Your orders shall be obeyed, commandant."

Scarcely had Henry uttered these words than he heard a great noise below. The count who had to finish his inspection in that part of the vessel moved hastily in that direction, and as he approached the main hatchway, for the purpose of going down the companion, he was almost thrown down by a man, who in his endeavours to escape was climbing the ladder with precipitation, it was Rumphius.

"Why, what the devil do you do here, governor?" said Henry half smiling, and half in anger, "where are you running? instead of remaining quietly in the hold, as I advised your brother, this is not your place, my worthy philosopher, you'd find it very difficult to measure the curve of the war planets that will be soon pouring from this battery."

Rumphius's body was half out of the hatchway and behind him might have been seen the face of poor Sulpice, who was doing his best to keep back the astronomer by the sleeve of his gown.

"I tell you what it is, count," said the sage, with his usual sang froid, we shall soon, it appears, find ourselves in the midst of a battle in which men will fall as thick as the grains of maize when shaken by the spirit of Naraca, as Patatasays. And for a long while I have been desirous to find out some methed of measuring the rate of the displacement of the air occasioned by the discharge of artillery. This, then, is what I intend to do, I will seat myself quietly in the shrouds during the firing, and then I will seriously employ myself in taking observations."

You should have seen Sulpice's face during this simple avowal.

"Why you are mad, governor," said Henry, unable to resist a fit of laughter, "but what of the balls?"

"The balls — the balls — the balls!" said the astronomer, in three different intonations of voice, and with a look of the greatest astonishment.

"Yes," said Henry, "will the balls alter their course to allow you to take your observations at your ease?"

Why that is true, I never thought of the balls. "said Rumphius coolly," then he added, as he made another attempt to get up the ladder, "Bah! bah! Yama the spirit of war, will respect an admirer of Vishnou, and...."

"Not in the least, my dear philosopher, he you call Yama has I believe very little influence over the direction of the cannon balls of His Britannic Majesty's squadron, so have the goodness to go back to your post below."

And pushing him gently, Henry made the sage descend backwards until he reached the hold, in spite of the supplications the astronomer renewed at every step he was obliged to abandon.

Then, again recommending him to the care of Sulpice, Henry proceeded to the surgeon's quarters, to be satisfied every thing was in readiness for the reception of the wounded.

And there doctor Gedeon with his sleeves tucked up above his elbows was arranging his frightful instruments with the greatest coolness possible, and abusing his assistants because they were not quick enough.

"Well doctor," said the count to Gedeon, "every thing ready—nothing wanting?"

"Nothing whatever, Monsieur le Commandant."

"I have no necessity to recommend you to take the greatest care of the wounded. As to those who come down without being wounded, if such a case should occur, which I have no reason to expect, let the captain at arms be acquainted with it, and they shall be shot on the spot."

"All men are equal, commandant—have the same claim upon my attention, and I would equally cut off the arm of—"

"Sir," said Henry impatiently, "I excuse your observations. When I give orders they are executed in silence."

Then, turning towards the chaplain, who, resting against the vessel's side, examined the frightful preparations with a disdainful and melancholy air, "a thousand pardons, I had not the honour of seeing you, chaplain," said the count to the abbe de Cilly, whose pale face, framed, as it were, in his black dress, was scarcely visible in the darkness of the cockpit.

The abbe slightly bent his head, but made no answer. Henry wished to address him; but he, always at his ease, so fluent of speech, could not find a single word, and remained silent.

In fact, even for Henry, who was above all fear, there was something so singular in the aspect of this silent and gloomy priest, whose very presence in this spot was eloquent; that, seeing him so near the horrible apparatus of the doctor, you could not avoid imagining he was there to attend upon those whom no earthly attention could save.

But so it happened, that Henry, vexed with himself at being unable to say any thing to the abbe, made him a cold bow and re-mounted the ladder, again recommending Sulpice to watch over his brother, who exclaimed as the count passed him—

"Monsieur le Comte, only let me be upon deck for a quarter of an hour, but let it be when the detonation and vibration of the air is at its height."

Henry did not hear him, and was already on the gun-deck.

When he reached the battery he gave his last directions to Monval, and went on deck.

At the moment he appeared the Sylphid was doubling Point St. Matthew, and the two vessels were tacking still in the Froise.

"Well, sir," said he to Thomas, "where is this firing?"

"We hear it less, commandant, and they have made no signal. Probably the action is taking place to the windward of Ouessant, and the land conceals it from us."

"Run on the same tack, sir, and, since we can carry no more canvass, let the sails be wetted, that perhaps will give us one or two knots more."

"The fire engine is not ready, commandant."

"Why not, sir? I expect that every thin g on board shall be ready at all times.'

"It shall be got ready, commandant."

And the lieutenant, suppressing a sign of impatience, proceeded to execute the orders of the commander.

The horizon began to open. To the right of the Sylphid might be seen the highlands of Ouessant, and the coast of Abrevack bristled with breakers; to the left the ocean was seen in the distance, in all its immensity.

The Sylphid kept on her course admirably, and in her wake the two ships, that were slower sailers, extended their mass of canvass and timber.

"The engine is ready, commandant."

"Let it play," said Henry

At the same instant three jets of water were directed against the surface of the sails, presented to the wind, for the purpose of closing the meshes of the cloth, and thus preventing the passage of the air.

"Let the topmast men come down, sir," said the commander, "the air is cold, and it is useless to expose the health of the men unnecessarily."

"He'll roll them up in cotton next," murmured the lieutenant, causing the order to be executed.

"All hands from the rigging," shouted the boatswain.

The order was scarcely given before the sailors descended from the shrouds by means of the guy ropes."

"There is still some one in the mizen shrouds," said Henry, whose eye nothing escaped.

"I'll lay a wager," said the boatswain, "it's that cursed Losophe;" then, whistling gently, he cried out, "yo-ho there, in the mizen shrouds."

At the sound of the boatswain's whistle two heads appeared above the stancheons of the shrouds, and leant over.

The two heads belonged to Losophe and his dog.

"Why do both of you remain there, when I piped all hands from the rigging?"

"Master Frank, we are making a clue to the bolt rope of a bonnet," said Losophe, and, as if to support his assertion, the dog gave a short bark.

"What is that?" said Henry, "is there a dog here?"

"Commandant, it is the dog I spoke to you about; the crew set great store by him, and I thought—"

"Well—so be it—but the engine, sir, the engine."

"Let the engine play," said the lieutenant, and they played, principally in the direction of the mizen-mast; for the sailors were delighted at playing a trick with Losophe: at the head of these mad-brained pumpers Daniel was found.

Losophe received the aspersion with stoical indifference, saying to his dog, who had his share of it, "You only wanted to be baptized, St. Medard, now you may bite the priests themselves."

To this St. Medard answered by shaking his tail with an air of intelligence.

"The engines had scarcely ceased to play, when the Sylphid began to make more way, stood up for the wind, and wore on her tack, so as to double the isle.

But the scene of action was still hidden from the Sylphid, and the two vessels in her wake.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RUSE DE GUERRE.

"JOAN, Yes, you are right; this white banner is propitious to the friends of France, and brings disaster upon her enemies."—SCHILLER.

OH, if, on a beautiful summer evening, under the enchanting sky of Zante or Cephalonia, when a gentle breeze scarcely ripples the surface of the sea, bringing with it the perfume of the orange-trees on the shore,—then, when the burning sun sheds, as if with regret, its last golden rays, oh, if you have sought the delicious freshness of the calm and limpid waters of the Levant, have you not seen a small and graceful fish sparkle like rubies, empurpled with a violet-red, whose sombre splendour is enhanced by its brilliant scales and iridescent fins?

Admiring its grace and beauty, have you not taken it for some good genius of the waves, for some gentle aerial spirit, who has clothed himself in this attire to pass unknown through the transparent depths of the sea, and to gambol amidst the beautiful green algæ, that enlace the petrified branches of the red coral like emerald garlands.

Then, enchanted with this ocean jewel, you have approached to seize it. But he—is it not so?—happy and foolish, sometimes remaining motionless, allows himself to be approached; then dives, as he flies, and then returns; and at length escapes leaving behind it a thousand circles of silver, and thus seduces you into pursuit.

But when, delighted, you at length imagine you are in possession of it, have you not seen, in the track of this charming fish,—have you not seen the two round eyes of a gigantic white shark glisten, with its black and rough skin, beating the water with its enormous tail, opening its frightful throat, and rapidly moving towards you, guided by that attractive pilot, who always precedes it, and thus charitably guides it to its prey?

Then—is it not so?—collecting all your strength, to avoid the sharp teeth of your enemy, you gain the hospitable shore, if you have the power.

Well, thus the dangerous and seductive pilot, the Sylphid—as lively, as graceful, as golden, and equally deceitful—guided and preceded the ponderous and dreadful ships of war, that, hidden by the highlands of the south of Ouessant, were floating in the wake of the frigate.

At this moment, the firing, that still continued, became weaker by degrees, and soon ceased entirely. From this it might have been imagined that the vessel attacked had been taken, or that having boldly attempted the Passage du Four, it had thus escaped the enemy.

Henry made no doubt the latter was the case, when he perceived the watch-tower of Ouessant signalling the Tonnant—when he saw, to the windward of the island, the two frigates of the enemy pursuing and engaged with a French frigate, which had taken shelter in the Passage du Four, where they did not dare to follow it.

The Tonnant made a signal to the Sylphid to double Point Porclas, which concealed the French ships of the line, and to approach the enemy alone, as if for the purpose of reconnoitering, then to sail off, manœuvring in such a manner as to lead the English frigates close to the point, and almost within range of the two ships, who then making

their appearance, would easily take possession of the enemy.

"A cowardly duty this," said Henry, displeased, "to serve as a bait for these two poor frigates, to lead them traitorously into a snare, and cause them to be taken without firing a shot. By heaven! it is like the trick of an ignoble merchantman, and not of a noble frigate. The seaman who commands that ship," added he, pointing to the Tonnant, "is he not aware of it? I would rather a hundred times, alone, attack these two vessels, than act in this manner."

But, as above all things, Henry obeyed the orders of his superiors with passive obedience; he hoisted all sail, and executed the task allotted to him, while the two men of war, hidden by the land, awaited the easy prey the count was leading to them.

Then the Sylphid, beautiful and decorated, doubling point Porclas, advanced alone into the ocean, with the bashful and timid air of a young bride who ventures trembling into a party, and seeks on all sides for the face of a friend.

The English vessels soon perceived the French frigate, and confiding in their superior force thus allowed her to approach them.

And the Sylphid, still tacking to windward, also approached the enemy, and soon found herself within a quarter of a mile of them.

Then, as if undecided, she reefed her sails by degrees.

The English making all sail, when within gunshot hoisted the British flag, and fired two cannon the balls of one of which fell within a few fathoms of the frigate.

Then, as if she only then discovered her danger, the Sylphid suddenly tacked, hoisted all sail and stood away towards the fatal point, behind which the two ships lurked like sharks.

The English frigates following the example of the Sylphid, and followed close in her wake endeavouring to place her between two fires, and prevent her reaching the port.

But alas! alas! scarcely had the poor English doubled the cursed Point Porclas than the Sylphid passed them, running before the wind, hoisted the royal flag of France, and fired a broadside, when the two ships of war appeared under all sail, so that finding themselves thus entrapped, without any hope of escape, the two English ships were obliged to strike their flag and surrender, after a slight resistance, which they could not avoid making to save appearances.

It was then ascertained that the French vessel the English had attacked, was in fact the Minerva frigate.

After this unexpected affair had come to so happy a conclusion, the captain of the Tonnant, made a signal for Henry to come on board to receive the orders he had to communicate to him on the part of M. Castries.

The Sylphid brought to, and a quarter of an hour afterwards Henry was on board the Tonnant.

"Bravo, M. de Vaudry," said the commander of the vessel to him, "no one could have played the part better."

"Still Marquis," said Henry with an air of displeasure, "it is a species of glory I would willingly relinquish to any one. I am not extremely scrupulous, but really I shall reproach myself with the action for the rest of my life."

"Why you are mad," said the marquis it was a fair action; the English fought the Minerva of twenty-four guns with two thirty-six gun frigates; upon my honour I am less scrupulous than you, and I am delighted my dear count."

So saying he took Harry by the arm and led him into the cabin.

"The Marshal de Castries has given me some despatches for you, count," he said to him; "here they are, and in addition you are ordered not to open them until you reach the Azores, when you will find instructions for your future proceedings. The Marshal, who knows you well, has also begged that I will request you to avoid an action when it is too unequal; for the despatches you carry out to New England are of the greatest importance and expected impatiently by the Chevalier des Touches. Adieu, M. de Vaudry, I wish you every success; you are more fortunate than I am, for we are obliged to return into Brest." Then he added in Henry's ear, in a confidential tone, "But perhaps we shall see each other again."

"How so, Marquis?" said Henry.

"Oh, I cannot say more," added the commander of the vessel, with a mysterious look.

Then re-conducting Henry on deck he shook him cordially by the hand, and the count entered his boat amid the congratulations of the officers of the Tonnant, who could not help admiring the speed, elegance, and beautiful sailing qualities of the frigate.

"Again farewell, gentlemen," said Henry, to the officers who were leaning over the bulwarks of the vessel, "a thousand remembrances to my friends in France."

And rowing towards his frigate he was soon on board, not without casting a look of pride upon his Sylphid, as she gracefully swang under her topsails.

"Once on board, the count gave orders to put out to sea; and taking advantage of the breeze which had shifted from the north-west to north-east, he commenced his course by taking a large offing in the west-south-west, after having ordered the powder room to be closed, and the preparations for combat suspended until further orders.

"Well, master Frank," said M. Kergouet, leaving his battery in vexation, "what do you think of this? Was it worth the trouble of getting our guns ready, to offer fire to the poor cannon, and to leave their appetite unsatisfied, by allowing them merely one useless volley, which had more the appearance of a childish salute than a discharge of shot! Once again I ask you, father Frank, what do you say to this? In a well regulated shop it never happens in this manner; if the master says to his clerks 'it is a holiday to day, well—it is a holiday; but here—here—well what do you say to it, master Frank?"

"I say, Master Kergouet, I am not one of those who like to see the vessel on board of which he serves used as a bait for the enemy, that she may be taken by others, and I am not pleased at being used like the carrion or the maggot they place at the end of a line to catch a whiting."

"Don't talk of the maggot it is too disgusting, but I accept the comparison of the carrion, it is more delicate."

"Delicate or not, if I am not deceived the commander is no more pleased than we are with the the task they have imposed upon him, to begin the campaign with, for he looks like a leopard who has as many teeth as hairs, as the saying is. I knew Giroux, who is dead now, he was master on board the Robust where the commandant served, who, as he tells me was a complete hare, who...."

"He could not have been a leopard then, if he

was a hare," said Master Kergouet with an ironical air.

"Hold your tongue, you joker, because you speak like a book," said Master Frank with a sneer. "Hare or not, he is a sailor, and, like a sailor he hates being made a maggot."

"Maggot again, Master Frank, it is revolting; but stop, putting the maggot on one side and without imagining I am superstitious, it is wearysome for reasonable people who believe in prognostication to...."

"Ah, now you are going to begin your nonsense!" said Frank interrupting him; "stop, Master Kergouet, it is you who have made such a fool of my nephew Daniel by your palaver about good and bad omens, and your nonsense about the fire of St. Elmo, you have made him tremble, but you can't bite me; my skin is rather too hard, my old cayman."

And, slapping the master familiarly on the shoulder, he went below.

"Can't bite me—can't bite me," repeated Monsieur Kergouet, with a disappointed air, "it is your skin is in fault, you simpleton! your skin is too hard, you savage! for presages, why they are like the barometer; they foretel good and evil, so I tell our purser, of that Spaniard who is always as melancholy as death, and never seen, but for ever shut up in the caboose. Ah! that man does not belong to the posterity of Adam, a child can see that;" added the canonnier bourgois, turning round to take a last look at his battery, which he so ingeniously called his shop.

It was by this time about four o'clock in the afternoon. The January sun shone in the pure sky, and slowly sunk to the horizon, tinging it with a bright and burning red.

The Sylphid floated gracefully on this magnificent sea, leaving behind her on her left, the high lands of Brittany, which the last rays of the sun covered with a golden tint.

All eyes were directed towards the shore, where every one left a recollection or a regret.

For a departure like this has always something

solemn in it; in a time of war particularly, when you quit your country, its affections and habits, for an uncertain future, as hidden as the ocean when covered with a fog.

This serious and profound sensation weakens not the courage, but it plunges the least sensitive man into a kind of dull and melancholy reverie.

On this account the first day of departure is usually a sad one on board, especially when you see the earth look smiling like a friend, who bids you farewell.

Or, angry as a creditor, who clings to the shore and sees his debtor depart.

Or, happy as the debtor, who sees his creditor leave.

Or, in tears, like a young girl, who has merely the recollection of a fault, gentle and cruel, like.. all the faults of a girl.

Or.... but this would be the history of the human heart, the history of that wonderful prism, which colours the same earth in so many various ways.

But once at sea, well out at sea, as soon as we no longer see anything except the earth and ocean, then we give ourselves up entirely to this new life, and its chances, its perils, and the emotions that are constantly rising, and absorbing you entirely, leaving you scarcely an opportunity for recollection.

Notwithstanding his frivolous character, the count did not escape these feelings; so that after having given his sailing orders to the lieutenant, he retired to his cabin, and there leaning on the blue velvet cushion, that surrounded the gilded window, he cast a long look upon the coast of that France where he had passed so many happy moments, when Monval entered, after having been announced by Henry's valet de chambre, and said to him,

"Commandant, the look-out an the coast asks for our number.

"Well, give it to him, sir," said Henry, vexed at being disturbed at this moment; "what is the name of this curious look-out?"

It is one recently established at the tower of Koat-Vën, commandant; stay, you can see it from this place."

It would be difficult to describe the effect that name, pronounced at such a time, at such an hour, had upon Henry; he knit his brows, bowed to the officer as if he wished him to retire, and began to pace the cabin with great strides.

The cabin, that bore evidence of the taste of M. Doquin, formed an oblong square, the walls of which were hidden by thick blue embroidered satin, framed in rods of gold; a magnificent Turkey carpet covered the flooring, and two wide and deep canopies of gilt wood extended along its length on each side of the centre door, which was itself covered with satin of the same colour.

In front of these canopies, and on the longest sides of the room, the four windows of the poop opened, with their velvet cushions, and draperies gracefully flung over cornices, and retained in their places by brilliant strings of acorns and golden fringe.

At each end of this cabin was a glass door, one of which communicated with a dressing room, and the other with a bath.

The door of the principal entrance, which we have said was concealed by a false door, opened into the dining apartment, and to the left was Henry's bedchamber, equal in all respects to the most elegant boudoir.

Finally there was an ante-room, in front of the dining room, where his maitre d' hotel and valets remained.

At the door of the room, on the gun deck, two sailors, armed with pikes, mounted guard; and others, seated on benches, awaited any orders Henry might have to send.

In the cabin, beneath each of the canopies, a transparent compass was suspended to the ceiling, so that whether seated or lying, the commander could always tell the direction in which the ship was sailing.

And then, on shelves placed between the windows, and curiously inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ivory, and silver, was Henry's rich collection of charts and nautical instruments, and a small assortment of licentious books or fashionable romances, together with all the known works on naval strategy and tactics, French, English, or Spanish. For Henry had also a practical knowledge of the two last languages, having remained a considerable time in the various possessions of the two countries.

Finally, within each window there was a small carved mahogany box, containing the rarest flowers, which the faithful Germeaü attended to with great care; then beneath the tables, that were hung to the ceiling by gilded chains, shone the most choice Sevres porcelain and Bohemian glass, with spoons of silver gilt.

I had almost forgotten the Chinese stoves, covered with cardinals of dazzling scarlet plumage, silver, and azure; these birds appeared as if alive, and suspended to the balmy petals of the flowers with which all the windows were enamelled.

The rooms of all vessels of war, although sufficiently ornamented, were far from being equal to these in sumptuous elegance. But Henry, thanks to his large fortune, was able to display in this small space a luxury replete with taste and elegance.

Leaning, then, against one of the windows of this splendid cabin, M. de Vaudry, weary of his agitated walk, contemplated the Tower of Koat-Vën, which was still visible on the coast, in spite of the increasing shadows of night.

And it can be truly said, that Henry at the sight of this tower, which recalled so suddenly to his mind his adventure with the duchess, could not avoid thoughts which, if they were not bitter, were, at least, melancholy; but a melancholy soft and full of charms, that made him deliciously sad.

For, as we have already said, a man never suffers very cruel tortures at the idea that through his inconstancy and scorn he has caused a woman to die of sorrow.

Such cruel tortures rather affect him who believes, that the forsaken one consoles herself for his inconstancy and disdain by living happily a long and merry life.

But what I have said of men applies more strongly to women; for, what they most execrate, after a faithless lover, is one who finds consolation.

In the mean time, the sun had long descended beneath the horizon, and the count was still looking in the direction of the coast of France.

But Henry was not the only one to whom the Tower of Koat-Vën had been the cause of thought and remembrance.

There was Rumphius, who had passed many nights on its platform watching the stars.

There was also Sulpice, the good Sulpice, who

had also passed many nights in watching his brother.

And there was Rita and her attendant.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CABOOSE.

"These surprises in the midst of sorrow, these short enjoyments of illusion, assist me, to a certain extent, in shifting misfortune from one shoulder to another."—THE BARON DE HAUSSEZ.

THEY give the name of caboose to that part of the false deck which is closed in above the first plane of the hold, and under the forward hatchway.

It is here that the rations of the crew are given out, and here the purser usually lodges.

The caboose, a dismal, dirty place, rendered infectious by the exhalations of the provisions it contains, a suffocating spot, where the air and light of the day never reach; a narrow and humid prison, whose walls are always beaten by the waves that break against the prow.

This was the place Rita and Perez had inhabited for the last six days, in a small low chamber about eight feet in length.

The duchess was stretched out upon a cot, in man's attire.

Perez, seated at her head, appeared to be attending to her; for through the loophole of this cavern the unfortunate duchess had seen, as well as Henry, and at the same instant as Henry, the Tower of Koat-Vèn, which standing out white against a sky darkened by the approach of night, appeared like a spectre in its shroud.

"I feel myself better, Perez," said the duchess, "better; but I could not resist the dreadful emotion I felt at the sight of that cursed tower. Oh, Perez! who could have told me, six months since, when I went there so happy, my soul so full of joy, to console a being I imagined to be suffering and isolated; when I dreamt of such a happy future, when for the first time in my life I thought I really lived? Oh, Perez! who could have told me, that this day I should again see the same place, but forgotten, faded, hideous; sailing unknown on the same sea, as that over which *he* and I have both cast our eyes, talking of love; over this sea that now appears so beautiful and grand, to whose murmurs we listened while we suspended our kisses? Oh! how dreadful it is to think of, Perez! Why do I not go mad? Oh! should I go mad!"

Then the duchess was silent, and again began in convulsive accents.

"Alas! what I suffer—I feel suffocated! Oh, God! how infectious and heavy is the air I breathe here!" And she added, with an accent of heart-rending sorrow: "Oh, my chateau of Kervan, my green meadows, my shady walks! Oh, Madrid and its Prado; its beautiful summer night! Oh, my almost royal existence—my lands—my palace—where are you? But what do I say? why these regrets? after all, is it not still all mine? Am I not still the Duchess of Almeda, working out a sterile vengeance? I could have this man slain by one of my lacqueys, and then it would be over. I should recover my rank, my titles, no more should I go to prison with common girls; I should not be scourged, nor dragged through the mud by the soldiers; I should not be shut up in a vessel with sailors; I should see the sun, the trees; I should possess my house as formerly, my gentlemen and gentlewomen; because, after all, I am still the Duchess of Almeda,"—cried Rita, in the excitement of delirium. For the new emotion with which she was overcome, sorrow, hatred, and suffering, had overthrown her reason.

"Madame la Duchesse d' Almeda is dead, madame, dead—do you hear?" said Perez, in a low, hollow tone, with the saug froid that usually characterised him.

His well-known voice recalled the wandering thoughts of Rita, and pressing her attenuated hands on her forehead: "Oh, pardon, Perez! I was wandering; I was regretting the past; but after all, after all I have suffered, it may well be allowed in a poor woman, may it not? But see you not, to judge by my sorrow," she added, with a bitter laugh, "see you not, what an excellent inspiration it was to cause myself to become dead, and disfigured—as a duchess and beautiful, observe, I could not have borne the frightful tortures I have endured. At the first trial I should, like a coward, have abandoned my vengeance; I should merely have killed him; while the more I suffer, the more I endure, and the less can I make up my mind to kill him—kill him!—kill him!—What would that be to what I have endured? And then again, there is always time for that. No, no, he must, in the first place, be dishonoured, betrayed, tortured; and the poison, we mixed with their food, will bring that about. Oh, I am certain of it!—stay, Perez!" said the duchess, opening the book of Jose Ortez, and pointing out these lines to Perez, "read this:"

"And their features became livid, and their sleep was disturbed by horrible dreams, and they lost their strength and gaiety, and from brave men they became cowards; and the hands of the young trembled like the hands of age, and they became meagre and looked like spectres, and their wandering eyes rolled in their orbits, and they died in the midst of a horrible delirium."

Then, violently closing the book, "Tell me, Perez, when these unfortunate men shall find themselves thus attacked, and that *he* alone is exempt, what vengeance will they not take? What frightfully superstitious ideas will not arise in their rude minds? And then, see you, Perez, now, it is not my slighted love alone I have to avenge, it is not this man that I regret; it is, besides, my name, my fortune, my sumptuous life, my comforts, in fact, of which I know all the value, from the misery and ignominy I now endure. It is horrible, it is weak to acknowledge it; but so it is: I presumed too much on my strength, I had not sufficient purity for a vengeance of this description, or rather, he is not worthy of it—*he*—so much sorrow for him alone does him too much honour. Merely to regret *him*, and to reckon this life of dirt and filth to which I have led myself as nothing; no, no, all that, Perez, all that is now as powerful, perhaps more so, in exciting my rage, as his infamous deceit. The brook has become a torrent, Perez, a torrent that drags all into its stream. For I care little for the means, so that my vengeance is terrible. Terrible, because I have felt and endured all, all, Perez, the weight of chains, the mud they threw in my face, the blows they inflicted on me, on me, Perez.... thy mistress —me. Oh, hell! oh, curses! but it was an ineffable enjoyment compared to what I am preparing for him. I could tear out this man's heart to devour it all bleeding." And Rita half raised her-

self, and straightened her arms, it was dreadful to see.... her eyes rolled in their orbits.... and she trembled in all her limbs.

At this instant a bell sounded ; it was the bell for evening prayer.

"What is that, Perez?' said Rita, the sound bringing back her recollection.

"It is the hour for prayer, madame, for these men pray."

"Well, then, I also will pray," cried the duchess, "but I will pray to Satan, the deity of evil. Satan, thou alone art the chief ruler of this infamous world! Satan, to thee am I devoted; thee I intreat; abandon me not!'

And Rita became insensible.

"Calm yourself, madame, calm yourself!" said Perez, "I hear some one."

And Perez, seizing a lanthorn, rushed to the door and opened it—but he saw nothing.

All was silent in the darkness.

When he returned to Rita, he found her overcome with a deep prostration of strength, which had succeeded her violent rage, and rendered the feelings of the unfortunate woman rather more calm.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE CHARM.

"Take the foot of a frog and three swallows' eyes."—Le Petit Albert.

At the very instant the duchess invoked Satan, a slight noise was heard, as we are aware.

Although Perez saw nothing in the darkness, two men were nevertheless hidden, and heard all, but without understanding anything, it is true, for Rita and her attendant always conversed in Spanish; but a single word had been noticed by the two curious listeners—that word was "Satan."

The two listeners were Daniel and Losophe.

It will be remembered, perhaps, that at the conclusion of some affair about a rosary, Daniel had though fit to hurt Losophe's feelings by administering a multiplicity of fisticuffs, as Master Kergouet said.

And Losophe, as full of rancour as a poet, was determined to be revenged on Daniel, and, that he might succeed in his intention, the first thing he did was, to forget the blows so liberally bestowed by the Breton, and by cunning and hypocrisy he had succeeded in creeping a good way into his confidence.

We also know that Daniel was one of the blindest and most intrepid listeners to M. Kergouet, when that admirable canonnier bourgois told his terrible tales, of which, the flying Dutchman, the fire of the devil, or the condemned pilot, were always the heros.

So that, thanks to a combination of ideas, common enough amongst ardent and narrow-minded men, Daniel, notwithstanding his religious belief, dreamt of nothing but fate, magic, demons, and men devoted to good or evil genii.

Not one of these dispositions of his mind escaped the notice of Losophe, who, without having any definite intention, always encouraged them, imagining, perhaps, that he might turn them to his profit or revenge, when a very common accident gave him the hope of satisfying both.

The dismal looks of Perez, the perfect solitude in which he had lived since he had been on board, his foreign accent, and his melancholy looking dress, had made a great impression on the sailors' minds, who, in their moments of leisure, always amused themselves with the most trifling matters, and magnified their importance with their usual exaggeration; and, in addition to this, his rude manner had not assisted in conciliating the good feelings of the men, who, according to their custom of giving men nicknames, had, at Losophe's suggestion, baptised him *Grand Gibet*, on account of his sad and austere countenance.

Losophe had no other cause for hating Perez, excepting that he had been surprised by the Spaniard, on one occasion, when he was endeavouring to steal some of the provisions from the caboose.

Besides, there was more fear than wickedness of intention in Losophe's behaviour towards Perez. But, I know not by what fatality Daniel observed to Losophe, on one occasion, that Grand Gibet was never present at morning or evening prayers, and that all the crew said the same.

This was like a ray of light for Losophe, who, speculating on the credulity and simplicity of the unfortunate Breton, began by telling him the most ridiculous and terrible tales about Perez, and proving to him, by a multitude of arguments, each more stupid than the preceding, that Grand Gibet was a supernatural being, who must be connected with the devil, because he was never present at prayers, and that he had the power, if he willed it, of enriching you, or injuring you, of making you high-admiral, emperor, or I know not what; in fact, confusing poor Daniel by all manner of tales, he concluded by declaring that, by means of a charm he, Losophe, possessed, as one initiated in the secrets of magic, he could enable the Breton to be witness to the interviews of Grand Gibet with the devil, and could, perhaps, even make him participate in his power.

Such was Losophe's plan, and what seemed must necessarily facilitate its execution was the following fact:—

Rita had come on board at night and scarcely any one, with the exception of the lieutenant and the clerk who had entered her as purser's assistant,—scarcely any one, I say, knew that Perez had a companion,

But Losophe, who was always skulking about the caboose for the purpose of stealing wine or eau-de-vie, according to custom, had often heard the imprecations or sobs of the duchess, so that he made up his mind to cause the mysterious companion of Perez to be taken for Grand Gibet's familiar spirit, and thus to amuse himself with the confiding Breton, making him pay, at the same time, very dearly for the charm he had promised him.

In fact, Losophe brought Daniel three or four times to the door of Perez's berth, and the novice, hearing the voice that answered the Spaniard in an unknown tongue, sometimes filled with rage, at others with indignation, firmly believed that Grand Gibet had a familiar demon, and fell easily into every trap Losophe thought fit to set for him.

This time matters appeared much worse, when Daniel heard distinctly the name of Satan.

"Well," said Losophe to him, "you see, I did not tell you a lie, they are speaking in the language of the *Sabbat*, which neither you nor I understand, but *Grand Gibet* called on Satan in a loud voice, I hope that is clear, he repeated it often enough—

Satan, Satan, Satan. If he be not a sorcerer, you are one, Daniel."

"Certainly, he said, Satan," replied the simple Breton, crossing himself, with a terrified air. "He said so, but what can this beggar *Grand Gibet* want with the devil on board?"

"You see very well, my dear boy," answered Losophe, "that is his secret, and I, who am at present only what you may call lieutenant of magic—and I am not one of that kind to say I know when I do not know; for of all things you ought not to deceive a friend—a true friend, like you, Daniel."

"Are there lieutenants, then, in magic, as well as in the sea service, Losophe?" said Daniel, much interested."

"All the same grades, my dear boy, but every thing is always done fairly in magic. If you are 'good magician,' well, your next rank is 'better magician;' as if you were to say, lieutenant in the art, if you are 'better magician,' you are next 'very good magician;' which is the same as the captain of a sloop. Then again, if you are 'very good magician,' your next grade is 'famous magician,' and so on."

"You are 'better magician,' then, Losophe?"

"For these seven years, three months, and one day. But the Count St. Germain, who is 'most excellent magician,' as if you were to say Admiral in the art, has promised to make me 'very good,' the first vacancy that occurs."

"But what is it to be 'better magician?'" asked Daniel with great curiosity.

"Oh, my dear fellow, it's simple enough! what is it to be, Daniel? why to be, Daniel, is it not? well, it is all the same thing."

"That's true," said the Breton, much enlightened by this lucid definition,

"But tell me, Losophe, what would be the advantage of the charm you told me I should have for a certain sum?"

"First, it will enable you to see the devil; and if it were only on that account, it is a pleasant thing to be able to mention it in company, or to the young ladies, who, according to your physiognomy, you must be in the habit of visiting. So much for the pleasure of the thing; for as the wise man says, *defile durci.* As to the use of it; when you once know what the devil is like, why you may defy him."

"Ought I to defy *Grand Gibet* also, Losophe?'

"I think so; for look you, this *Grand Gibet* is perhaps worse than the devil; for after all, in the case of the devil, it is natural for him to be a devil, he could not be otherwise; but in *Grand Gibet* it is sheer wickedness, do you see, downright villany. So with my charm—should *Grand Gibet* be a fated man, or cousin to the flying Dutchman, you would know it at once. And knowing it, you must take care never to be without your rosary in your pocket, and then he will not be able to injure you."

The word rosary recalled his old grievances to the novice, and he exclaimed, "Then why did you tie mine to your dog's tail, you rascal!"

"For the sake of the charm," said Losophe gravely, "on account of the charm, which I knew you would ask me for. As a lieutenant magician I can always foresee what charms will be demanded of me."

"What do you want to make this charm with, Losophe?'

"To make my charm, Daniel," said Losophe with a thoughtful air, telling off on his fingers the ingredients necessary to perfect the wonderful operation, "to make my charm, first I want a black fowl, but it must be as black as jet, that is essential; then five leaves out of a mass book—a Dutch cheese—a six livre crown piece—three ends of wire—a piece of twenty-four sols—seven, you hear me well — seven measures of eau de vie, another crown of six livres, but it must be marked with the cow, a pair of worsted stockings, and a piece of beef for St. Medard, but it must not be too lean, and there must be no bone in it."

"Has St. Medard, then, any thing to do with the charm?"

"What do you mean; any thing to do with the charm! did not I baptize him for the express purpose? Did I not tell you it was on that account I took your rosary, when you behaved so unjustly towards me with those heavy blows on the back with your fist? Not that I reproach you in the least on that account, dear Daniel, on the contrary I was much flattered, because when I foresaw that you would become my friend, it told me that I should have a very powerful friend."

"You would have discovered it, Losophe, without that. But, Losophe, is a fowl absolutely necessary for your charm?"

"Must have a fowl, and a black fowl too, Daniel,"

"As to a fowl," said Daniel, scratching his head, "that's a difficult thing to get at; and yet there are plenty of fowls in the commandant's coops—but it is very wrong to steal, Losophe—very wrong."

"But it is not stealing, my dear boy, it is for a charm; and when it is for a charm, religion allows you to do it; indeed, religion can oblige you to do it."

"Do you think so, Losophe? But then I have only seen white fowls in the coop, and you want a black one, as black as jet, you say."

"Ah, you beggar of a Breton, how thick your head is," said Losophe, quickly, "I wanted a black fowl no doubt, but in case there were none but black, then there would be no white fowls, then a black fowl would be indispensible, so would a white one be when there are none but white: so that you see very well, that, on the contrary, a black fowl would be worth nothing at all—a black fowl would be dreadful, it would spoil the charm—it is absolutely necessary it should be white. Oh, what a thick head you have! It is a white fowl, I tell you, a white fowl, and the whiter it is the better."

"Well, then, I will wring the neck of a white one, so much the worse."

"That's right; but you must take care to put the head and feet in your hammock."

"In my hammock! is that to assist the charm, Losophe?"

"Yes, a part of the charm; but as you are a good fellow, I will explain that to you: the claws of the fowl, you see, Daniel, are intended to make the devil walk before you, and the head is to enable you to see him; it is for the same purpose as the cheese, to attract him by its sweet smell, the eau de vie is to surround him with flames, the worsted stockings are to enable me to walk in the flames without burning my legs, the ends of wire are to tie him with, and the leaves out of the mass book to make him speak. I tell this to you, Daniel, because you are a friend, but you must not mention it to any one else."

"And the two six livres crowns, and the twenty-four sol pieces," said Daniel, "what effect have they on the devil, Losophe?"

"To bribe him, my dear boy, to bribe him by means of gold."

"But St. Medard, Losophe, what has he to do with the devil with his piece of beef, not too lean and without any bone?"

"Ah you are very selfish, Daniel! Ought not the poor beast to strengthen himself beforehand to defend me in case the devil roars; for he has been known to roar sometimes."

"Has St. Medard any power over the devil, Losophe?"

"Has he any power! I believe he has, since your rosary was tied to his tail; he nearly has a grade equal to that of a singing boy, and he is more able to bother the devil because the devil will have no suspicion of a dog."

It would have been impossible to answer in a more orderly manner, or with more precision or clearness, Daniel's cunning and embarrasing questions; who, certain now that he had made a good bargain, took out two six-livre crowns and a three-livre piece from a long leather purse he carried next his skin, and gave them to Losophe, asking him for change out of his three livre-piece."

"Don't mention it," said Losophe, in the most disinterested manner, shaking Daniel by the hand, and putting the fifteen livres in his pocket, don't speak of it Daniel, if the charm succeeds you know well, I shall not be stingy enough to say a word to you about it; once more, Daniel, don't talk of the change, unless you wish to vex me."

The novice, convinced by Losophe s generosity, busied himself in collecting the things that were necessary for the accomplishment of the charm.

As for the cheese and the eau de vie, he said, "I will save them out of my rations; I can find the bits of wire any where; I have a mass book that belonged to my poor mother, which I can't read; for the worsted stockings, I have a pair my cousin Ivone bought for me at the Pardon of Plougastel; for the beef, St. Medard shall have my ration this evening. But you promise me that with all this—"

"With this," said Losophe, "when you have given me all these things, and I have completed the charm, that you shall see the devil, and when you have once seen him, as I have told you, you may defy him, and if you defy him he can do nothing to you, unless indeed, it be to load you with money, and confer rank and honour—perhaps kingdoms upon you,—or even make you a Roman emperor; but you had better not calculate on being made a Roman emperor, for that does not often occur."

"But if I don't see the devil, Losophe?"

"If you do not see him, it will be because the charm has failed because the fowl was not of a sufficiently brilliant white; then it must be done over again—you must always repeat it until it succeeds."

"Quite right, Losophe, and for my part, I shall continue to thwack you well until it does succeed," added Daniel in a gentle voice, showing at the same time his mutton fist.

"Very well, I will allow you to do it, Daniel," said Losophe calmly, "indeed I will insist on your doing it, if the charm fails; yes, Daniel, I will even make you sign a paper to oblige yourself to break my back and pummel me with your fist, if the charm does not succeed. So that you see I don't wish to deceive you."

What answer could be made to such a proof of candour? So Daniel, convinced, asked no further questions.

"Shall I see you make the charm, Losophe?"

"Not at all, my dear boy, not at all, I can't enable you to see it, for if I did it before you, you would not perceive it; you must be a magician to be able to see it, although one of the lower order, still you must be one."

"And what is the lowest rank?"

"The rank of foremast-man in magic, Daniel."

"Indeed, Losophe!"

"It is easily understood, my dear boy, for since the highest rank is 'most excellent magician,' the lowest must needs be 'wretched magician,'" said Losophe, without changing countenance.

"But can't I be 'wretched magician,'" said the ambitious Daniel.

"Oh, very well, when you have caused a charm to be worked you can, and indeed you owe it to yourself and your respectable family; but it will cost you a vast deal."

At this moment the dialogue was interrupted by the bell ringing for prayers.

"Prayers, prayers," said Daniel springing up the ladder.

"Wait for me," cried Losophe.

Then, seeing Daniel mounting the ladder, "Oh, the cursed Breton, I'll avenge myself for your blows," said Losophe, "at any rate it is as good as fifteen livres, and enough to give me and St. Medard a hearty meal. Oh, you beggarly Breton! Ah," added Losophe, as he went to join the crew at evening prayers, "Ah, you beggar of a Breton, you are safe to have your hide well flayed, even if you escape with your life.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE COUNCIL.

"You are a being full of artifices
Oh God! oh God! what shall I do, Seignior Burin?"
BURKE.

The crew of the Sylphid for eight days after it had left Brest, had a pleasant voyage, for the breeze from the north west still continued favourable for them.

Although they were not far off the latitudes where the English cruisers consorted, they had not as yet seen a single ship of the enemy.

But, alas! better would it have been for the frigate to have fallen in with two ships of the line, and seen herself surrounded by fire and sword, or to have been swallowed up by the sea, than to endure that icy and funereal calm that made her resemble an immense sepulchre.

For Perez had executed the designs of Rita.

A tolerably strong dose of Tshettick having been mixed with the flour and bread of the crew, and with the wine and eau de vie they drank, it was not long before frightful symptoms manifested themselves.

So that on the morning of the eighth day, Henry summoned a council, consisting of the lieutenant, the doctor, and the abbe.

Henry, whose looks were in general so lively and happy, now betrayed a feeling of deep vexation and sorrow.

The lieutenant and the doctor seemed much absorbed, the abbe alone maintained his calmness, and his usual self-possession.

When each had taken his place, "Gentlemen," said Henry, "for the last three days in particular, a strange disorder has attacked the crew; what is

your opinion of the subject, doctor? and what additional observations have you made on this new disease?"

"I think, commandant," said doctor Gedeon, who appeared, in the serious circumstances of the case, to have forgotten his politics and philosophy, "I think I see the effects of some disease I cannot explain, nor can I understand the cause. The symptoms I have observed in this disease are, that it begins by an exhibition of great weakness, headaches and vertigo, the next day a general prostration of strength takes place, loss of appetite, and a burning thirst, the day after extreme weakness, and a sleep disturbed by horrible dreams. It is the same to day, but the symptoms are more severe; this is the state at which we have arrived, Count. But what I am fearful of is, that the disease will become worse, for the men are in such a depressed state they can scarcely be induced to take any nourishment, and what is extremely singular is the fact, that all the healthy sailors have been attacked by the disease, while five or six who are on the sick list, and kept upon low diet, have been exempt from it."

"It cannot be the badness of the water that has occasioned it?" asked the commandant.

"We have scarcely been at sea eight days, and it ought to be perfectly sweet."

"Certainly," replied the doctor, "the water is good and clear; you also saw, commandant, when we paid a visit to the caboose, that the provisions were excellent, and that the purser, the Spaniard, neglected nothing to keep the false deck aired, and took every imaginable care to prevent the provisions being spoiled; I must again repeat, commandant, that I am completely at a loss."

"And you, lieutenant, what have you observed as to the condition of the crew?"

"We can scarcely, commandant, find sufficient hands to work the frigate under the small press of sail we carry. They are completely enervated, without courage or strength, and even the bonds of discipline are relaxed."

"And I am told also by the watch that a kind of inexplicable feeling of irritation exists, the object of which I cannot comprehend, but particularly among a certain number of the sailors, who have nightly meetings, though I cannot discover where or for what object, for menaces and imprecations are often heard, and I have given orders to some of the picked top-mast men to be always prepared, in spite of their malady, in case the discontented men should make any attempt against their officers."

"And you, chaplain, can you give any further information or any advice in the matter?"

"All I know has been confided to me under the seal of confession, Count, and I am not permitted to divulge it," said the Abbe.

"Zounds, sir," cried the lieutenant, "this is not a time for hypocrisy and mummery, the welfare of us all is at stake, and—"

"As to advice," continued the Abbe, without noticing the interruption of the lieutenant, "as to advice, Count, if the unhappy condition of the crew arises from any physical cause, that is the business of the medical man; if the state of discipline of the crew is at fault, you must rectify it by the influence you ought to possess over the minds of the men. I also, commandant, will use my best endeavours in the unhappy situation of the men, to encourage their hope and resignation by the words of the holy Scriptures."

"And I, commandant," cried doctor Gedeon, delighted at finding an opportunity of mortifying the Abbe, who never spoke to him, "I declare that I will have nothing more to do with the sick if the Abbe takes upon himself the task of frightening them by his nonsense and folly about religion. As long as they are alive they belong to me, once dead, he may do as he likes—"

"Silence, sir," said Henry, in an angry tone, interrupting the doctor, whose mad language had produced no effect on the Abbe, "silence," continued the count, "what you have said is extremely improper, the Abbe imposes his counsel on no one, those who seek his assistance are too happy to obtain it; you, attend to the health of the sick sailors, for that is your duty here, you understand me, sir; if you attack, in my presence, and with so much impropriety, so serious and elevated a character as that of the chaplain, I shall be obliged to punish you, sir, and that severely."

"It appears to me, commandant," said Jean Thomas, "that a discussion of this kind has nothing to do with discipline, and that if the chaplain is not satisfied, he may—"

"It appears to you in a very wrong light, sir," said Henry, interrupting the lieutenant, "and once for all understand, that I never permit any person on board to be bold enough to make the least remark on what I say or what I do. I have before now, M. Thomas perceived signs of discontent on your part, that were only puerile, but now, in the unhappy situation in which we find ourselves, the least mark of insubordination becomes a dangerous example, so that I expect to be passively obeyed —obeyed in everything, and for any purpose—obeyed without a word and without hesitation; otherwise, sir, you will find me rather harsh and severe."

"I know the commandant has the power of placing me under arrest," said Thomas, ironically, "under arrest, although I am forty years of age; unfortunately at thirty punishment has little effect on a boy of that age!"

Henry coolly answered:—

"When a boy of thirty changes not, do you know what it is the duty of a commander who is not obeyed, to do, M. Thomas—obeyed on the minute—the second—do you know?"

"That depends," said Thomas in an insolent tone.

"That depends, in fact, on the disposition of a man; and according to mine, sir, at the least symptom of want of discipline on your part, I would blow your brains out."

"Zounds, commandant, that is to be seen!" exclaimed Jean Thomas, rising in a passion; carried, in spite of himself, beyond the limits of respect and obedience, which he always exhibited towards a superior, be he who he might; but he also partook of the general feeling of suffering and discomfort, from which the Count alone appeared to be exempt.

"Be seated, sir," said Henry, with the greatest coolness in the world, "the council has not risen."

Then addressing the doctor and the chaplain, who had remained unmoved during this scene, as unmoved as if they formed no part of it, the Count continued:

"Continue, gentlemen, to bestow your care and watchfulness upon the crew; give me notice of the most trifling occurrences; and above all, gentlemen, pray endeavour to restore the spirits of our sailors. I have ordered my maitre d hotel to place my cellar

and stores at your disposition for the benefit of the sick; and again let me beg of you to endeavour to relieve us from our fatal position. Gentlemen, the council is at an end."

They rose.

"A thousand pardons for the doctor's outbreak," said the Count to the Abbe who rose to salute him.

"The Count is too good," said the Abbe, "but I did not understand him; it is a language I do not speak."

And he left, followed by the doctor, who observed:

"Ah, perhaps he speaks Turkish."

The lieutenant was about to retire, when the Count said to him:

"You are under arrest for fifteen days, sir."

Thomas made a movement, which he instantly reppressed through his involuntary respect for discipline; but a tear of concentrated anguish and humiliation glistened in his eye.

Henry noticed it, and said to Jean Thomas as he conducted him to the door of the cabin:

"When any one of my officers, M. Thomas, believes himself unjustly punished, I never admit, it is true, of any objection being made as long as he is on board; but when our cruize is over, I always place my epaulettes in my pocket, in order that I may give satisfaction for any wrong I may have involuntarily committed."

"I thank you for your offer, commandant, but I took an oath before my mother never to draw my sword in satisfaction of personal revenge. You have placed me under arrest—it is in your power to do so, and I will endure the punishment; because it is my duty to do so." And he bowed to the commandant and left the cabin.

CHAPTER XL.

THE TSHETTIK.

"A beautiful science, upon my word."—SCHILLER.

WE have already said that since Perez had implicitly followed the direction of Rita, the unfortunate crew of the Sylphid could no longer be recognized.

It was no longer the merry song, shouts and blasphemy, which the presence of the officers scarcely restrained; no more long yarns, spun in the forecastle, or the jocular tales of which Losophe was the Homer. The tale-tellers were silent, as birds cease singing at the approach of a storm.

The faces formerly so radiant and open, were now wan and pale; those vigorous limbs were as useless as if they were maimed; no more merriment. The unfortunate sailors seemed isolated within their narrow bounds, and looked threatening and distrustful.

Scarcely could all the energy, threats, or promises of the commander and his officers force the men to execute the manœuvres of the vessel, which had been made as simple as possible. The masters themselves, lost their authority day by day, and showed themselves almost careless, so much had physical weakness worked upon their minds. Master Frank, always lively and overflowing, appeared dull; and Master Kergouet allowed himself with impunity to be looked upon as a sea faring man by every body.

Losophe and his dog partook of the universal weakness, and neither the violin of the dancing master, nor the yelping of St. Medard were heard, to irritate the delicate nerves of the canonnier bourgois.

Rumphius and Sulpice, boarding at the commandant's table, had escaped the general infection, of which the astronomer was unaware, absorbed as he was in his calculations and meditations.

Sulpice, when he thought his services were not needed by his brother, placed himself at the disposition of the doctor, begging of him as a favour to be allowed to attend to the sick, a task of which he acquitted himself with all the angelic kindness for which he was celebrated.

Going from one to the other, encouraging, exhorting, and raising the spirits of the most timid, in which he was sometimes successful, Sulpice ended in being adored by the crew, who gave him the surname of *Bon Jesus*, in the same manner as they had named Perez *Grand Gibet*.

The most singular thing was the contrast between this Christian and pious appellation and the oaths and blasphemous sayings that accompanied it, as an evidence of the energetic admiration and gratitude of the sailors.

But, alas! in spite of all his care and attention, the health of the crew became weaker every day, and the duchess had nearly completed her vengeance.

About two hours after the council was dissolved, the wind, that hitherto had blown briskly from the north-east, began to sink by degrees, and, at the end of an hour, there was a perfect calm.

The clear horizon grew cloudy in the west, and when the sun set, it disappeared behind a large wall of thick clouds, of a blueish black tint, tinged here and there with a reflection of fiery red; in other respects it was a perfect calm; not the least breath of air swelled the sails; there was but little sea, and the frigate scarcely rolled.

All hands were piped below, and the chaplain mounted the deck to repeat the evening prayers.

The commandant and the officers appeared in uniform on the quarter deck, and the boatswain's whistle was heard as a signal for the pious exercise.

The sailors came on deck, some scarcely able to support themselves, while the strongest assisted the weaker.

The prayers were listened to with the most serious attention, for the strange disease that had smitten the crew for the last few days had directed their minds, if not religious, at least superstitious, to serious and melancholy thoughts.

Among the more devout, Daniel, and five or six of his countrymen, natives, like himself, of Abrevack, were noticed, who, since the commencement of the epidemic, never quitted each other; thus forming a little society firmly united in the midst of the general distrust, which appeared to be one of the characteristics of this strange malady

Master Kergouet frequently associated with this club, which held its meetings at night on the false deck, and it was through their connection with the master that Daniel and his friends enjoyed a kind of tacit protection, by which they were enabled to assemble without being disturbed; for the master gave them notice of the lieutenant's movements.

The reason of this partiality of the canonnier bourgois for Daniel and his friends was simple enough: Master Kergouet, professing a complete belief in all past, present, and future superstitions, experienced an unheard of pleasure in meeting, in

Daniel and his friends, formed an auditory, excellently disposed to listen and be convinced. So that the canonnier sometimes meeting his proselytes, assisted, by his dreadful stories, in inflaming still further their narrow and credulous minds.

After prayers the sailors, sad and melancholy, descended to the gun deck, to sling their hammocks.

Half the crew remained on deck, where Henry had caused tents to be erected to render the watch less fatiguing, although it had been abridged one half.

The lieutenant was on deck with Saint Sauveur.

Henry, dreadfully dispirited at the weakness of his crew, had retired to his cabin, and there, leaning against the windows, he watched the setting sun, which appeared to make him uneasy as to the night.

In fact, the sun, having now completed his course, merely cast a reddish reflection, and its last rays scarcely tinged the contour of the large and sombre clouds that each minute increased in height, and by degrees filled the deep curve of the horizon.

It was still a deadcalm.

Henry foresaw that the wind was about to spring up in the west, but that a considerable time would elapse before the breeze and the gale would set in. He remained, therefore, still gazing on the sky without noticing it; thinking on the fatality that seemed to press upon his crew, and above all, afraid of meeting some ship of war, that would oblige him to have recourse to a shameful flight, or be under the necessity of blowing up his frigate, for Henry would not have hesitated an instant, resolved to avoid the least humiliation of the king's flag.

The Abbe was walking on deck; and the lieutenant, on the quarter-deck, also noticed the weather with uneasiness.

But a curious scene was taking place at the same time in the caboose.

Formerly, as at the present time, there was a circular gallery, a kind of corridor on the false deck of a vessel, that surrounded the interior of the ship, leaving an empty space between the sides of the vessel, forming a receptacle for the bags

and other property of the crew. This gallery was intended to facilitate the movements of the caulkers and carpenters during an action, to enable them the more readily to stop the holes made in the ship's timbers.

It was in this obscure retreat, Daniel and his *pays* held their nocturnal meetings.

On this evening none of Daniel's countrymen found themselves on the watch; and after prayers they had met to the number of six.

As they could not place themselves two abreast in the narrow gallery where they had assembled, they were seated in file, one behind the other, and Daniel alone, in his quality of orator, was placed facing his auditory, that he might have a good view of them.

This obscure corridor was only lighted by the reddish reflection of a lamp that burnt in the cock-pit.

Daniel's features, generally happy and open, bore a dull and sorrowful expression. He appeared particularly thoughtful; his cheeks were furrowed as much in consequence of the disease as through the tales of Losophe, which had made a lively impression on his ardent and superstitious imagination.

Believing, and firmly too, in these visions and supernatural tales, Daniel found himself in a state of the most perfect halucination, which the singular events that had taken place on board had considerably increased. In this manner his quick short mode of speaking, his distracted look, and religious deportment, had made him a kind of prophet on the lower deck. His influence was, nevertheless, direct and powerful, particularly on the six sailors who were his countrymen, and being almost always in his company, since the appearance of the epidemic, they almost mechanically partook of his fears, superstitions, doubts, and projects, and waited only for a word, or a mere sign from him, blindly to execute his orders; for in difficult circumstances, the most stupid, as well as the most reasonable man, who will but imagine any thing, will always find hands to execute it.

It was in Low-Breton patois that Daniel delivered the following words:—

"Sailors, my fine lads, my countrymen; let us first pray to our holy Lady, of Recouvrance to intercede for us, and to enlighten us."

And then, after a short silence, Daniel continued:

"Sailors, my fine lads, my countrymen; for the first month after we placed our baggage on board, were we not as happy as a lugger in a calm, when she feels the breeze rising?"

"True;" replied the auditory, in a low voice.

"Were we not strong, and bold—bold enough to decorate our vessel with an English garland, which we could have made by tying them together by their arms alone, that would have answered the purpose of cords?"

"That is true;" said his hearers.

"Were we not such eaters, that we could have put the cook in his cauldron to thicken the soup with?"

"True;" replied they.

"And now what are we, my sailors? hungerless and weak."

"Its true, its true, Daniel," exclaimed his hearers.

"Well, my sailors, do you know why we are thus? It is fate; we are on board a *fated* ship. That's clear enough—why? because if that were not the case, we should not have been taken sick as we were—all of us, my countrymen, all of us. Is not this right? Can it be any thing except a fate, that, in one day, could change a crew of fine fellows into a crew of cowards? Once again I say it is a spell; it can be nothing else but a spell."

"Yes, yes; that's well known. Besides, master Kergouet has told us the same," repeated the whole chorus.

Well," my countrymen, if it must be brought to a close; it must be put an end to while we have strength, because, to-morrow, perhaps, we shall be dead; and the worst of it is, that when a man dies on board a fated ship, he is d . . .d," said Daniel, crossing himself.

"D. . . .d," said the sailors, imitating him

"D. . . .d," continued Daniel, "like a dog;—master Kergouet, who is a learned man, has told me so; so that this should not be the case, my boys. There is but one thing to be done; that is to get rid of the man who casts the spell, but that is not enough, as it is always the devil himself, or one of his imps, a new recruit, as it were, in his crew; we must not fail to put a rosary that has been consecrated round his neck, that will drag him without fail to the bottom of the sea, on account of the burden religion is to him;—because you see he has a great distaste for it, as Losophe has told me, and he knows it well. Without that it would be useless to cast him into the water for the more you throw him in, the more he would rise again. Whereas, if he has a consecrated rosary round his neck, and a couple of cannon balls rammed into his claws, there is no fear of his rising again."

"But Daniel, since you put a rosary round the devil's neck to make him sink, what's the use of the cannon balls?" said one of the sailors.

"You animal!" said Daniel, "because the rosary makes him like you or me, and the cannon balls are quite necessary, because without them, he would rise again, like you or I; Losophe told me that also."

"That's true," said the hearers.

"At length," said Daniel, with frightful energy, 'will you go on, or remain as you are? Will you die—yes or no. Or will you have the power of saying, 'we have saved our comrades, and the brave commander we adore?'"

"Yes, yes, we will;" cried the six Bretons.

"Well, then, this is what must be done: Losophe, who is lieutenant in magic, has already gone through the farce of a charm, which has not taken, because the fowl was not white enough: but I thrashed him so, in a friendly way, that I have damaged one of his eyes; and he has looked over the matter again, and made me a second charm with a grey fowl, and that succeeded; so that I saw, through a hole, as plain as I see you—"

"What—what, Daniel!" said the sailors.

"The devil."

"The devil! how so, Daniel—the devil?"

"In 'Grand Gibet's' berth, through a hole I made in the door of the caboose."

"In 'Grand Gibet's' berth!" repeated the auditors in great terror, and turning involuntarily towards the door of the caboose where Perez and Rita lodged.

"In Grand Gibet's berth," replied Daniel, "I saw a real monster, in a black cloak that hid his claws, and a cap to conceal his horns. The wretch was talking to Grand Gibet as if nothing was the matter, but in a patois that smelt so strong of sulphur that I was nearly choked; and I should have thought it was Losophe burning matches, if it had

not been the devil: the smell of his patois must have been confoundedly strong."

At this instant, a slight sound was heard, and one of the men posted as a vidette announced the arrival of M. Kergouet.

"My boys," said he to the sailors, "we must go to work: the weather is getting bad, and every instant we may expect a strong breeze from the west; all hands will be called on deck, and you must be ready."

"We will go, M. Kergouet," said Daniel; "but as you are so learned, tell us what you saw in India, on board the Belle Jeanne brig, you know."

"Well, my boys," said the master, who could not resist the pleasure of telling a tale, "the brig Belle Jeanne had a sepoy on board, who perhaps for the purpose of punishing his wife, had administered to her such deadly poisons that she died of them, saying to him simply, 'You are a wretch; you will have no luck.' Since that time, my boys, the sepoy I have told you of enlisted as a sailor on board the Belle Jeanne, and from that time, a day never passed that the Belle Jeanne had not the pleasure of a strong breeze and a hurricane; so that one day the sepoy, who, notwithstanding all, was not a bad sailor, was carried off the main-yard by a quall. Well, after this tempest, the Belle Jeanne had thes finest weather, because the sepoy was an unlucky man, and he threw his ill luck over the vessel by his presence; so that having once got rid of him, nothing more happened. It is all quite simple, my boys," added M. Kergouet, in a serious tone. "But above all, my lads, remember you must never punish men as fated, unless you are certain that they are so; because, if you are deceived, he who finds himself in the shark's stomach, without deserving to be there, will have the privilege of being discontented at it, and much the more so from being obliged to remain there."

"But," said Daniel, silencing his auditory by a look, "how do you know a fated man, master Kergouet?"

"He is known," said the master, sententiously, "he can be known, because he has cast a spell; and when a man has cast a spell, he is a fated man."

As to the matter of reasoning, the master evidently belonged to Losophe's school—the consequential school of logic, it might be called; so that its lucid nature particularly struck Daniel and his hearers.

"But in our case," continued the Breton, in our case, who do you think has cast the spell?—for there is a spell, is there not, master?"

"As for a spell—that there is one, is an incontrovertible fact," said the gunner; "for everybody is suffering under it. I feel it myself, as if I had not a bone in my skin; but as to the fated man, I am not yet resolved; for it is a very delicate affair to send a man overboard to be washed in the great tankard. Still, there must be some one. But——" and he was interrupted by the sudden rolling of the vessel. "Stop, my boys;" this is a bad day to talk of these matters. Stay! do you hear? the vessel is gunwale under; the breeze is rising. Up! up! my boys: I must go to my shop."

And Master Kergouet hurried off to his battery.

"Well, my lads," cried Daniel, "you have heard the master says there is a spell upon us; and you know a fated man, by his having a spell over him. Well, there is a spell here, I hope; and who is it, if it be not Grand Gibet? because he is friendly with the devil, for they are messmates. And now a storm has arisen to make an end of us; it is the monster's last stroke; perhaps it is our last hour, if we do not make an end of the beggar. Come, we must finish it, my boys,' cried Daniel, almost raving, rising at the same time, and taking his rosary in one hand and a bundle of cord in the other, which he had hitherto concealed under his jacket. "Overboard with Grand Gibet!' he exclaimed; "up, my boys, up, now is the time!" and they all rose.

And Daniel, maddened by superstition, sickness, fear, and the noise of the tempest that began to roar, shook his fist at the door of the cabin, that was visible at the end of the gallery.

Nothing is so electric in its effects as fear, rage, and superstition. The wretched sailors, always seeking for a supernatural explanation for everything; irritated, also, by pain and an inexplicable disease; and firmly convinced, that the sacrifice of the scapegoat would put an end to their sufferings; had no hesitation in doing all the fanatic Daniel advised them.

"Yes, yes," they all exclaimed, with concentrated rage; "overboard with Grand Gibet!"

"Silence, my boys, silence!" cried Daniel, raising his hand authoritively; "silence!—do you hear the storm? It is the voice of heaven: perhaps what we are about to do is wrong."

He added, kneeling down, with a feeling of indescribable terror, which he felt struggling in his breast, with his rage against Grand Gibet.

And all the sailors who appeared only to think and act by Daniel's will, were silent, terrified like him; and falling on their knees, they also looked round in terror.

In fact, all the timbers of the Sylphid creaked; and the whistling of the wind, as it howled through the rigging, was heard even in the false-deck. But the dismal sound continuing, seemed to increase the fear or rage of Daniel, who exclaimed, with inconceiveable rage and in an exasperated tone, "No, no; on the contrary, heaven wills it, heaven commands it. This is what we must do; we must enter Grand Gibet's berth, seize on him, strap him up well, put my rosary round his neck, and then to the sea with him."

"To the sea! to the sea!" they exclaimed.

"Follow me, then," said Daniel.

And feeling their way in the dark with their backs against the side of the vessel, the six miserable men, leading each other by the hand, silently directed their steps towards that part of the vessel that was occupied by Perez.

Having reached the door of the caboose, he again applied his eye to the hole he had made.

And the sight he saw there, and pointed out to the sailors, was sufficient to increase the superstitious terror of the miserable men.

The faint light of a lamp, inclosed in a glass globe, alone illumined the scene that was taking place in the caboose.

Perez, with his face bathed in tears, was on his knees before the duchess, who was dressed in a kind of morning gown, or robe-de-chambre, of black cloth

Standing upright, her pale and cicatrised face scarcely concealed by a large black cap, Rita had her right hand placed on Jose Ortez' book, that lay open on the table.

It was truly, a frightful thing to look on; something resembling a fantastic illusion; that pale face of Rita, who, standing erect and motionless in her long black robe, seemed as if she were casting a spell upon Perez, kneeling at her feet.

The duchess spoke, but in Spanish.

"Well, you see, Perez, all has succeeded; our vengeance is nearly accomplished, the last stroke alone is wanting, and that is, to denounce *him* to the crew as the cause of these dreadful misfortunes; the opportunity is excellent. Up to the present moment I have partaken of your scruples; the men were not sufficiently serious, but now, in a time like this, do you still refuse? in the midst of this howling storm, that will become horrible—horrible Perez—by Satan—"

"By Satan, did you hear? cross yourselves, and go forward;" said Daniel, almost maddened by this strange scene.

And with one blow of his sturdy shoulder he burst open the door of the caboose.

The noise made by the frigate's timbers as she yielded to the rage of the storm, had prevented Perez suspecting the presence of Daniel and his companions, but, seeing the door fall, and observing the sinister faces that tumultuously presented themselves, he rushed forwards to meet them, exclaiming "Villains, what is it you want?"

"Bind 'Grand Gibet' fast," said Daniel to four of his countrymen, "and we three will make the other safe," cried the Breton, rushing upon Rita, "you limb of the devil, Beelzebub, you shall not escape us, by our Lady!" roared Daniel, as he threw his rosary over Rita's neck; while two of his countrymen pinioned and gagged her, and the four others did the same to Perez, who was unable to offer any resistance.

All this was done with the rapidity of thought, and the two victims were bound fast, and lying on the deck without the power of making the least resistance, or uttering the faintest cry.

The tempest was terrible, and in the midst of their danger, the absence of the six sailors was no doubt unnoticed.

"Wait for me," said Daniel; and he left the deck precipitately.

The faces of the six sailors were as pale as death, the perspiration rolled down their foreheads, and the hair stood upright on their heads.

It was with a feeling of indefinable fear, and after crossing themselves frequently, that they pointed to Perez and Rita, who, lying on the deck, still filled these madmen with the species of terror the tiger inspires when caught in the toils.

In an instant Daniel returned with a large tarpaulin and two cannon balls, which he had taken from the gun deck.

"It is a stiff breeze, my boys," said he, "overboard, overboard with the sorcerer, we have plenty of time."

Hearing these words, Perez and Rita opened their eyes in terror; for neither word nor gesture were possible to them.

"Demons of infamy, sorcerers of ill luck," said Daniel in a furious rage, enveloping Perez and Rita in the immense tarpaulin, as if it had been a winding sheet, "ah, you limbs of the devil, you will throw a spell over poor sailors—but you did not calculate on my rosary—Losophe told me that!"

"Now my boys," he added, "tie all tight; roll up their heads above here, and place the cannon balls at their feet, and then carry them up through the little hatchway."

All this was done.

They reached the gun deck, which was deserted; for all the sailors were on the main deck, handling the ropes.

Daniel opened a port to the windward, in spite of the danger.

The four men who carried the frightful burden, that was agitated by violent struggles, and placed it on the port-hole, one half out the ship and one half within.

"To your knees," said Daniel, taking off his cap, and saying, "we return thanks to you, our Lady of Recouvrance, for having delivered us from fate and from sorcerers."

Then they crossed themselves and rose.

"Now!" cried Daniel, "overboard with them, now!"

And the madmen threw their burden over; and it disappeared in the midst of the fury of the waves.

And this was the end of Perez and Rita—of the duchess of Almeda, and her faithful squire.

* * * *

At the same instant a monstrous wave rushed through the open port, on to the gun deck, and partially inundated it.

"That was Satan bidding us farewell," cried Daniel, closing the port; "now then on deck, but be silent, and the ship is saved."

When they came on deck they found the crew dull and sad; for though they ought to sail under reefed topsails, the men were so weak that Henry ordered them to let the ship run before the wind.

The Count, standing on the quarter deck, gave his orders calmly, and his features brightened up by the binnacle lamp, displayed not the least emotion.

As short in duration, and as variable as the winds of these seas usually are, the gale soon diminished in violence, and then ceased. A heavy rolling of the sea was all that remained of the tempest, and two hours afterwards, the wind shifting to the north, the Sylphid was again on her voyage.

"I cannot tell," said Henry to Monval, as he left the deck as soon as he saw the wind hushed, "I cannot tell why the sudden lulling of this gale seems a happy augury; it is foolish if you will, but something seems to tell me that our misfortunes are at an end, and that we shall soon find these winds have had a beneficial influence on the health of our crew, in fact, I feel myself much less depressed than usual."

"I sincerely take part in your wishes," said the officer.

"Zounds!" said Henry, seeing his maitre d'hotel make his appearance, "do better; come and take a share of my supper for I feel a devil of an appetite, having escaped, I know not how, this confounded epidemic; you shall pass your opinion on the talents of my new cook; he belonged to M. de Gevres."

And Monval, accepting the count's invitation, went below along with him.

De Miran remained on the watch.

Next morning at eight o'clock, when the provisions were to be distributed to the crew, the sailors went to the caboose for their rations.

They waited in vain for 'Grand Gibet.'

As he did not make his appearence, they carefully sought him in every direction—but their search was necessarily in vain.

They then imagined, and with much probability, that he had fallen overboard by accident during the storm, but that the darkness and the noise of the wind had prevented their seeing him, or hearing his cries.

He was not much regretted on board the Sylphid.

and his clerk was not even mentioned, for scarcely any one knew of his existence; those who had seen him before they left Brest imagining he had remained on shore, as they put to sea in so much haste.

Daniel and his countrymen maintained the most profound silence on the event, and were not even tempted to think of it until they saw the crew recover their strength and health, for after the disappearance of Perez and Rita, the provisions of the sailors being no longer poisoned, the frightful symptoms which had exhibited themselves ceased at once.

This salutary change in the strength and feelings of his crew filled Henry with joy, and inspired him with an ardent desire to meet the enemy.

A quarter-master was placed in Perez' situation, whose death was recorded, in the following words, in the ship's log:—

"15th Feb. 1781.—Charles Dales, a Spaniard, placed on board by the chief of the victualling department for the distribution of the ship's provisions, not being found in the caboose, nor in any other part of the vessel, it is believed that the said Charles Dales was washed overboard in a gale of wind the ship encountered during the night, without any suspicion arising of the unfortunate occurrence. In witness of which, the clerk, the commandant, and the lieutenant, have signed, &c."

Thus died Perez de Sibeyra: thus died the Duchess of Almeda.

Poor duchess! of so high an origin; fallen so low.

Poor Rita! whose life had been so splendid, so sumptuous; who, before she became acquainted with the count, rivalled, by her rank and riches, the greatest families of France. To end her days thus, after having spent months in a bitter, infamous, and miserable life; to end thus; suffocated, drowned, without being able to utter a syllable; without being able to say to her murderers, "Tell *him* I was here; let him, at least, tremble in learning that, lying at his feet, in his own ship, he had an implacable enemy, who could have slain him, but who did not slay him, because it would have been a single death only, and she wished to make him die in the midst of a thousand torments—a thousand deaths.

"If *he* has escaped this terrible danger, let him know, at least, that he ran that danger, for sometimes a man dies from the contemplation of the dreadful peril he has escaped. Let him, above all things, well understand that what sustained my life was the most incurable and deepest hatred; that it was no longer his despicable love I regretted with tears of blood, but my title, my name, my fortune, let him know that, at least; let him know—"

No, duchess, no; the Count de Vaudry will know nothing of that; he will never know it. If, in his hours of idleness, he thinks of you, his thoughts will be sweet and flattering, for they will recall to his memory an angel of love and devotedness, who died with the name of Henry on her lips. An adorable woman, who preferred death to living without the love of him who had, nevertheless, so dreadfully deceived her.

If he thinks of you, it will be to recall to his memory the pleasures he shared with you formerly; to remember, and tell his companions in debauchery, "That he possessed among his mistresses, a Spanish duchess, whose teeth were magnificent, form divine, and hair superb; but that this incomparable woman died of despair, because he neglected her."

In one word, your image will never appear to his imagination otherwise than smiling, voluptuous, golden, clothed in black drapery, by way of contrast.

No, madame, no; the count will never know how much you hated him; he will not die in the midst of a thousand torments, as you wished.

It is you who died a thousand deaths, it is you who renounced beauty—rank—fortune, it is you the police chained with public girls and thieves; it is you a jailer flogged—you duchess—you, so chaste and pure—you, who committed but one fault, a sublime fault—for the love of a woman is noble and religious—who, possessed of all human prosperity, left it for a being she imagined obscure, pious, suffering, and resigned! Such was your love for poor Henry, of the Tower of Koat Vën; it was almost that of a mother for her child—that of the Creator for his creatures.

And then you wished to consecrate that love by the laws—you wished to make your union holy—inviolable—eternal; to settle the treasures of the world and of your heart upon him, whose whole possessions you believed to be a good heart.

Well; in spite of this—in consequence of this, you died; I tell you, a frightful death; and the bitter despair—the poignant hate—the moral and physical tortures you endured, exceed the limits of probability. You suffered the most dreadful deceptions, the deception of love—the deception of vengeance, for you relied on your vengeance, as you relied on your lover with one of those deeply rooted faiths which are almost equal to revelations. Well; this faith deceived you; constantly, and at all times; your plans, conceived in the madness of hatred, you found overthrown by the most trifling chances: the neglect of a passport, the stupid credulity of a sailor. You died a frightful and unknown death, and no one pitied you; for no one knew what the duchess of Almeda suffered, before and after her death.

As to your death to the world—your death as a lady of rank, it was sneered at, insulted, calumniated, and long since not spoken of.

Your death! it was a satisfaction for the self-love of those you hated, or those who envied you.

Your death! it answered the purpose of filling up the conversation of Henry, during his new amour with Madame de Cernan. It secured him the friendship of sir George, and that famous duel, in which he killed M. de Cernan so honourably, and wounded M. de Saint-Cyr.

Your death! it made the Count the most celebrated man of the day; without calculating what an excellent subject it was for his melancholy, when he was weary of pleasure, or on a dismal day; so that M. de Vaudry was indebted to you for an additional pleasure, and a new amusement.

And that which is still more dreadful to contemplate is, that you have suffered so much from a heartless man, and nothing more for a handsome, lively man enough; well born, brave, and rich, it is true, but without genius or high spirit—in one word, for one of those charming men, one of those gilded, but insipid fruits that are grown under the pale sun of a court.

Oh, it is horrible—horrible above all things, for you, Rita, I imagine; but such is almost always the case when passion and selfishness are concerned; or when a woman omits to seek for the

consolation of misfortune in a religion full of hope and resignation.

It also arises from that inscrutable providence that generally protects men like the Count. Yes, they always have what is callen *luck*, and then, in this grand game of humanity, they are always successful. They cheat, but they win; it is dreadful, but they enjoy it; it is not justice, but it is a fact—deny it, and I will bring you instances: Lucullus, Alcibiades, Falkland, Rochester, the Regent, Buckingham, Louis XV., Grammont, Lauzun, Richelieu, and a thousand others.

Certainly, these honourable men must, during their long career of debauchery, pleasure, and dissipation, have created much hatred, and been the cause of much jealousy. But what was the consequence? nothing. For a long time they lived a voluptuous life, and then—died.

BUT WHEN THEY AWAKE AGAIN! !

Once more, Rita is dead, dead! Her joys and her sorrows have been of as much service to the Count as possible; of what use, then, has her life been for the future?

And when I say the Count and Rita, I speak of 'selfishness' and 'self-denial'—of the 'strong' and the 'weak,' the 'good' and the 'wicked.'

For in the eyes of some beings, who are admirably gifted or predestined, who represent the mass of mankind, whether it be the orange Frederick crushed so easily after he had sucked out the juice, or that complacent and easy prize, so readily obtained at all times by clever selfishness.

Oh, selfishness! that sparkling centre, cold and hard as adamant, that magnetic pole towards which all devoted beings are attracted, perhaps by the invisible power of the laws of contrarieties.

For truly it is a strange thing to observe, that every organized being possesses an instinct that leads him to evil, whether as an agent or a sufferer, and that says to him, 'if you are not an executioner, you must be a victim.'

Stay—observe on a beautiful summer's evening, when the breeze is gentle, and the old oaks tremble amorously beneath its breath, when every flower, sending forth its perfume, opens its dew-besprinkled blossom, when every leaf, and every blade of grass, offers a fresh and balmy asylum to the sound of the waving trees, and gives birth to the silent voice of night.

Then say, dwells not perfect happiness and joy within the petals of a rose or the corolla of a dahlia? Then, what endless games are there not on the disk of a 'queen margaret?' what loving strife in the recesses of an orange lily?

Well, introduce a golden lamp into this scene of pleasure, and let it suddenly display its dazzling light.

Why does each butterfly, each insect, on the instant leave its flower, its honey, and perfume, for the false glare of that fetid and mortal light?

See: one of them approaches it; retreats, returns again; again it flies away; but the flame is so calm, so beautiful, so dazzling, it resists no longer, but dashes into it, and dies in the midst of frightful tortures, mutilated and scorched. Myriads die like it, suffer like it, disappear like it.

And the flame will be not less pure, not less bright; it will still remain fatal, yet attractive.

So it is with the false and seductive glitter of the selfish man—the coxcomb—the libertine; so it is with those devoted beings who suffer and die, fascinated by a deceitful and showy exterior.

Why is this the case? Why does the pure and sensitive soul always feel itself irresistibly attracted towards the wicked one?

Why does the bird cast itself into the jaws of the basilisk?

Why, in fine, will the dismal symbol of the tempter serpent and the forbidden fruit be still true—true to the end of the world?

For there are three or four dreadful truths like this that sum up the moral history of the human species, and serve as the eternal centres on which their sad passions revolve.

Once again, why this undisputed success of the selfish man, the coxcomb, and the libertine, all monstrous varieties of the same species?

False and vile beings, stupid and vulgar, you appear, in comparison with the man who possesses genius, and a good heart, like the light of a lamp by the side of the sun. Like the factitious light, that burns but vivifies not, to the dazzling rays of that star which fills the whole world with life.

It is true—a hundred times true—who can deny it? the coxcomb is a wretch compared to the man of genius: the light of a lamp is paltry compared to the magnificence of the sun.

But then, how many are there who content themselves with the sun's light? How many are there who love to meditate in the shade, and who, comprehending the mysteries of night, listen with delight to the voice of solitude?

How many are they, who content themselves with the love of a pure and elevated soul; who delight in contemplating their reveries, and feel an ineffable joy in listening in silence to the aspirations of a noble heart?

Alas! the number of these men is small, almost all mankind prefer the factitious glare of the chandelier to the shadows of a beautiful night—the dull chatter of a fool to the deep and silent meditation of genius. This, I think, is a sufficient explanation of the extravagant value set upon the candle, and the 'ladies' man.'

Well; the Count was a man of this description; he was impudent, selfish, and a coxcomb, and, as such, he had a right to the most undeserved good fortune.

Rita, loving and devoted Rita, whose heart was noble and great, must—ought almost to have died as she did, if we are to put faith in the laws of the experience of what may be called 'social logic.'—To die; die after such horrible agony, while on the very boards that separate her from him: the Count, who, full of life, gay, careless, and vain, thinks no more of her than if she had never existed. The Count struts upon his red-heeled boots, dreaming of I know not what confused future, in which beautiful female forms are painted, here and there, resting upon noble trophies of war.

CHAPTER XLI.

PREPARING FOR BATTLE.

> "Quick, fetch me my red coat and my blue breeches."
> A. DE MUSSET.

EIGHT days after the death of Rita, the Sylphid found herself to the windward of the Azores, her crew had recovered their strength, the health of the brave sailors was again restored, and if by chance they spoke of the strange malady from

which they had escaped, it was to laugh at their past sufferings, and thank Sulpice, the *Bon-Jesus*, whom they had made their guardian angel without knowing why.

For in the ideas of sailors, there is always some supernatural cause both for good and evil—a visible and palpable symbol, the cause of success and defeat. Thus, in their eyes, the *Bon Jesus* had saved the ship, in the same manner as 'Grand Gibet' would have caused its destruction.

We have said that the Sylphid was sailing to the windward of the Azores, and, in time of war, these latitudes were admirably situated for those lucky meetings, which generally ended in the loss or capture of one of the actors at the meeting; for, in one word, this spot was a kind of 'chalk farm,' for these maritime duels, single and sanguinary combats, of which the ocean and heaven were the only witnesses.

It was about eight in the morning, a fresh and delightful breeze was blowing from the north-east, the beautiful clear sky reflected its azure blue from a magnificent sea, and the light mist, that in the first instance had concealed it, had just been dispersed by the rays of the sun. The ocean at this time resembled a circular sheet of water, of which the Sylphid occupied the centre, so that, from the deck of the frigate, in whichever direction the eye was turned it saw in the horizon the undulating line of the waves, whose green tint was strongly divided from the blue sky.

For nearly two days, after the Count had been in the neigbourhoud of this rendezvous for cruizers (the Azores formed the point of intersection of the different routes of navigators), the Count, I say, redoubled his watchfulness and activity; the vessel, cleared for battle, was ready for any event, the matches smoked, the grappling irons and boarding tackle were on deck, the shrouds filled with arms, and bundles of axes and pikes glistened in various parts of the deck and battery.

Jean Thomas, provided with an excellent telescope, had, since day break, been walking on the deck, and every minute sweeping the horizon with his glass.

A sailor came to inform him that the commandant expected him in his bed-chamber.

Leaving the telescope impatiently, the lieutenant left the deck; after desiring Miran to observe the windward, and to keep a sharp eye on the men on the look out.

When he had entered the chamber of his superior officer, Jean Thomas found him carelessly reclining in an arm chair, and dressed in a magnificent morning gown of blue silk, embroidered with silver flowers.

The faithful Germeau, who had just completed the Count's toilet, held in his hand the swan-down puff, white with *poudre a la marechale*, while two other valet de chambres were in attendance, to supply him with the object necessary for his important functions.

"Zounds, Germeau," said Henry, in a very ill humour, "Germeau, how negligent you are, see what a state my head is in! Here is one curl covers my left ear, while the other scarcely reaches my temples. What are you thinking of? And from one instant to another I am expecting to meet the enemy. Why, you simpleton, what do I look like? A pretty notion you will give these English of the accomplishments of a French valet de chambre! Really, Germeau, you have not a shadow of national spirit, and you scarcely take any interest in your master's success (but perceiving Jean Thomas): "Ah! it is you, sir;' said the Count; "a thousand pardons!' I had not the honour of seeing you."

"I have come according to your orders, commandant."

"Good; now I am at your service; but that rascal Germeau has dressed my hair villainously; only look, is it not hideous in this way, lieutenant?" said Henry, turning towards Jean Thomas

I do not understand these matters," said Thomas coldly, "I am not aware that this knowledge has ought to do with a sailor."

"You are quite right," answered Henry, turning round again, "you do not approve of these useless matters. Every one according to his taste; M. de Buffon could not write without lace ruffles, and I cannot fight unless I am dressed as if I were going to court. Now go on, Germeau."

"May I take the liberty of observing to Monsieur le Comte," said the valet de chambre respectfully, "that he turns so frequently to look through the window, it is impossible for me to dress him as I wish."

"There, I will be quiet, my old servitor. Well, M. Thomas, what is there now this morning? shall we be more fortunate than we were yesterday? for, by heavens! we have had nothing but ill luck for the last two days in these seas; we have not met with a single ship of war—it is dreadful!"

"The men on the look out have noticed nothing up to the present moment, commandant; but according to your orders every thing is cleared for action,"

"Quite right, sir; let every tihng remain as at present, the matches lighted, the guns shotted, the ports open." Then, stopping short, the Count said impatiently to Germeau, "bring this curl lower down—lower still; you will kill me with vexation; you miserable Germeau."

"Are we still to carry our top gallant sails, commandant?" said Jean Thomas, scarcely able to conceal his anger.

"No sir, no; let them be reefed; I am not fond of lofty sails, they are seen at too great a distance, they are quite sufficient to alarm the enemy, and sometimes to excite a curiosity extremely inconvenient for those who are the object of it. But, zounds! Germeau, you have got my bag too high."

"Commandant, commandant, two sails!" cried Saint Sauveur, entering the Count's chamber with precipitation, for the young man was unable to contain the joy the certainty of an approaching conflict gave him.

"Good heavens, sir," said Henry calmly, "is there any necessity for crying out so loud, and making such a noise to inform me of it? What ships are they?"

"Commandant," said Saint Sauveur, rather confused, "the man at the mizen top has just given the word; he thinks it is a schooner and a cutter."

"A schooner and a cutter, paltry enough," said the Count with a disdainful air, "unless, indeed, they are in company with some larger vessel, for small ships seldom venture into these seas alone. Well, you have got that curl in its place at last!" cried Henry complacently, finishing the arrangement of the frizzled hair on his forehead by means of little knife with a gold blade and mother-of-pearl handle, which served to remove the powder.

He then gave orders to Jean Thomas to reconnoitre the vessels and bring him an account of them.

The lieutenant saluted him, and went on deck, followed by de Miran.

"Germeau," said Henry, looking at himself in a most magnificent mirror, "bring me my embroidered uniform, my satin shoulder knots, and my diamond cross, for, thank heaven! this is the time or never to be in full dress, and to show the English that we possess a little of the Versailles' taste."

As soon as the Count had put on his splendid suit, Saint Sauveur entered, but this time less excited.

"Commandant, the lieutenant informs you, that in addition to the schooner and cutter, there is a sloop and a frigate."

"That is excellent; I guessed as much; I am delighted to hear of the frigate, for if it is a glorious thing to harpoon a shark, it is a pity to throw your net over a flying fish. And these vessels are to the windward, sir?' said the Count, adjusting his cross of St. Louis, enriched with precious stones, and taking particular care that his blue coat should not conceal the rich, old embroidery of his scarlet waistcoat.

"Yes, commandant, the ships are to the windward," said Saint Sauveur.

"That is still excellent; let them say what they will, I am better pleased to engage with the wind before us, the guns are more pleasantly served, and, in a breeze, the inclination of the vessel does not interfere with the working of the battery;" then, addressing Germeau, "give me my watch with the pearl chain, and my snuff box, but let it be filled with Spanish snuff, for the English are not in the habit of taking it, and if I am lucky enough to board one of these gentlemen, I ought to be able, after the action, to offer them something they will relish, for we shall board them, M. de Saint Sauveur," said the Count, turning briskly towards the volunteer, "for we will board them, sabre and pistol in hand, I am sure of it; and to see that I am not deceived, tell the lieutenant to place the men at their guns, to shake out the top gallant sails and sky scrapers, and to bear up towards the enemy. I will be up in an instant.'

Saint Sauveur saluted him, and left the chamber almost overcome by the strange calmness his superior officer maintained, under such circumstances.

"Don't you think, Germeau," asked the count, "that the skirts of this coat hang too stiffly?"

The valet de chambre examined it seriously, and after a few moments' silence, "The count is quite right, the count must not wear this coat. Luckily, I had the precaution to get Lenormand to make three full-dress coats, Monsieur le Count."

"Well, make haste, and come into the cabin; I must get a few arms that I may be ready for boarding."

The count having cast a long look upon the rich armoury that ornamented his cabin, first placed on one side an excellent pair of English double-barrelled pistols, and after trying the locks, he carefully examined and loaded them. He then took a sword, the blade of which was somewhat curved; it was short, but very wide, and the solid and beautifully engraved hilt and guard defended the hand, and almost the whole of the fore arm. He bent its gray and matted Damask blade, and examined the point and edge: a superb Turkish dagger, with a conical blade, was also submitted to the same proof, and added to his other weapons.

Germeau soon returned with another coat, the fashion of which was most exquisite.

"Ah, let me see it!" said the count, looking at it when on—"Yes, this is fit to be seen in; and now, Germeau, my hat with the white feathers and my speaking-trumpet, and give this frightful heap of arms to one of the men that he may place them on my seat on the quarter-deck," he added, lifting with some difficulty the heavy leather belt that supported the sabre, pistols, and dagger.

Then Henry negligently fastened on his golden-hilted sword, whose white satin scabbard was formed of a mere strip of whalebone, sufficient for one of these semblances of swords, called at that time, *pens*, on account, no doubt, of their extreme lightness.

"Ah!" observed the count, once more, "I had forgotten, I had rather you gave me the box Admiral Byron sent me, it will be in better taste in case I have to offer snuff to the English."

And he cast a last self-satisfied look on his dress, plucking at the same time a beautiful rose from the box of flowers, which he placed in his mouth. (This answered the same purpose as Marshal Saxe's pellet of wool, and Coligny's tooth-pick) and then went upon deck.

When he made his appearance the gunners were at their posts, the boys in the topsail yards, the sailors in all the shrouds, and the lieutenant on the quarter-deck.

At the sight of the count, the young and lively captain, so handsome, and so elegantly adorned with gold and diamonds, azure and scarlet, at the sight of this great lord, who appeared on deck with his usual grace and ease, the sailors could not avoid giving utterance to a feeling nearly resembling admiration.

For men are deceived if they imagine that physical advantages like his, when decked out in all the splendour of well-directed magnificence do not produce a great effect on the excitable but simple imagination of the sailors.

Living themselves by opposition, they are particularly and instinctively sensible to the poetry of contrasts. So that this extreme dress, on boaard a ship, this drawing-room toilet in the midst of the ocean, must necessarily have a great effect. And then these men, so plainly and carelessly clothed, felt a kind of pride in seeing the man who commanded them splendidly dressed. For after all, their captain had decked himself out in this manner to enter into action; and then again, if they submitted to their commandant, he also depended on their courage. His self-possession depended on theirs, his renown on their blind obedience; in one word, they were as necessary to him as he was to them. So that they were proud of him, proud of his splendour, and proud of his elegance, in the same manner as they were proud of the Sylphid, her beauty, and splendid decorations.

Again, I repeat, a feeling of pride and admiration spread itself over their hearty and rude features at sight of the count.

And really there was so much calmness and assurance in the handsome face of the count, there was such an expression of firmness and decision in the outline of his mouth, which played with the flower, so much careless intrepidity in his bright black eyes, that the infatuation of the brave sailors may be easily understood, especially when they made a comparison between the exterior of their lieutenant and that of the count.

In fact, Jean Thomas was in everything a perfect contrast to that brilliant personification of the aristocracy of the day. His short, thick-set figure,

his every-day features, his ragged hair, and dress which through a kind of cynical fatuity, was always old and worn, completed a vulgar and almost repulsive aspect; and thus made up the complement of the motives through which Jean Thomas was execrated by the crew, who found a perfect accordance between the physical and moral attributes of the man, and the most intimate connexion between his slovenly habits and rude manners.

As to the young officers, although particularly neat in their dress, they did not approach the elegance and good taste of their commander.

When he reached the quarter-deck the count leaped lightly to his accustomed station, and from thence he for some time examined with his telescope, and silently, the manœuvres and position of the enemy, who were now nearly visible to the naked eye.

"A thousand devils," said Master Frank, looking in astonishment at the count's dress. "Ah! there's a commandant, as you may say, braced up, braced up to the nines; on the faith of a man, I shall burst at the sight of the gold and jewels he wears on his breast. It makes one proud to be commanded by such a captain, whose very fleas will not be able to jump or even cut a caper without getting their claws entangled in that confounded fine gold lace, or among the sparkling of the diamonds that blind you like the sun's light."

"In the first place, my dear boy," said the canonnier bourgois, who was examining the tackle of the guns, "my dear Frank, if you were the least acquainted with good society, you would know that a commandant has no fleas, so your insect comparison is defective, Master Frank," added the gunner, with a vain smile at his own pleasantry.

"Oh, Master Kergouet!" replied Frank, with great simplicity, "you see I said fleas because I have fleas myself, that's all."

"Zounds! I know that well," said the canonnier bourgois, with a look of melancholy recrimination, "but forget these ridiculous insects, my friend Frank," continued the gunner, more calmly; "but stay, see how we are drawing near to the enemy.

Ah, ah! Master Frank, I think I shall have some business in my shop, the customers are coming. I call the frigate, the cutter, the schooner, and the sloop, customers, Master Frank; I call them customers because they are coming to my shop for a quantity of cannon balls, with which I shall serve them, and wholesale too."

And the canonnier went down to his battery.

But Frank seized him by the tail of his maroon coloured coat as he was disappearing through the little hatchway, and exclaimed, "What Kergouet, is that the way you leave an old messmate? you ought not to ,leave me so when we may perhaps soon go to Davy Jones; one shake of your fist, one hearty shake, at least.

"You are right, Frank, my dear boy," said the gunner, again mounting the ladder, to give a friendly shake to the horny hand of the boatswain.

And then the gunner went down to his shop, as he always called his battery.

At this instant the four ships of war were visible to the naked eye.

Henry put up his telescope, took the rose from his mouth, and exclaimed in a loud voice to his crew, at the same time pointing to the enemy with the corner of his hat with its border of white feathers:

"Let us make haste to take possession of these four English vessels, for they are expecting us in America; and once there, besides your share of the prize-money, I promise you a hundred louis to to drink the king's health. Long live the king! my boys, long live the king!"

"Long live the king!" cried the crew, in a state of excitement; for the few words he had uttered had produced the best effect, the assurance with which the count considered the ships he was about to engage as already captured, proved the confidence he placed in his crew, and this presumption brought into play the most powerful motive of action for man in general, but above all for a sailor—vanity.

Then addressing himself to the lieutenant, "Go forward, sir, and pray listen attentively to my most trifling orders," said Henry.

Jean Thomas saluted, and went to his post.

"M. de Miran, you attend to the working the vessel; M. de Sauveur, will you be good enough to ask M. de Monval, to whom you are second in command, if every thing is ready in the battery."

"The men are at their guns, commandant," said Saint Sauveur when he returned.

Henry then erecting his noble form, with glistening eye, and glowing cheeks, exclaimed, as he addressed his officers, "Now, gentlemen, remember the glory of France, behave like gentlemen, and long live the king!"

"Long live the king!" exclaimed the officers.

"Now, M. de Miran, let the large white flag be hoisted, and fire one gun, that it may declare both aloud and far off, *France*, and we shall see what answer these strangers will return."

And at the same instant an immense white flag glided majestically to the mast-head.

"Hats off, gentlemen," said Henry, gravely, and uncovering himself; "and you drummers, beat to arms."

The drums rolled, the officers and sailors uncovered themselves with a holy respect for the royal symbol as it slowly rose.

The instant the standard was fixed the sound of a cannon rolled over the surface of the ocean.

Scarcely was the echo returned when the four vessels hoisted the English flag, and also fired a shot.

"Ah! these gentlemen understand good behaviour," said Henry, perceiving the action of the enemy; "they return our politeness; they have given themselves a name, and cry, '*England*.' M. de Miran, bear down upon them."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE ACTION.

"Doris has conquered Fieschi."—SCHILLER.

I HAVE observed on board our navy, that the last moments which precede a naval action, are always remarkable for the silence maintained by the crew, and by the singular expression of anxious curiosity, or reflection, imprinted on their countenances.

In fact, the nearer the decisive moment approaches, the more serious the thoughts of the men become.

The noble excitement of the certainty of an action causes shouts of joy to be heard, and to overflow, an hour before the action. But when, ten minutes only have to elapse before the commencement of the engagement, the instinct of self-preservation obtains the upper hand in almost all constitutions. A man does not tremble; on the contrary, he reflects, and calmly calculates the bearing of all the chances he is about to risk, and in such an hour, the bravest men, I hope, may be allowed to perceive, it is a question of life or death for them which the cannon must decide.

And in my opinion this quiet struggle between the courage of reason, and the conservative desire of our nature, is of all valour the most beautiful, and eminently distinguishes our nation; and the certain proof of this is, they never make our sailors half-drunk before the action. They fight with all their faculties about them, and look firmly at all the dangers they are about to confront.

Among other nations, on the contrary, as if for the purpose of concealing the danger, perhaps, they treat their crews in such a manner as to fill them with a kind of blind and suddenly roused rashness; but they cause them to lose that which is of more value, particularly in a naval action, judgment and self-possession, qualities indispensable when fighting not only men, but fire, water, the winds and rocks.

If soldiers are drunk when fighting on dry land the danger is less; their object is to penetrate the masses, they rush forward head foremost, are either stopped or pass through; they move ahead or fall; at any rate, their footing is firm. On board, on the contrary, a single rope imprudently let go, or a false direction given to the helm, may jeopardize the safety of the ship's crew; so that the indispensable necessity of temperance is evident.

This solemn silence, this imposing precursor to battle, reigned on board the Sylphid, while they were passing over the short distance that separated them from the enemy. The English still held the wind, and the cutter served as an advanced guard to the small squadron. The frigate and the sloop formed the centre, and the schooner was in the rear, as a kind of *corps de reserve.*

The battery of the Sylphid had a magnificent

appearance; the captain of every gun, and the men who loaded them were standing erect, silent, and motionless, near their pieces. The matches were here and there smoking in barrels filled with water; the men whose duty it was to serve the guns stood at the entrance of the powder-room, with their cartridge bags. All the hatchways below, and those of the battery, were closed, except those in the centre, which served as a communication between the hold, the battery, and the deck; for the large square opening that passed perpendicularly through the different stages of the ship, opened on the deck, and ended in the hold. In this open space a chair was slung, and raised or lowered by means of a running tackle, whether it brought up the wounded, or let them down to the cockpit, where, in greater security, they were confided to the temporal cares of Doctor Gedeon, or the spiritual attentions of the chaplain.

Monval, who commanded in the battery, was standing near the capstan, resting on his naked sword, with which he used to give his orders to fire; for, during the engagement, it became impossible to be understood except by signs.

Kergouet was near Monval. Like the count, the canonnier bourgois was also unable to fight unless full dressed; so that, after having been shaved, powdered, and pomatumed by Losophe, the worthy master had dressed himself in an elegant maroon coloured coat with steel buttons, which formed a delightful opposition to his white waistcoat, embroidered with a wreath of vine leaves. To this you must add his chamois leather breeches, gray China silk stockings, a *batiste* collar and frill, and long ruffles, which were turned up, so that he might be more at his ease. Add to these a huge cocked hat, and you have a full description of the canonnier bourgois.

In one word, you might have imagined the gallant man was one of the most inoffensive and modest of the citizens of the *Rue Saint Denis*, had it not been for a pair of double-barrelled pistols, and a large and shining boarding sword without a scabbard, which he carried in his leather belt.

I have not mentioned the battle-axe he bore in his hand for the sake of appearances, as he might have carried his cane or umbrella.

Approaching the ensign, and saluting him respectfully, Master Kergouet said to him, "Will you allow me, M. de Monval, just to say a few words to these boys? They know me well, and perhaps, before the affair it will do no harm."

"Do so," said Monval.

"Gentlemen," said the master, "by permission of our officer I am going to ask you a question. We have an account to settle with four ships, have we not? but you must not imagine on that account there are four against one, and I'll tell you why—a canonnier bourgois is equal to four soldiers, is not that the case, gentlemen?"

"Yes, yes, master," said the gunners, delighted at breaking the silence that pressed so heavily on them, particularly at that instant.

The master continued: "Four six-livre crowns are not more than equal to a louis?"

"No, no, master," said the sailors.

"Well, then, gentlemen, my dear boys, look through the port and you will see a schooner, a sloop, a cutter, and an English frigate. That is just the right change for one French frigate like the Sylphid. And we dealers all know that large pieces of money are better than small change."

"Dealers," murmured the second master, Rapin, "yes, dealers in blows with a battle-axe, dealers in shot, dealers in red hot balls."

"And then, my boys," said Master Kergouet, "luck is on our aide, good omens...."

"Enough, enough, master," observed Monval, interrupting the gunner. "As to good omens, my lads, that which foretells the capture of a vessel is a good broadside in the hull, or among the rigging; a good aim is equal to a prophecy. But now silence among you all."

"The officer is right," said Lucas to a messmate, "our omens are made by ourselves; it is the safest plan, it is the same as when Losophe asked Gibard for the sake of teasing him, 'who tied your tail, Gibard?' And Gibard, who is quick enough, took him aback by answering, 'Who tied my tail? I tied it myself, Losophe.'"

Unfortunately Lucas was cut short in his tale by the speaking-trumpet that communicated between the deck to the battery and enabled them to hear the orders of the count.

"Gunners, down on your faces, let every man lie in the direction of the guns, and above all don't fire without orders."

Monval repeated the order, and the gunners laid themselves down by the side of their pieces.

Master Kergouet and Monval alone remained standing, but sheltered behind the capstan.

The position in which the gunners were ordered to remain, clearly proved that the enemy's broadside might be expected every intant to take effect on the battery, but that the commandant, not intending as yet to open fire, wished not to expose the lives of his crew.

"Gentlemen," said Master Kergouet, "now you are lying down, don't go to sleep, or, at least, don't snore louder than the cannon."

"We can't make sure of that," said Rapin; "for after the first volley, some of us may sleep sound enough."

At this instant, the line of water seen through the portholes, was hidden by the English frigate. A bright stream of fire tinged the surface of the waves, and the loud roar of the artillery was heard, while several cannon-balls entered the battery of the Sylphid, and others, lodging in the timbers of the vessel, made the sides of the ship tremble.

"Let the gunners still remain as they were."

After recovering from the stunning sensation of the broadside, the men movedtheir heads in various directions, to ascertain what mischief had been done; and Kergouet observed to Monval,

"Not much harm done, I think—a few splinters, but see, see that poor devil who has left his post; and another is rolling, and dancing as if he were mad."

"It is one of the sleepers I spoke of just now, M. Kergouet," said Rapin; "he has rather an unpleasant dream. But see, it is all over with him; he has died like a dog, and without the aid of his priest."

"What, ho! the chair," cried Master Kergouet."

"It is engaged," exclaimed a weak voice, and at the same instant it descended with Losophe, who was wounded, and holding St. Medard in his arms.

"Stop, Losophe," said Master Kergouet, catching at the chair, and drawing it on to the gun-deck; "will you have the civility to take poor Peter with you; it will save a journey, St. Medard and you will have company."

"At your service, Master Kergouet. come, move, St. Medard, and make room for the gentleman:"

and the dead man, the dog, and the living, descended into the depths of the hold!

Silence again took possession of the battery; but a dreadful rattling noise, succeeded by the voice of Henry, rising above the tumult, was heard: "Stand by to wear!" and the loud voice of Jean Thomas repeated the orders. The manœuvre was scarcely executed when the speaking trumpet gave vent to the words: "Fire from the starboard side!"

"To your guns, my boys; at her hull; fire!" repeated Monval. The broadside was discharged, and the timbers of the Sylphid trembled.

The action continued to be maintained with fury on both sides.

But in the midst of the dreadful tumult, the chair, instead of returning empty from the hold, as it usually did, re-appeared with Rumphius, calm as usual, with a thermometer in his hand, and a syphon between his teeth, clinging in the best manner he could to the tackle of the chair. The unfortunate astronomer, finding the means of escaping the watchfulness of Sulpice, had flung himself unperceived into the empty chair. Having reached the deck, he coolly took refuge among the sails and the cordage of the bowsprit.

On deck, in the midst of the confused sounds of the battle, the discharge of musketry and cannonades, and the thick and yellow smoke by which every thing was enveloped, the brilliant sun of the Azores appeared like a blood-red globe shorn of its rays.

Henry stood on the quarter deck, holding by the mizen shrouds with one hand, and pointing with the other to a broken rope, but still calm, although his cheeks were slightly coloured by the ardour of the contest.

At this instant the master carpenter appeared on deck; his face was pale, in spite of all his efforts to conceal his emotion, as he whispered a few words in Henry's ear.

The features of the Count remained unchanged, with the exception of a slight knitting of his brow, and he called to Jean Thomas, who, after hearing a few words from his commander, went below with the carpenter.

The Sylphid had received two balls beneath low water mark, and the pumps were unable to keep the leaks under. But the Count still maintained his self-possession. "Well, sir," he said to M. Miran, touching his embroidered hat, "these English fight well, and I have been making some observations on their method of working their ships, which I think I can take a lesson from. But this accursed powder spoils all my lace, it is as bad as a blacksmith's forge."

"You seem to forget," said Miran, "that your silk stockings are covered with blood."

"Ah, it was that devil of a helmsman who touched me as he fell! For we are losing a great many hands, sir, a great many."

But the Count was unable to conceal his impatience at the delay of the lieutenant; the latter however soon reappeared, and approaching Henry, said to him, "it is stopped, commandant:"

"That is well, sir, now go forward."

Again the action appeared to have redoubled in fury, when the chair for the wounded once more rose, bearing in it Sulpice, pale, distracted, and with his hair in disorder. Not being able to see his brother, he exclaimed, "where is my brother? in heaven's name, where is my brother?"

But the Count, whose attention was directed to the movements of the enemy, repulsed him rudely, and at the same time thrusting the man at the helm from his place, he seized upon the wheel, and boldly and skilfully brought the Sylphid as close to the wind as possible, giving orders to the crew to spread every inch of canvass; the crew obeyed the orders of the Count with alacrity, and he was thus enabled to avoid a movement of the enemy's ship, by which they would have been able to pour their shot into his stern. It now became Henry's turn to avail himself of the advantage he had gained by this manœuvre.

"Now then, M. de Miran," he exclaimed, "we will bear down upon them, and the instant I give my order to wear, open your broadside, fire from the shrouds, and the tops, and this insolent frigate shall pay dearly for her temerity—now, stand by to wear!"

Every man took his place, and, at the word of command, all the sails expanded their canvass wings, all but the jib sails, with the working of which Jean Thomas was entrusted.

"Run forward, de Miran, and if the manœuvre is not executed on the instant, cut him down like a dog."

At the very instant de Miran rushed forward, the sails rose, the frigate wore, and the combat again became more fierce.

The reader must be reminded that Rumphius after he had escaped from his brother's custody, had succeeded in reaching the deck, and concealed himself among the sails of the bowsprit, the latter, forming, as he imagined, an admirable place for his observations, and there, notwithstanding the noise and danger of the action, he very coolly employed himself in his calculations.

Sulpice had also reached the deck, and ascertained from one of the sailors the hiding-place of his brother. Looking in the direction the sailor indicated, he perceived the philosopher very quietly scribbling a number of geometrical and mathematical figures on a piece of paper.

Lieutenant Jean Thomas, in his usual brutal manner, asked Sulpice what business he had on deck, bidding him go into the hold, where he had been directed to remain.

"I will not go down without my brother;" replied Sulpice, resolutely

"I know nothing about your brother, I only know that every passenger ought to be in the hold just now. So go down; you are in our way," cried Thomas, thrusting back Sulpice.

Sulpice, however, would not yield, but continued to call on Rumphius, "brother, brother, come down--in the name of heaven, come down, brother!"

Rumphius, hidden by the sails, and absorbed in his calculations, could not hear the voice of Sulpice, in the midst of the creaking of the blocks, for the Count had that instant given orders to wear.

To execute these orders, it was necessary to hoist the triangular sails behind which Rumphius was concealed, and unless this manœuvre was executed quickly it might have occasioned the loss of the Sylphid.

"Once again, will you leave the deck, you wretched fool!" cried Jean Thomas, "you interfere with my obedience to orders, and if I fail, my life is at stake," and he seized Sulpice by the collar.

"No, no; I will not leave this place without my brother;" and with supernatural force he repulsed the lieutenant and rushed to the bowsprit, calling out loudly to Rumphius, and clinging to the ropes by which the sails were moved. declaring he would not move without his brother.

It was at this instant the commandant ordered the manœuvre to be executed, but as long as Sulpice clung to the ropes, it was impossible,

Jean Thomas, dreadfully exasperated, seized an axe, that always lay near the spot, and threatening Sulpice, exclaimed, "If you value your life, come from that place."

"I must remain near my brother," answered Sulpice, with unflinching countenance, and a look of the most intrepid resignation.

Just then Henry exclaimed, in a tone of dreadful anger:—

"Haul up the jib, sir, you are hindering the ship from wearing!"

His situation was teirrble, the safety of the frigate was at stake, the success of the action and his own life. Jean Thomas hesitated not, but with one blow of the hatchet he brought down Sulpice.

The unfortunate man extended his arms, let go the ropes, and could only utter these words:—"Brother—pardon—" and he fell into the sea.

But the frigate veered.

All this took place in less time than we have taken to write it. Dreadful as the fate of Sulpice was, the sailors had no time to pity him, for the fire was opened from every quarter at the same instant, and the excitement of the battle prevented their thinking of what had taken place.

The Sylphid's broadside swept the enemy's deck from stem to stern, shattered their main top-mast, and cut their rigging to pieces.

By this manœuvre the Count had separated the English frigate from the schooner; the former was too much disabled to re commence the action at the instant, and Henry at once chased the schooner, and, in spite of her rapid sailing qualities, soon gained upon her, and bearing down with all sails set, struck her a-mid-ships, and received also a violent shock herself, but the frail schooner, overcome by the concussion, disappeared without time being allowed to save a single man.

But, just at that moment, one of the men on the look out exclaimed, "two ships of war to the windward!"

This announcement changed the direction of the ideas of all, and every face was turned towards the mast head.

"How many guns?" said Henry.

"I think they are two men of war."

"I must ascertain that," said Henry; and throwing his hat and coat on the deck by the side of his arms, he reached the mast head with the agililty of a boy, and glided down the shrouds again with frightful rapidity.

"M. de Miran," he exclaimed, putting on his coat hastily, "hoist all the canvass we can carry, and make sail, it would be folly to think of holding out against the two sixty-fours that are coming up. I know them to be English by the cut of their top sails.

The battle once over, in the cock-pit, and there alone, we have a clear exposition of how much it has cost. During the action honour and vanity have maintained the spirits of the men; but, alas! when it is all over, Achilles feels his heel, the demigod is in the cock-pit—the vulgar, hideous, prosaic abode of *glory*. There might be seen the dreadful apparatus of the doctor; on one side the wounded sailors waiting for their turns, on another the doctor, busily engaged in his cruel, and yet merciful occupation; while, on the starboard side, a huge tarpaulin exhibits its formless mass, this, for the instant, forms the receptacle for the dead. Near to this, before a small crucifix, the chaplain on his knees prays for the departed souls.

Losophe wounded, waiting for the doctor's assistance, was carefully noticing doctor Gedeon as he amputated the left arm of an unfortunate sailor, at length he exclaimed, "he may be sure of being free from the cramp in the elbow when he lies on his left side."

The doctor then, turning to the speaker, observed, "Now, then, what is the matter with you?"

"Major," replied Losophe, showing his leg, "St. Medard and I have both been wounded with a *biscaien;* see the poor creature has had half his ear carried away; we were up in the tops splicing a rope, and St. Medard was barking furiously at the enemy."

"Do you think, you animal," said Gedeon, "that I am going to attend to your dog?—but stop—stop, what are you frightened at? where the devil are you going, hobbling in that manner, with your dog, before you have had your wound dressed?"

"I will tell you, major," observed Daniel, who had been wounded in the head with a splinter, "he is afraid I shall give him his allowance, the beggar that he is. Only think major; before the battle that rascal Losophe offered to procure a little matter of magic for me, for which I paid him three crowns, by means of which I should run no risk of being wounded. But *sacre dieu !*" he exclaimed, interrupting himself, "you are splitting my head, doctor!" and he raised his hands to his head.

"Take your hands away, you booby! or some one shall hold you."

"Yes, major; but you pinched my brain, and they say I am very tender in the brain."

"How can you talk such nonsense? But go on with your tale it will distract your attention."

"Well, major, as Losophe did a job in magic for me on one occasion that was very successful, I was not suspicious, and paid him; as soon as he had done, he made me swallow something as black as ink, but such dreadful stuff, it made me so sick I could not finish the phial. 'That is excellent, Daniel,' the rascal said to me, 'the worse it makes you, the safer you will be.' I believed him, and ran bare-headed into the fire, and the first thing I received was a blow on the head, although the rascal swore to me, on the faith of a lieutenant magician, that if I placed myself before the mouth of a cannon the gun would burst sooner than injure me."

"Get away with you, you're an ass—there, your wound is dressed, be off, for here comes the lieutenant, and he wants my assistance."

"Thank you, major," said Daniel; then addressing a group of sailors, "have any of you seen Losophe?"

"Yes, he has just gone through the little hatchway."

"Has he? then I'll serve him out, the impostor."

"Well," said the doctor to the lieutenant, "what's the matter with you, Jean?"

"I don't know, it is here, in the arm, a ball, I believe;" and the doctor, after examining the wound, exclaimed "yes, it is a ball, a little bullet, it has not been very mischievous, however, it has stopped at the 'biceps,' I'll soon remove it, and then you may go upon deck again. But the commandant—the master, is not he wounded?"

"No; still Monsieur le Comte, even in the case of bullets, the insolent coxcomb stood erect on his quarter deck, in the midst of the fire, in the most

perilous part of the ship, but nothing—nothing happened."

"It was all mere chance: his courage was the courage of vanity, all eyes were upon him—that's all, he was good seaman enough for that."

"You are wrong—blood and thunder! I tell you he is a good seaman, and a good officer, although he is a Count and a coxcomb."

But the rolling of the drum announced the visit of the commander, and Henry, having seen the wounded pitied their sufferings, promised pensions and favours, and recommendations to the king, and then returned to his cabin.

"Open the windows, Germeau, and bring me that box of flowers and pour out a bottle of hungary water. I cannot get rid of that dreadful smell, I had rather fight ten hours than endure it for ten minutes. How they can exist in the midst of it I can't imagine. Then, looking at the list of the wounded, he observed, "Ah, eleven amputations! that is very inconvenient, men in that condition are of no use on board, they are always in the way." Then crushing the paper in his hand, he had a bath of rose water, made an excellent dinner, and, stretching himself on the sofa, he slept, and enjoyed the most pleasant dreams.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE MEETING.

"Who would have thought it?—Anon.

The crew of the Sylphid having repaired the damage they had received from the enemy's shot, she was now under easy sail for her destination; for Henry, having in the first instance carried all the canvass he could, had succeeded in distancing the men of war.

It was night; and all but the watch were asleep, all with the exception of Losophe and his dog, and the Breton Daniel. St. Medard and his master had for some time been endeavouring to avoid Daniel, who, after a variety of dodging movements on the part of Losophe, at length succeeded in fixing him in a corner, from which he was unable to escape.

"Now, you rascal, I have you at last!"

"No, I have hold of you," said Losophe, taking his dupe by the collar, "I have been looking after you for this hour."

"Looking after me!" said Daniel, confounded by his impudence.

"Yes, looking after you. Oh, you are a bold animal, Daniel, a bold animal!"

"This is rather too much;" said Daniel, "after selling me a filthy bottle of stuff for three crowns to save me from the shot, when the first thing that happened was my receiving a wound!"

"Daniel, you are a sad dog, you'll come to a bad end; now answer me, did you drink all the contents of the bottle?"

"No, I did not drink all—no, by St. Peter, you may cut me to pieces before I'll take another drop."

"You did not drink it all, and yet you expected the charm to operate; and you have exposed me to the risk of being punished by our 'most excellent magician,' St. Germain. You have deceived a friend, Daniel."

"Well, but I swallowed a great part of the filthy stuff, and yet I was wounded."

"Why, you animal, for that is the only name I can call you by, what is your wound, after all!" a mere scratch; I was in the tops at the time, and I saw what wounded you; enough to have crushed you. It was six red hot balls chained together; and yet you only received a scratch; how would it have been had you taken the whole of the mixture? Instead of wounding you, the six balls would have merely tickled your head, as they tickle a parrot's poll; they would have changed into a coronet of roses, but you preferred having a scratch on your forehead. Well, every one to his taste."

"I had rather have been crowned with flowers, Losophe, on my sacred word of honour I had."

"Ah, well, every one to his taste, as I said before. But you have made me run the risk of being punished by the 'most excellent magician,' for I informed him through the air that I had made a charm to prevent your being wounded, and now you are wounded I shall be punished, when it was all your own fault, you ass—you brute—you animal!'

Daniel began to tremble, and imagine he had wronged Losophe,—"Zounds, Losophe, I did'nt believe—"

"You did not believe, indeed! - Can you read?"

"You know I cannot, Losophe."

"Well, then, read this," and Losophe drew forth a large sheet of paper covered with figures and hieroglyphics, which he had stolen from Rumphius. "Well, have you read it? No? well, I'll read it for you.—'Every man who only half performs the conditions of a spell, given to him by a magician, shall be punished by being transformed into a sea bear, and by having a d....ble pain in the bowells for seven hundred thousand and nine years.'

Daniel shuddered, and crossed himself.

"'Unless he gives two six-livre crowns, to purchase refreshment for the green dragon with the red tongue, that would otherwise have bitten the magician.'"

And Losophe gravely closed the book.

The Breton was much moved, but he managed to stammer out, "Bah! it is all the same thing; if I am to be punished, let it be in a lump, and I'll begin by lathering you, Losophe."

And he levelled his fist at Losophe, who calmly observed, "I could pulverize you with a puff of my breath, but I had rather be beaten by you, for every blow I receive will be ten millions of hundreds of billions of a pain in the bowels for you."

This menace had the desired effect, and Losophe was about to proceed, when a strong smell of burning filled the false deck, taking advantage of this Losophe observed, "do you observe; you had scarcely raised your hand against me, when the devil himself makes his appearance, to defend me, and carry you off....do you smell the sulphur?'

"Mercy—mercy, Losophe!" said Daniel falling on his knees.

But the whole vessel was soon in commotion, and Henry, having hastily dressed himself, appeared on the quarter deck, and gave his orders in a firm tone.

"Every man to his post; and you, M. de Miran, let the vessel be brought too, and close the hatchways to prevent a draught of air, and let the wounded be carried to the gun deck, if the fire is not got under; and as for you, Master Frank, get ready the fire engine, and let it be worked."

The fire was completely unexpected, and every one was taken by surprise.

"The fire is gaining on us, commandant," said

the lieutenant, in a whisper, as he issued from the after hatchway.

"Where is the seat of the fire?" said Henry.

"In the after part of the vessel," said Jean Thomas, immediately over the powder magazine; M. Kergouet, the master gunner, has risked his life by going down to the spot."

"Tell him to drown the powder, as soon as he sees the seams of the deck begin to open; and let the rest of us do all we can to save the ship."

But in spite of all their exertions, the fire gained ground; and soon a column of flame rose from one of the open ports, and lighted up the rigging, the masts, and every object on deck, while the tops of the waves were tinged with its ruddy light.

The sailors, alarmed, endeavoured to get the boat ready; but Henry being acquainted with this by Master Frank, exclaimed, "Let no one speak of embarking without my orders."

"They will not speak of it; they will do it," cried a voice.

"And who will do it?" said Henry, coolly.

"I," said the same voice.

And Henry approached the sailor, who was engaged in releasing one of the boats of its tackle. "Ah, it is you," said Henry, quietly cocking a pistol.

"Yes; I had rather be on the water, than roasting here."

At these words, the Count placed the pistol to his ear, and blew out his brains: "That is the punishment of a mutineer; who wishes to imitate him?" But this energetic act had silenced the rest.

"A ship to windward!" cried the look-out, from the masthead. "Curse on it!" exclaimed Henry; perhaps it is an English vessel: the light of the fire has betrayed us."

"Ship ahoy! your vessel's on fire: do you want boats or any other assistance?" said a voice from the unknown craft.

"Confusion! it is an English frigate," said Thomas.

"She has kindly offered us assistance," said the Count; "accept it at once, and we shall see afterterwards." Then, taking his speaking-trumpet, Henry answered the English vessel, "We are French; our ship is on fire; send us your engine; and I, the commander of this frigate, request a truce, until our fire is got under."

"It is equitable," said a voice, that made Henry start.

The English engine was soon alongside, and being directed by Master Frank, it was not long before the English sailors were enabled to extinguish the flames.

When the danger was over, Henry said to the chief officer of the party who had come to his assistance, "May I ask, sir, to what generous commander I am indebted for this assistance, what is the name of your vessel?"

"Our commodore is the Honourable Sir George Gordon, and our frigate is called the Lively," answered the officer, in French.

"Sir George, the son of Lord Gordon, govenor-general of India?"

"Yes, Captain," replied the English officer.

"Well, then, sir," said Henry, "tell Sir George, that Count de Vaudry, one of his most devoted friends, will pay him a visit to-morrow by daybreak; and also inform him, that I shall remain within range of the guns of his frigate, and that I shall not leave, unless driven off by the weather."

"Good day, my dear count," said the voice of Sir George, as soon as he had received Henry's message; I am delighted at having rendered you this slight service. I shall remain all night in the west-south-west, under half-reefed top-sails.

"To-morrow, then, my dear George," said Henry.

Henry did not forget the invitation of his old friend, and in the morning he departed for the English ship, accompanied by De Miran, and much to the astonishment of Jean Thomas. Before he left, however, he took out his sealed orders, that were to be opened in the latitude of the Azores. After removing the envelopes, he found two packets, on one of which was written, "This packet to be opened first." On opening it, it contained orders to burn the despatches addressed to the Chevalier Destouches, and to cruize near the Azores for one month, and then to sail for Cape Verd, and there open the second packet. But at the bottom of the despatch, he found an intimation, in the handwriting of the Marshal, that he would meet with Suffren off the African coast, and proceed with him to India.

When Henry and De Miran reached the deck of the Lively, they found Sir George surrounded by his officers; and all were soon engaged in deep and interesting conversation, on the chances of the war, the merits of their two vessels, and other equally interesting subjects.

"A thousand pardons, gentlemen," said Henry, at length, "if I carry off Sir George for an instant;" and they both retired into the cabin.

"Now we are alone, Henry," said Sir George, "allow me to thank you, and to clasp your hand once more, and express the happiness I feel at once again meeting with you."

"And let me," observed Henry, "also express my gratification. I have but one thing to complain of, and that is, the haste you were in to send me back those few thousand louis."

"Say no more about it," said Sir George; "I almost regret it ever took place. May we not, perhaps, within an hour, Henry, be in deadly conflict."

"Well, that is what delights me," said Henry; "for, between us, it will not be so murderous a conflict, as it might be under other circumstances,—it will be more like a trial of skill—it will be the Sylphid competing with the Lively."

"Well, but if we board each other?"

"If we board, let us swear, on the honour of gentlemen, never to raise our swords against each other: it can make no difference in the issue of the combat."

"Agreed," said Sir George; "but with this exception only—it must be a mortal struggle, without truce or rest."

"I am willing, my dear George,"

But suddenly Henry, striking his foot on the floor, exclaimed, in a state of the highest excitement, "Curses upon it! I forgot the powder—the powder!"

"What do you mean?" said Sir George, much excited.

"I mean," replied the count, looking at his friend with an expression of wild despair, "I mean, that I am the most wretched of mankind."

"Explain yourself," said George.

"Well, then," observed Henry, "during the fire, I caused the powder to be wetted. I have not a grain left—not enough to prime my pistol."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Sir George; "I can now partly make amends to you for your kindness.'

And ringing his bell, he desired his servant to tell the lieutenant to come to him.

"You cannot guess what I mean?"

"No, on my honour."

"Henry, I will divide my powder with you"

"Oh, Sir George, how noble and generous this is!"

The lieutenant entered.

"Go to the powder magazine, sir, and see the powder divided into two equal portions."

"Yes, captain," said the officer.

"Send one half on board the frigate in our offing."

"Sir?" said the lieutenant, imagining he had not correctly heard the orders.

"My orders, sir, are, that one-half the powder be taken on board yonder frigate."

The officer, thunderstruck, bowed and left the cabin, believing peace had been signed between France and England.

The lieutenant had scarcely left the room, when Henry again expressed his thanks to Sir George.

"My dear friend," said the latter, "is it not the same thing?—powder or money, you saved my honour, as I now save yours."

"How can I ever repay you for this?"

"If you imagine you owe me anything, I will tell you how. I know you well, Henry, and I dare explain myself. When I was in India, at Pondicherry, I became acquainted with a young girl, to whom I was to be united at the conclusion of the war. It is possible I may not survive the approaching action; in case I fall, promise me, Henry, to deliver a packet of letters I shall leave behind me, and a portrait, to this young girl, by your own hands; for as you go to India, I have no doubt you will land at Pondicherry."

"If I go to Pondicherry, I swear to do as you wish."

"You will find the letters here in my waistcoat."

"You will deliver them yourself, George; and when I pay a visit to London, I shall have the honour of an introduction to Lady Gordon."

The two friendly enemies were interrupted by the lieutenant of the Lively, who came to inform the captain that he had executed his orders.

An hour afterwards, Henry departed for his own vessel.

Ten minutes had not elapsed, after he reached his own deck, before the two frigates were at gun-shot distance from each other.

Then a flash of flame illuminated the dark sides of the Lively—the action had commenced, and a similar streak of light was seen on the hull of the Sylphid. Broadside followed broadside, until, at length, the lofty masts of the Lively were seen to totter, and then fall by the board, bringing with it the ample white sails. The Sylphid, taking advantage of this misfortune, succeeded in pouring a broadside into the bows of the Lively, that swept her from stem to stern; but the latter vessel, after repairing the damage she had sustained, bore down upon the French frigate as if with the intention of boarding. The offer was accepted by Henry; and after the exchange of a last broadside, the grappling-irons were thrown, and the vessels lashed together yard-arm to yard arm.

The musketry was for an instant heard, and then a mournful silence succeeded, interrupted only by the clash of sabres and other weapons,—for the sword, the dagger, the axe, and the pike, are at work.

But the bird's-eye view of a combat of this description discloses none of these details, nothing is seen but two noble and beautiful vessels, gilded by the rays of the sun, in the midst of a calm and transparent sea, beneath a beautiful sky, close to each other, like two swans on the surface of a purling stream.

But on the deck of the vessel itself, what is really going on? Imagine that each vessel has a crew of three hundred men, and that these six hundred men are murdering each other, with cold steel, within a space of one hundred and twenty paces in length, and thirty in width, and that this space is still further contracted by capstans, cordage, and the bodies of the slain.

At the end of twenty minutes the red flag was hauled down, and the white standard of France hoisted at the mast head of the English frigate: the Lively was the prize of the Sylphid, and, before long, both the vessels, having repaired the damage, were under sail in company, like two old friends.

The splendid cabin of Henry had been much injured by the shot: the gilding destroyed or blackened, the beautiful mirrors broken, and everything thrown into the utmost disorder.

Seated on a cannon was the Count de Vaudry, without coat or waistcoat, his shirt covered with blood. The faithful Germeau supported him in his arms, and Doctor Gedeon was busily employed introducing a steel probe into a wound a little below the right clavicle.

A group of curious listeners surrounded the door of the cabin. Doctor Gedeon, full of importance, after he had withdrawn the probe, applied his ear to the wound. After a moment's silence he withdrew it, then listened again, and at length observed, "the wound is not deep, there is no danger, count."

It would be difficult to describe the effect produced by these few words. Cries of joy, and loud shouts were heard through every part of the vessel.

"Monsieur de Monval," said Henry, after he had heard the doctor's opinion, "tell the lieutenant that, while my cabin is being put in order, I will go on board the prize."

"Will the exertion do the count any harm?" said Germeau, timidly.

"Not the least," said doctor Gedeon, "and if the count will allow me, I will accompany him; for I wish to see my friend Jean Thomas, who has been slightly wounded by that wild animal the English commodore."

"In heaven's name, be silent, sir!" said Henry violently, "do not remind me of the dreadful scene —poor George!" added the count, speaking to himself, "poor and brave George! When I went to him, how sadly he said:—

"'I spoke the truth when I said that I should be unfortunate, my dear count, but you will testify that I defended my poor frigate to the last, did I not? Adieu! count, our fate is singular; do not forget your promise.—Stay, here are the letters and the portrait.'

"And then he uttered these words—which I cannot comprehend, '*I merited my fate, for I have been perjured.*' What could he mean by that?" added the count; then, after a moment's reflection, he exclaimed:—

"Curses upon it, to lose a man like this! it is enough to drive a man mad!"

When the count reached the deck, he turned towards the boatswain, who was standing by, hat in hand, and said, "How is Master Kergouet?"

"Going on very well, commandent, his right

hand is a little injured, however, for he has lost his thumb, and at least three of his fingers, by a discharge of grape shot; and he is waiting now for the doctor."

"Well, doctor, I think this poor devil's wound is of more importance than that of the lieutenant, suppose you take him first."

"I was about to propose that to you, commandant; where is the master gunner?" said Gedeon to Frank.

"This way, doctor, in his own berth."

The worthy master, although reclining on his cot, was carefully powdered, according to custom, and Losophe had just finished shaving him.

At the foot of the bed stood Daniel, holding a large bottle and a glass, and about to pour out for the master.

"Zounds, Losophe! your razor bites confoundedly," said the canonnier bourgois.

"As for that, it is very likely that it bites," said Losophe; "for it is not without teeth; it's a complete saw."

"And very pleasant, no doubt, for your customers, you animal!" cried the gunner, in a passion. But seeing Gedeon, "Ah, the doctor! I have the honour to salute you," cried Kergouet, bowing very low.

"Well," said Gedeon, "what's the matter here?"

"Oh, nothing," said Kergouet, holding up his arm covered with a large plaster. "It happened near the end of the affair; all the men at the gun had been demolished, and I was about to load it myself, when a cursed shot snapped at me; but I have only lost four fingers, and I don't consider that much, they are under process of cure already."

"What the devil have you been putting to it?" said Gedeon, horror-struck, and touching with the points of his scissors, the mass of well-tarred tow by which the wound was concealed."

When this question was asked, Losophe suddenly escaped on tiptoe, putting his razor at the same time in his pocket.

"What have I put on the wound?" said the gunner.

"Yes, this mass of filth I see here," said the doctor, impatiently.

"Monsieur le doctor, speaking respectfully, it is a very excellent thing, a very simple remedy, prepared at Lima, under the influence of Saturn and the southern cross. It contains the tail of a lion's whelp, the eyes of a sea swallow, the tooth of a she-tiger, and the fat of an elephant."

"And who gave you this beautiful receipt?"

"It was not given me for nothing, doctor; Losophe has been kind enough to impart it to me; he had it from a cacique's niece, a lady he was acquainted with in the south; and it even appears, that the cacique never gave this remedy to any but his relations or his most intimate friends, and no one else is acquainted with it."

"And at your age, Master Kergouet, do you believe such nonsense?"

"I am not a child, doctor," said the gunner, with vexation; "I can distinguish a quack medicine from a natural remedy like this."

And the gunner said in his sleeve, "Ah! he is rather jealous on the subject: two of a trade, that's it."

"Just as you like," said Gedeon; "but after you are once under my hands, if I find any of this rubbish on it again, you may be attended by whom you will."

And the doctor began to dress the master's wound.

At this instant second master, Rapin, entered in haste, cap in hand, and his face covered with smiles.

"Well, Master Kergouet,," he said, as he approached the gunner, and shook his hand triumphantly, "Well, master, it seems you have had your hand crushed, it is your fourth wound, I think; is that very citizen-like, eh? what is there like a dealer in that, eh?"

"He is very grand with his *ehs*," cried Master Kergouet; then after coolly shrugging his shoulders, and looking at Gedeon, he said "I hope, doctor, you will acknowledge, that it is impossible to meet in the vilest poultry yard, with a greater goose than this. But to the fact: look you, Rapin, there ought to be some respect shown to each other among citizens, and I wish to answer you and convince you for your own good, that you are a brute beast. Listen to me then, Rapin, my dear friend,—I have an intimate friend at Brest, M. Joliot, a grocer and dealer in chocolate. M. Joliot is far from being a fighting man, and above all, a gunner, for he is in the habit of observing, when speaking of the imprudent loading of fire-arms, that he could not be comfortable when in a boat, if he knew there was even an unloaded musket at the bottom of the water, because there is no knowing what might happen. So you cannot say, Rapin, that my friend Joliot is either a fighting man or a gunner, can you?"

"Certainly not, master, a grocer, nothing but a grocer."

"Well, Rapin, very well; and yet one day, while grinding his cocoa, he crushed his hand under the roller, and lost three fingers in an instant; well, that does not make him a gunner, does it? or a fighting man either? answer that, if you can."

"You are extremely civil, Master Kergout," said Rapin; but you argue like a hedgehog."

"A hedgehog," cried Kergouet."

"Yes, said Rapin, coolly, "and a hedgehog that has drunk too much."

"Ah, that is the case, is it? well, do me the kindness to superintend the cleaning of your guns, and see the battery put in order, instead of standing here talking nonsense," replied Kergouet, who, finding he had the worst of the argument, was anxious to cut the discussion short.

The damage done to the two frigates having been repaired, the two vessels continued their cruize off the Azores, under the command of the Count de Vaudry.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE ABBE DE CILLY.

"Despair itself becomes a kind of asylum under which a man may seat himself and find repose."

The Abbé de Cilly, who had devoted himself to the duties of chaplain on board the Sylphid, was descended from an ancient and noble house, and had only embraced the ecclesiastical profession about two years previously. He had passed the greater past of his youth in the centre of the Vosges, on the estate of his father, who having passed the earlier part of his life in the midst of the gaieties of the court, during the regency and the reign of Louis XV., retired from the world while still young; and marrying the daughter of one of his neighbours, passed the remainder of his life on his hereditary estates; here, shortly after his marriage, he lost his wife, who left behind her, young Arthur de Cilly, her only child, the present Abbe.

The Baron de Cilly thus left to the entire superintendence of his only son, determined that none but himself should interfere with the education of young Arthur; and being a man of considerable acquirements, the mind of the boy was rapidly developed. In fact, Arthur being, from his earliest years, familiarized with the most abstract studies, and endowed with an ardent imagination, still more exalted by solitude, before he had attained the age of twenty, had nearly made himself master of the whole circle of knowledge his father was able to impart to him; but in addition to these solid acquirements, Arthur possessed an obstinately analytical spirit; and it was not long before the inconvenience of this *penchant* was felt by his less talented father.

For the latter had early introduced him into worldly knowledge of every description; and he began, when he saw the ardent imagination of his son, to regret the lessons he had given, and endeavoured, but, alas! too late, to retrace his steps. The consequence of this state of affairs, was frequent disputes and much angry argument between the baron and his son; and M. de Cilly listened to Arthur with that species of terror and surprise with which a man might look at an acorn he had planted, if it were to grow before his eyes, and become an oak in the space of a second.

The feeling thus engendered in the breast of the young man, which told him, "your intellect is superior to that of your father's," poisoned all his days, for he really doated on his parent.

This constant feeling of depression at the failure of his schemes, soon injured the health of the baron; and he shortly afterwards died, and left his youthful heir a prey to the compunctions of conscience, and without the most remote belief in revealed religion. As a relief to his distracted

thoughts, he sought for new sensations in the dangers of an adventurous life; and entering the army under an assumed name, distinguished himself so much in his new career, that he was made an officer on the field of battle; but in the morning he left his post, disgusted at the horrors and cruelties of war, and not long afterwards entered orders, and instructed others in a faith in which he himself had no belief.

Such was the Abbe de Cilly, who, about fifteen days after the action with the Lively, and the death of Sir George, found himself in company with Henry, now nearly cured of his wound. The two frigates were still cruizing off the Azores, and Henry, having no mental resources, found his time pass heavily during the monotony of a cruize; to relieve himself, to a certain extent, from the vapours, he had sent for the chaplain, not, as he assured the abbe, exactly for the purpose of confession, but to speak to him of the singular state in which his mind had been for some time past.

He then very candidly entered into an account of his cruelty to Rita, and the numerous other acts of his dissipated life, and he continued, "Hypocrisy apart, abbe, I am sometimes terrified at my conduct."

It would be useless to weary the reader with the long and tedious conversation that ensued between the count and the abbe, in which the former, while accusing himself of the various crimes with which his life had been chequered, at the same time could not avoid an expression of vanity at the situation in which he imagined his constant success, and apparent appreciation by the world, had placed him above the other libertines of the age; while, on the other hand, the shrewd and unbelieving abbe harrowed up his feelings by his ironical observations. Suffice it to say, that, as the abbe had assured him at the beginning of their interview, they parted dissatisfied with the result of their meeting, the abbe perfectly convinced of the hollowness of the heart of t e count, and the latter unable to fathom the character of that "devil of an abbe."

But let us shift the scene to India. It was on a beautiful, pure, and transparent starlight night, a squadron of eight ships of the line and three frigates silently glided along the waters of the narrow strait that separates the island of Ceylon from the mainland of the Carnatic or Coromandel. To all appearance the greater number of these vessels had lately been engaged in a murderous conflict; in fact, they had just returned from the battle of Negapatnam, in which the English admiral, Hughes was beaten.

In the cabin of the Ajax, which carried the admiral's flag, a man about forty-five years of age might have been seen in a reclining attitude, quietly smoking a houkah; he was tall and muscular, and clothed in a plain calico dress. In the same cabin a young officer, in the full dress of a lieutenant, was seated at a small table, covered with papers and writing materials. The man with the houkah was M. le Bailli de Suffren de Saint-Tropez, rear admiral and commander of the fleet of the king of the French in the Indian seas. The young officer was the nephew of the admiral, the Chevalier de Pirrevert, captain of the Bellona.

After writing a portion of a despatch at the dictation of the admiral, the lieutenant observed:—"Admiral, you told me I was to remind you of the Count de Vaudry."

"You are right—I had forgotten it—forgotten my intrepid pupil, Henry de Vaudry!—write, 'I cannot close this despatch, Marshal, without particularly recommending to your notice the Count Henry de Vaudry, commandant of the frigate Sylphid, who, according to your instructions, fell in with me off Cape Verd, bringing with him the beautiful English frigate, the Lively. I have sent this vessel with the sick to the Isle of France."

"It wants but your signature, Admiral."

"Confound this wound," said the admiral, "it prevents my using my hand;" and he signed the despatch, as well as he could, with his left hand. "To-night," he continued, "I intend to cast anchor at Gondolar, to have an official interview with Hyder Ali; he is our ally, and plays the devil with the English, although more for his own satisfaction than ours. If I land at Gondolar, I shall stay, I suppose, with my old friend, M. Horn Praedt, to whom I believe Vaudry has a number of papers to deliver, belonging to that brave English officer, who died while defending his frigate so valiantly."

The lieutenant left the cabin, leaving the admiral busily engaged in preparing for his interview with Hyder Ali.

M. Horn Praedt was a rich merchant of Gondolar, and having remitted vast sums of money to be invested in the principal banks of Europe, or to purchase magnificent estates in Holland, his native country, intended, in the following year, to take his departure from the East. His house was one of the most extensive and elegant palaces of that luxurious country, and furnished with the utmost extravagance. On this occasion the owner, aware of the intended visit of the French admiral, had summoned his household about him to give directions for the reception of his guest, with the greatest demonstration of respect; and after partaking of the comforts of a bath, M. Horn Praedt, his short and corpulent form enveloped in a large dress of white cotton, caused himself to be rolled into the dining-room in a great arm chair upon wheels, there to partake of a banquet prepared with the most expensive dainties of the country.

But in the midst of all his caprice and idleness, the object most beloved by M. Horn Praedt was his daughter Ina, the only offspring of his marriage with a French woman of good family he had married at Madras, and who died when his daughter was but five years of age. The nabob adored his daughter; and as he was extremely logical, he argued, "when we love people we try to make them h ppy; I must, therefore, make my daughter happy; but then, how am I to make her happy? At this juncture, no doubt, the nabob paused, took a long pull at his golden-bowled houkah, and asked himself another deeply philosophical question. "What is happiness?" to which he necessarily answered, "Happiness is that which makes you happy."

And as that which rendered him happy was the most perfect independence, and the most voluptuous idleness, together with the most complete facility of satisfying his numerous caprices, he made it a rule never to contradict his daughter in any thing, and to leave her at complete liberty.

But let us pay a visit to his beloved daughter. At the distance of about a mile from the dwelling of M. Horn Praedt, but within the circumference of his immense park, an octagonal pavilion was reared; it was one storey in height, and the walls were covered with squares of porcelain of the most dazzling whiteness. This pavilion was embowered, and almost hidden by a grove of magnolias, while

numerous odoriferous shrubs surrounded its base, and many domesticated animals of the most elegant forms, and gayest colours, sported in the cool retreat.

In the interior of this elegant abode, the walls were hung with white muslin, on which the most graceful arabesques were traced with the gay and shining wings of the pica beetle. Musical instruments of the richest manufacture, and a library of elegantly bound books, formed a portion of the contents of the pavilion, together with a few choice paintings.

Several young negresses, clothed in white muslin, attended upon their mistress, who at this instant was enjoying her siesta on a couch, beneath a curtain of rose-coloured silk. "My mistress does not sleep;" said one of her attendants.

"No Badjy, no," said Ina, throwing aside the light curtain, and rising from her couch, "I have been dreaming, and I cannot understand my dream."

Ina was about eighteen years of age, and her cheeks, whose colour was heightened by her disturbed sleep, were of a rosy hue, her complexion being of the most dazzling whiteness. With the whim of a spoilt child she dressed herself in the Indian fashion, and the picturesque costume, modified by her exquisite taste, appeared to advantage on her delicate figure; her arms were bare, white, polished, but, alas! partially concealed by pearl bracelets. Her legs also were uncovered, according to the costume of the country, and so graceful, so beautifully rounded, that you could almost curse the slender rings of gold and pearls that encircled them; and then her feet, so white, with veins so blue, and polished oval nails, tinted by the purple hennah; to complete her description, long black hair was twined round her head, almost in the Grecian fashion.

But Ina, although a spoilt child, had too much nobility of nature to yield to the seductions of her situation, and prided herself in avoiding idleness, and improving her knowledge.

Sir George, who frequently accompanied his brother officers in their visits to the nabob, had particularly attracted her attention by his gravity, and his gentle, serious, and measured voice, for which the most distinguished of the English aristocracy are so peculiarly characterized, and then she was but twelve years of age when she first became acquainted with him.

Ina was uneasy at not having lately heard from her lover; not that she feared his death, such a thought was too dreadful to enter into her mind, but she was anxious to learn how soon she might expect again to see the lover of her earliest years. Her dream distressed her also, and turning to the slave she said, "Badjy, I wish to consult old Mabohe respecting my dream, let her be sought for."

"I go, mistress," said Badjy, and she disappeared

Henry, who by this time had arrived at Gondolar, was introduced to M. Horn-Praedt, and paid him several visits, without, however delivering the packet with which he was entrusted, for he remarked "it was always soon enough to hear bad news;" his desire also was to see the daughter, in the first instance; but in this he was disappointed, for Ina did not make her appearance, notwithstanding the endeavours the count had made to excite her curiosity by means of the gossip of her slaves.

At length he informed the father, that he had a letter from Sir George, which he wished to place in his hands to be delivered to Ina.

To this request the good man replied—"As this relates to my daughter alone, count, you must make your arrangements to see her—I never meddle in her affairs."

A note from the count announcing himself as the bearer of a letter from Sir George, opened every door to him, and he obtained an interview with the fair Ina.

Henry, without any previous observations, presented the letters announcing the death of Sir George, with cool politeness. The poor girl hastily broke the seal, and ascertaining the dreadful news, she fainted away.

In the first instance, the abrupt manner in which the count had announced the fatal news, roused the anger of the fair Creole. But Henry, with his usual judgment on the characters of women, had boldly resolved that one of the best means of obtaining their affections was to produce a strong impression in the first instance, whether of love or hate.

The count was not deceived, and, after considerable time had elapsed, he learnt, by a secret emissary, through the means of a negress, that Ina's hatred had given way to curiosity, and she had observed to her favourite slave, that "If the count were to ask for an audience, she might grant it, that she might have the sad pleasure of speaking of the dear deceased;' and one morning he received a note, begging he would repair to M. Horn-Praedt's, that madamoiselle Horn-Praedt might return him thanks. &c.

But the designs of Henry, whatever they might be, with regard to the fair Creole, progressed slowly, when an incident occurred which suddenly removed every obstacle to his success.

Our readers will remember, that Sir George, during his last interview with Henry, had declared that he deserved his fate because he had perjured himself. These mysterious words were at length explained: Sir George was strongly addicted to the vice of gambling; Ina had obtained a written promise from him, duly signed and sealed, that he would never more indulge in play, under the penalty of being considered a perjured man. The count, having ascertained this fact, succeeded in causing an account of the duel between himself and Sir George to come to the ears of Ina, and by this means the perjury of her English lover became apparent.

From this time forward the recollection of the deceased appeared gradually to be effaced from her mind, and Henry, in consequence perhaps of the immense fortune of her father, and the wish that his name might not be lost to posterity, had determined upon marrying Ina. But to drive from her mind every trace of love for the English captain, the count appeared anxious, yet at the same time unwilling to solicit her hand, although he expressed the most ardent love; he sighed and lamented, and at length declared, in a state of despair, that "seeing so many charms in a woman, who had so far forgotten herself as to become the mistress of Sir George—"

Ina interrupted him, filled with rage and astonishment, "from whence did he obtain that information?"

"From Sir George himself; who," he said, "being somewhat of a coxcomb, had given him to understand that—"

Horror stricken at the supposed perfidy of Sir George, Ina burst into a fit of passionate tears,

mingled with reproaches, and protestations of the falsehood of the charge.

The count had by this time wrought up the feelings of the beautiful Ina to the state he intended, and with the coolest impudence he addressed her, —"Mademoiselle, I have too much reliance on your truth, and your love, to exact an oath, to humiliate you, for the purpose of justifying yourself. I offer you my name, certain you will not accept it if you are not worthy of it.'

The pure and delicate mind of Ina felt no suspicion of the deceit of the count, and no insult at his effrontery, and shortly after his strange proposal of marriage the ceremony was celebrated at the Isle of France.

Six weeks after his marriage, the count wrote thus to one of his intimate friends.

"At length, for six weeks, I have been married; knowing my character, I need not tell you I do not love my wife like a Celadon. But I make myself agreeable, and I love her almost as much as I ever did any of my mistresses. I love her on account of the position it gives me in society. She is descended from a very good family of Languedoc; her mother was a St. Perry, her father belongs to the Horn-Praedts of Holland, one of whom was a commodore under admiral Ruyter. So that her birth and connections are good; and in addition to this, her father bestowed on us eight millions of francs at our marriage, and the remainder of his fortune will become ours at his death. Add to this my own income of fifty thousand crowns, and there is enough to support life, so that the more I reflect, the more I think I have done right."

CHAPTER LXV.

TIPPOO SAIB.

"And the tiger, lying down on his back, patiently endured the bites of his young ones." —BUFFON.

OUR scene is laid on the sea-shore of the Isle of France; a thick wood descends within a short distance of the water. The setting sun still cast its level rays upon the earth, lengthening the shadows of the lofty palms, and tinging the summits of the distant hills with its ruddy beams. Two men, enveloped in large cloaks, were seen to cross the sands and approach the wood with stealthy pace. The man who appeared to lead the way was a swarthy Asiatic, his companion, our old friend lieutenant Thomas.

"This way, this way!" cried the Asiatic, whose name was Craeb.

"Shall we never reach that cursed wood?" said his companion.

"Curse it not, we are close on its borders; but let us rest a while, and tell me who you are, I have promised to effect your escape from the island, and land you in my proa on the coast of Coromandel, but who are you?"

"What signifies—I wish to leave the island; I have promised you fifty louis, here, take them in advance."

"But who are you—of whom do I take the money?" said Craeb.

"First, then, who are you?"

"I will give you a proof of my confidence," said the Asiatic, "I am Craeb the smuggler, Craeb the pirate, Craeb the assassin, and I am making my escape after having killed a rival."

"So you are Craeb the assassin?'

"Yes, and who are you?'

"Jean Thomas, the honest man."

"That's strange," said Craeb, "the honest man and the assassin fly together!"

"Do men abhor you, brother Craeb?"

"They execrate me."

"I also am hated;" observed Thomas. 'Why do they execrate you?"

"On account of my crimes.—And you—'

"On account of my virtues."

"Strange enough," said Craeb. "I am hated for my crimes, you, for your virtues! but tell me, brother honest man, for what good action you are endeavouring to escape in company with a murderer?'

"Up to the present time, brother Craeb, I have been hated and laughed at, but not openly; but now in broad day-light they write upon my forehead *cowardice! infamy!* For, you see, I was an officer in the French navy—"

"Oh!" said Craeb, "you are condemned to death for having saved the life of your admiral, or gained a victory!"

"Worse than that, Craeb, I am driven out with infamy because I would not assassinate a lad of eighteen!"

"Strange," said Craeb, "we both fly from the face of our fellow-men; I for murdering; you, for refusing to murder!"

"And besides, brother assassin," observed Thomas, "it is better to be hated than despised, there you have the advantage of me, and yet I could have accepted the challenge and killed the boy, as easily as I break this twig."

"What!" exclaimed Craeb, "starting back, "a king's officer, and refuse a challenge!"

"Listen to me, brother Craeb, I am not quite a coward—I have received five wounds, and all in front: in the midst of the tempest, while others uttered cries of anguish, I was silent."

"But this duel," said Craeb.

"A young Creole, eighteen years of age, was cruelly beating an old negro, I cried out against his cruelty, and the boy struck me."

"Struck you! you, a king's officer!"

"I swore, before my dying mother, never to fight a duel, and I always keep my word."

"Away, you coward! seek for another guide. Here, take your gold!" exclaimed the assassin scornfully, and flinging down the purse, he departed.

"At this action of the assassin, Thomas burst into a fit of horrible laughter—"despised by him! despised by the assassin Craeb!"

* * * *

After the peace of 1782, Doctor Gedeon left the sea service, and established himself as surgeon, in the first instance, at the Isle of France, and afterwards at Seringapatam. During 1790-1-2, his political influence over the French who dwelt in that town, obtained for him the presidency of the Jacobin club which existed in that city. The doctor had left off wearing powder; his forehead had grown bald, and his grey hair floated over his shoulders, while his whole appearance still bore evidence of self-sufficiency and good nature. A tri-coloured flag floated over the principal window of his dwelling, the staff being surmounted by a cap of liberty and he was busily engaged preparing for the reception of a visitor; his old friend Jean Thomas, at that time representative of the

people at the Isle of France, and an envoyé sent by the governor of that island to the court of Tippoo Saib, who had succeeded his father Hyder-Ali in 1782. The worthy doctor was also preparing an address for the sultan, who was designated "citizen, and honorary member of the society of Jacobins and friends of liberty;" but, in spite of all his engagements, he found time to describe his old friend Thomas to his favourite slave Mahé, who received the information with all the imperturbable coolness for which the Indian character is noted

"A proud man is this friend of mine, Thomas, a devil of a fellow. I shall find him much older—much changed, for it is eleven years since we have seen each other; but there will be no alteration in his character; I am sure you will see, Mahé, in my friend Thomas, a lion let loose against kings, a man furious against the aristocrats and luxurious expenses; he is, as we say in Europe, a true sans-culotte. It must be acknowledged, however, that my dear friend is not particularly neat in his dress. But he is a rigourist, a rude fellow, and attached to his promises; only think of that duel he refused two or three years back, through which he was obliged to leave the service—a devil of a fellow, a glorious Brutus he would make. I shall be glad of his company to the sultan, not that I am afraid of the sultan, no, I am not afraid."

"You must take care of the tiger, master, he has claws and teeth."

"What! are not all men equal? shall the president of the jacobin club fear the man you call the tiger? And besides, sultans and kings always make a present of superb snuff-boxes on these occasions, and then—"

At this instant an elegant palanquin appeared at the door, borne by peons in livery, and Jean Thomas leapt out of its soft couch. Gedeon was thunderstruck; he could not comprehend the change which had taken place in the appearance of his friend; his dress was no longer mean and neglected, but neat and glittering, as if intended for a birthday. Tri-coloured ribands streamed from his hat, and a large belt, also tri-coloured, supported a magnificent sabre and rested on a pair of white satin pantaloons and black and shining boots, while the delicate white of the collar of his shirt set off to advantage the tawny and proud features of the new representative of the people.

The fact is, Jean Thomas no sooner learnt that the revolution had thrown open honours and dignities to all, than he understood his own disposition, and discovered that his violent hatred of privileges was nothing less than his measureless envy of the privileged. So he retrieved his lost character by picking several quarrels, in which he either wounded or slew his men, for, although the grandson of the dealer in fish had been able to sacrifice his rank and quiet to the promise he had made his mother, he could not make up his mind to sacrifice his ambition.

The day after the meeting of the two friends, Doctor Gedeon and Jean Thomas were to be presented to the sultan.

In a splendid gallery, in the sumptuous palace of Tippoo Saib, might have been seen two Indian soldiers standing motionless, near a curtain of Persian stuff, worked with silver and green silk; their looks were fixed on the ground and, while their thin white garments contrasted finely with the dark colour of their skin, their imperturbable looks gave them the appearance of automatons. A third personage, dressed in the same costume, carried a sabre and a large dagger with a long blade, suspended from his belt. He was leaning on his elbows at an open window, and appeared to contemplate the sublime scenery before him. This was, in fact, our old friend Craeb the assassin, who for the last nine years had held a confidential situation in the household of Tippoo Saib. As he enjoyed the prospect, he hummed a verse of a Malay song.

At the end of a few seconds the curtain near which the two soldiers were placed was withdrawn, and a man about sixty years of age, with a white beard and smiling countenance, appeared, moving backwards and repeating a number of salaams.

Before the appearance of this personage, the Malay had raised himself from his leaning attitude and stood erect and motionless. The old man, who was splendidly dressed, had scarcely returned the respectful salutations of Craeb, when suddenly a short, harsh, and guttural whistle was heard behind the curtain, and repeated three times.

This sound must have had some peculiar signification, for it produced a terrible effect on the man with the white beard, he drew back as if he had been bitten by a serpent, his face assumed an ashy hue, and his eyes glared wildly with terror, while, as if with the instinct of self-defence, he raised his hands to his throat.

But he had scarcely time to perform this action, before the two negros had, with the utmost gravtiy, seized his arms and twisted them behind his back, while they twined their legs round his and held them motionless. His horrible astonishment was too great to allow him to utter a word, his teeth chattered, but he was unable to give vent to an articulate sound.

Then Craeb approached the old man, and introducing his hand into his mouth, twisted his tongue to prevent his cries, while with his right hand he quietly drew forth his dagger, with a blade as thin and round as the barrel of a quill, and sharp as a needle. At a sign he made, the two soldiers opened the dress of the sufferer, and pressed forcibly on his loins, and Craeb, choosing the spot, thrust in his dagger with so much precision, that the old man died without a struggle, and not a drop of blood appeared from the wound. His clothes were then re-adjusted, and Craeb, leaving his victim in the arms of the soldiers, knelt before the curtain, and gave three light blows on the floor, to announce the successful termination of the affair.

"To the dogs with the traitor;" cried a harsh voice from the mysterious chamber, and the two soldiers carried the body of the old man to a door at the other extremity of the gallery, through the opening of which a crowd of sircars, and other officers, might be seen awaiting their audience, among them the corpse was thrown with the same cry, "to the dogs with the traitor."

The two soldiers then resumed their stations, and Craeb, again retiring to his favourite window, recommenced his plaintive ditty.

The unfortunate man who thus lost his life was Mahommed-Osmar-Khan, formerly an ambassador from the sultan at the court of France, and his crime appears to have been the constant praise he bestowed on all he had witnessed at the court of Versailles, by which the vanity and self-love of the tyrant Tippoo had been roused.

Another man soon entered the fatal gallery, and by his haughty bearing appeared to be a favourite at court, he was about forty years of age, tall, robust, and extremely corpulent. Craeb approached the curtain, and kneeling before it, said—"Shaikl!"

"Let him enter, the bear may enter, the tiger allows him," said the silvery voice of a child, with a burst of laughter.

The fat man involuntarily knit his brow, but he repressed his look of discontent, and made a sign to Craeb to announce him again.

Craeb, kneeling again, said, "Shaikl!"

"Did you not hear my son's order, you cursed dog?" cried a harsh and angry voice. Craeb grew deadly pale, afraid he should hear his master's whistle—but the sultan did not whistle.

The child's voice again exclaimed, "Bear Shaikl," with another burst of laughter.

And Shaikl, the bear, lifted the curtain, and entered the audience chamber of Tippoo Saib.

The sultan was seated on a large sofa of green silk, resting upon six steps of silver, and supported on either side by a silver tiger as large as life, the eyes being formed of topazes and rubies; over head was a bird of paradise of colossal size, formed of massive gold, and adorned with precious stones. Near one corner of this throne a child about five years of age was seen, almost buried in the soft cushions, this child was Abdul, the youngest of the three sons of Tippoo Saib, and the object of his fondest adoration.

The spoilt child had, in his play, flung a small dagger underneath a massive silver coffer, in such a situation that it could not be easily reached; in vain had his father, stretched out at length, made incredible exertions to reach it and he was about to give up the task, when the impatient cry of the child, "I will have it!" induced him to continue his exertions, till at length, much to the joy of Abdul, the *tiger* recovered the dagger.

"Well, Shaikl," said Tippoo to his favourite, "are we to pay a visit to my eagles to day?"

"Is your highness inclined to forget that it will soon be the hour when the two Frenchmen were to prostrate themselves before you?"

"True, Shaikl, I had forgotten, and I impatiently expect the answer of the sircar of the Mauritius I have asked him to provide me with several good European officers; but have these two Frenchmen come together, and with a numerous retinue?"

"Your highness will give his orders on that subject."

"Well, I will receive the two Frenchmen as I receive others, I mean singly, and you will not even allow their followers to enter the palace. I fear these traitors, Shaikl, so that, you understand me, let them be separated as soon as they have crossed the threshhold." And the suspicious tyrant added.—

"Let their clothes be searched before they are introduced to me; and, Shaikl, you will remain, and tell Craeb to be ready with his two red-turbaned companions to answer the slightest signal. Now let my houkah be brought in, Shaikl, and go and give orders concerning these men."

When the favourite had left, Tippoo Saib rose, and took down a Turkish pistol, and having examined the priming he placed it beneath one of the cushions, and laid by its side a large and long dirk, with an extremely sharp point, and poisoned, and then flung himself carelessly on the sofa.

Two negroes brought him his houkah, with its golden bowl, and placing the amber end in his mouth, he began to smoke.

The negros retired, and Shaikl, having returned, was soon followed by the unfortunate doctor—but alone!!

Poor Gedeon's plans were considerably deranged by his separation from Jean Thomas, on whose cool determination he much relied to support him during his interview with the "tiger," and as he entered the palace he clearly distinguished a dead body borne out by two parias, a circumstance that by no means added to his resolution.

The sultan, as soon as doctor Gedeon made his appearance, gazed on him with the steady and unwinking look for which he was noted; as to the favourite, he appeared completely absorbed in attending to his master's houkah, but, nevertheless, he kept his eye steadily fixed on the unfortunate doctor.

Tippoo, wearied by the reiterated salaams of the doctor, was the first to break silence — "Well, what is your business?"

The president of the Jacobin club, assuming the courage of despair, began to read the address he had prepared; his humble manner, and tremulous voice contrasting strangely with the pompous language of the writing.

"Liberty, equality, or death! Eternal and mortal hatred to kings, tyrants, despots, and aristocrats—

"What is your business?" repeated the sultan, who scarcely understood a word the doctor uttered. But the latter, gathering courage as he proceeded, made two steps in advance, and offered the emblem of republicanism to Tippoo Saib, and then continued his address, in which the words tyrant, despot, equality, and liberty, were so often repeated, that at length his highness, thrusting back the republican emblem with the end of his pipe, exclaimed—

"What do you mean by despot, you dog?"

"I mean by despot," said Gedeon in a shrill voice, and nothing abashed, "I mean by despot, a tiger, thirsting for blood, who quenches his thirst in the tears of his subjects, devours their flesh, and drinks their heart's blood as a dainty, and—"

"But," said the sultan, who, tyrant as he was, still enjoyed a laugh, "what does your society wish to do with despots?"

"In the name of liberty and equality, death to tyrants!" said Gedeon, in a state of excitement.

"Why, then, you dog, you come to seek my death! For I am a despot, and so was my father before me, and so my son Abdul will be."

"The proof that your highness is not a despot, is that your subjects have bestowed on you the glorious name of *Koodaband* (the gift of heaven), and that I come to lay the name of citizen at your feet."

"What do you mean by citizen?"

"Citizen means patriot;" said Gedeon, gaining fresh courage.

"And patriot?"

"Patriot, sublime sultan, a friend of nature, he is greater than a king, he wears a red cap, is a sans-culotte, and wishes for universal liberty, and destruction to priests, tyrants, and aristocrats."

"And what do you mean by a tyrant?" said Tippoo, who happened to be in an unusually gentle mood.

"A tyrant, magnanimous sultan, is always a king, and a king is always a tyrant."

"Why, you dog of the world, I then am a tyrant!" said the sultan, laughing, "ask Shaikl if I cannot, by a mere sign, have all my wishes gratified! Yes, you dog of the world, and, if I wished, could order you to lose your head this instant—would that satisfy you?"

"Sublime Koodaband, I am sure you are inca-

pable of any thing so monstrous!" and the citizen thought of the dead body.

"Why you wretched madman, shall you with impunity offer me the title of citizen, that I may kill tyrants and despots, and I myself am a tyrant and despot?" then turning to Shaikl, "let this dog, who has come to amuse himself with us, be well whipped, then let his head be shaved on one side, and, dressed in a yellow garment, let him ride three times round the city on the back of a hog. I have said it."

And Gedeon, thunderstruck, was handed from one to the other, until the sentence was duly executed.

"This madman has not been very amusing, Shaikl," said Tippoo, "Now let the envoy from the governor of the Isle of France be introduced;" and Jean Thomas was led in by another door.

Jean Thomas, with an intrepid look, saluted Tippoo Saib after the military fashion, and handed him the despatches from the governor of the Isle of France, and while Tippoo Saib read them he looked around him boldly, but respectfully, and the sultan, on the other hand watched the countenance of the ex-lieutenant, with whose bearing he seemed to be pleased.

"The sircar of the Island of the Mauritius has sent you to me, no doubt, in the name of the king of France?"

"The king of France is dead;" said Thomas gravely.

"Truly but the king never dies! there is always a king in France?"

"There is, at present, no king in France," said Thomas.

"No king in France! In the name of what sovereign do you come, then?"

"In the name of the sovereign that has replaced the king of France—the people."

"And what has this people done to the king of France?"

"The people condemned the king of France to death, and the people now is the only sovereign."

"And the queen!" said Tippoo Saib.

"The axe of the executioner is blind—it strikes all who injure the people."

"At Mysore, Frank, the executioner's sword never touches the neck of a woman. But after all, I like this people, Shaikl, and, although ferocious enough, he puts me in mind of my glorious father Hyder-Ali. Well, Frank, your new sovereign is a usurper, like my glorious father, and I feel an inclination towards him, because he is a usurper."

"The people," said Jean Thomas, "has not usurped the throne, but taken that which belonged to it by the law of nature."

"Ah, that is what my glorious father said to the rajah of Mysore; and I see with pride and joy that your people govern France as I govern Mysore. As for you, Frank, are you devoted to your people! do you love your sovereign?"

"I am devoted to the people for life or death—body and soul—heart and blood."

"Devoted under all circumstances—let its orders be what they may!"

"Under all circumstances."

"To secure its favour, would you do all it is in the power of man to do?—If the people said to you—kill?"

"I would kill."

"Your friend!"

"The enemy of my people could not be my friend, I would kill him."

"Your mother?"

"Speak not of my mother, she is dead."

"If you had a son, would you sacrifice him for this people?"

"Brutus did so, I would do it."

The sultan, unable to repress a movement of terror, observed aside, "he would kill his son!! He is a blind hyena, to be let loose on its prey, who thinks only of the blood with which it is intoxicated; he is precisely such a man as I want. Frank," he observed, turning to Thomas, "I shall soon be at war with the English, I want a man as hard as iron, and as pure as fire, to execute my orders—let them be what they may. I want a man entirely devoted to me, and who understands the warfare of the Europeans—will you be that man!"

"Magnanimous sultan," said Thomas."

"Why hesitate—master for master—the people or Tippoo Saib! And perhaps I may be able to reward you far more magnificently than your present master; your governor says you have been a naval captain, you shall be the commander of my fleet—what you Europeans call admiral. Your property at the Mauritius shall be protected, you shall have three thousand rupees a month, and receive the title of Bellawh."

"Does that title make a man noble!" exclaimed Thomas in delight.

"It renders noble, the past, the present, and the future."

"In Europe, also!"

"My ambassador was equal to any of the lords of France. Do you accept my offer!"

"If the governor of the island grants me permission."

And the sultan placed a splendid collar of precious stones round the neck of Jean Thomas, and taking the sapphire from his turban, also presented it to him. In the mean time, Shaikl, who had been hitherto able to conceal his jealousy, made an angry movement,—"Are you afraid of losing my favours, my poor Shaikl?" said the sultan.

Shaikl prostrated himself, and exclaimed, "Magnanimous and victorious sovereign, I could not exist without them."

"You shall have your wish," observed the sultan, whistling at the same time for Craeb, "for they are withdrawn from you;" Craeb instantly entered and bore out Shaikl, Thomas remaining unmoved during the scene, for he did not understand the meaning of the three whistles.

The sultan then rose, and addressed Jean Thomas:—"My noble Bellawh, you—you are mine, but under the protection of my oath to France and her sovereign. I will shortly send you my orders." And the sultan left the apartment.

Thomas, filled with pride at his unexpected elevation, exclaimed, as he paced the room, "Commander of the fleet! first lord at the court of Mysore, and my ancestors ennobled also; courage, courage! grandson of Thomas, the dealer in fish! You have washed off your original taint. Tippoo Saib is a magnificent man, and who knows what I may not become?"

But when Thomas entered the gallery, he found himself face to face with Craeb, who was singing, as usual, and, at the same time, wiping the dagger with which he had just made an end of Shaikl.

But seeing his old acquaintance, he suddenly dropped his weapon, and exclaimed, "What! my brother Thomas, the honest man!"

"Who are you?" said Thomas, confused, "I am not acquainted with you."

"What! not know Craeb? Not recollect Craeb, the assassin? This turban disguises me; but it is Craeb, brother—still an assassin, as he was in the Isle of France, but, by my turban, I never was so busy as I have been to day---but you, brother, are you still Thomas, the honest man?"

To this question of the assassin, Thomas made no answer.

"Ah!" continued Craeb, "I understand; you remember the word 'coward,' but I forget it all; for as I only kill now for the sake of money, I am not much better than you. You are still Thomas, the honest man, I suppose; the man who keeps the oath he swore to his mother and risks his honour."

"No! no!" exclaimed Thomas, in a rage; "no! leave me, you accursed murderer!"

"Ha! ha! ha! what, are you no longer, my brother, the honest man?"

At this instant, an officer entered and invested Thomas with a magnificent sword, at the same time, saluting him by the title of "first Sircar of the sea" "What," continued Craeb, "are you the favourite of the sultan? You have the situation of poor Shaikl, I have just...." and he moved his dagger significantly.

"What man what are you speaking of?" said Thomas.

"I mean," continued Craeb, "that in obedience to your master and mine, I have just killed that fat man in the green turban; and it appears to me that his death was in consequence of your elevation."

"What!" exclaimed Thomas, drawing back with horror. "You killed this man here—just now—on this spot?"

"Yes;" said Craeb, quietly; "this very instant—here, just where you are standing—but go on."

"Oh! this is strange!" exclaimed Thomas; "and I am in this man's service."

"Strange?" cried Craeb, with a loud laugh, "still strange, brother, the honest man; formerly you would not kill, you fled from men who insulted you: but now you cause men to be slain, and you sell your soul to the devil or to Tippoo, for it is all the same. You have curried favour, like your brother Craeb, the assassin. It is singular the same fate always brings us together, proscribed or favourite, always; proud or degraded, it is the same, and I say to you now, as before, fate is a juggler---now, brother, I *esteem you;* but this is the last word from the sepoy to the great lord."

Craeb was leaving the gallery, when Thomas bitterly exclaimed, "Now then, I am esteemed by Craeb the assassin, as I was formerly despised by Craeb the assassin!—It is just." After a short silence, he continued: "Bah! after all, it is foolish in me to think of such matters, when fate is so favourable to me." Then taking a jewel from his sabre, he flung it proudly to Craeb, at the same time saying to him, "Here, sepoy, arrack and the Bayaderes for ever, there is something to drink the health of the noble Sircar of the empire of Mysore."

Craeb took the jewel, saying, "By my faith, noble lord, I will drink my share of the price of your soul—strange, still strange!" and Thomas left the room without answering him.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A CONVERTITE.

It was in the year 1801, Count Henry de Vandry was fifty-six years of age, yet, notwithstanding his time of life, his taste for pleasure and dissipation still remained unchanged, and although he had been married eight-and-twenty years, his pretensions to success among the ladies were so extravagant, as to render him ridiculous in the eyes of his friends, and a great source of amusement to his enemies.

From thirty to thirty-six years of age, the count had been admired by the ladies for his actual accomplishments, but from thirty-six to forty they excused their partiality for him on account of his having been so much the vogue at the court of Versailles; from forty to forty-five, a few young women, of little pretentions, but much foresight, attached themselves to the count for the sake of bringing themselves into notice, but quitted him as soon as their object had been accomplished. From forty-five to fifty his favourites were young inexperienced girls, who had just left boarding-school. But alas! from fifty to fifty-six years he became merely a pleasant companion, and neither husband nor lover was any longer jealous. At length, however, the vanity of the count received a severe lesson.

A certain baroness, the better to conceal her predeliction for another lover, paid great attention to the count, and that to so great an extent, that a duel took place between her husband and her admirer; and he became, in the end, the laughing stock of the court. On this he determined to retire from fashionable life,

If we cast a glance over the life of the count, we cannot have avoided noticing that *self* was always uppermost; whether in the case of pleasure or glory, everything was sacrificed to self; and finding now his earthly enjoyments fail, he still looked forward to secure, at any price, his *future welfare;* and that he might obtain this prize, he, no doubt, thought of the happiness and affection of his family?

No; as in every other case, he would even sacrifice them without hesitation, to secure his own salvation. But it was not the *hope* of happiness in the other world that biassed his mind; it was the *fear* of punishment.

Such was the Count de Vaudry—a man utterly selfish. Turning next to his old lieutenant, Jean Thomas, we find the passion of vanity as fully developed.

Having returned from India, he attracted the attention of the Emperor Napoleon, and as a man's character, perhaps, can be better developed by his own confidential communication to a friend than by any description, we subjoin a portion of a private and confidential letter of "Chevalier Jean Thomas, Prefect of the department of...., to Baron Blumart, private secretary, &c. &c.

"I have already addressed two letters to you, my dear Blumart, which have both remained unanswered, and really it is too bad, for what I wish you to ask of the minister is decidedly no favour. I think I am fully entitled to the title of baron after all the trouble I have given myself in the affair of the conscription, and considering the result of my efforts, by which I obtained, for his majesty the emperor and king, three hundred men beyond the contingent.

"It really almost makes me sorry I quitted the army for the civil service, but you know it was the emperor himself induced me to enter into my new career. I think I even now hear his majesty speak.—'You served under my orders in Egypt?' 'Yes, sire.'—'You had then just returned from India?' 'Yes, sire'—'You had been in the service of Tippoo Saib?' 'Yes, sire.'—'Long?' 'Until his death, sire.' 'He was a man who would have his own will—Tippoo Saib,' said his majesty, speaking to himself, then he added, 'He held you in considerable esteem?' 'I will have the honour of laying before your majesty the firmans in the sultan's own hand writing.'—'Do so; send them to me, and return, the grand marshal will introduce you." I returned, as you know, my dear Blumart, and his majesty, the emperor and king, said to me, when he returned my paper, 'I have read these; you are a bar of iron, I like that, I will make trial of you; you shall be prefect of the department of . . . . . I have already sent three prefects there, who have been unable to return me the fourth of the contingent. Let me see how you will succeed in this, your first attempt.'

"Three months afterwards my department was regulated like a battallion of sepoys.

"By the bye, I have ascertained that the confiscated lands of the Count de Vaudry have been restored to him by the emperor because the count, the richest man in Holland, has accepted an honorary office at the court of his majesty king Louis. I am almost sorry for it, for the property, being in my neighbourhood, would have suited me well – but, however, private interest must give way to the public good.......I open my letter to say your despatches have arrived: how wrong I was in accusing you. At length then I am a baron! and the letters by which the honour is conferred on me are written in the most flattering terms, everything is perfect; I admire the arms; do you think if I were to have them sculptured over the door of the prefecture they would have a good effect?—all the houses of the old nobility are ornamented in this manner.

"If you meet with an opportunity, my dear Blumart, return the minister thanks on my account, and remind him that I was the first to get rid of the absurd practise of excusing the blind and lame. One eye is quite enough for taking aim at the masses. As to the bandy-legged men, I always congratulate myself for the idea of incorporating them in the navy, there is more climbing than walking in that service, and they can cling excellently to the ropes.

"Be satisfied of this, my dear baron, there is always something to be got out of a man: if you ever possessed slaves you would have found that out. They are something like the lame men; these animals live to the age of a hundred years, and they are as strong as Turks; and then again, during an unlucky campaign, when the soldiers' spirits are depressed, a few lame men in each company will excite the merriment of the rest, and when a soldier laughs he forgets his troubles; and then, if it were only for the sake of vanity, these bandy-legged fellows will fight like lions; besides, you may tell them the Marshal de Luxembourg was the same as they are. Accept the assurance of my deepest gratitude.

"The Baroness Thomas sends her respects to you."

"LE BARON THOMAS."

Prefect of the Department....

On the 5th of January, 1812, the Marchioness de Bellow, then at Naples, received the following letter from the Countess de Vaudry:—

"Pity me, my dear friend, my head is wandring; I have just heard a most dreadful determination of M. Vaudry's; it alarms me beyond anything as to the future fate of my poor Mary. I have long since, my dear friend, told you of the incredible change that has taken place in the habits of M. de Vaudry. You know that after the ridiculous and unfortunate affair in which he might have lost his life, when he became the laughing-stock of the court, he left the Hague, and established himself here, near Utrecht, accompanied by a chaplain, recommended to him by Chevalier de Volsky.

"As soon as we took possession of this estate, M. de Vaudry informed me of his new intentions. Wishing to devote his attention to his future welfare, he formally recommended me to receive no company, that he might not, he said, be disturbed in his pious exercises.

Although all this was extremely sudden, and arose, perhaps, more from vexation than conviction. I must acknowledge to you, my dear friend, that his conversion, in the first instance, delighted me, for I knew better than any one the consolation one might expect to receive from heaven."

"Alas, my friend, it was but a bitter illusion! M. de Vaudry rises at nine o'clock, hears mass in the chapel, then breakfasts in his own room, and, at dinner, he makes his appearance, bows to me, gives his daughter one kiss, and then goes to confession, listens to a lecture from his chaplain, and at eight o'clock retires to rest."

CHAPTER XLVII.

EXPIATION.

FIVE more years had passed over the heads of the actors in our tale, and M. de Vaudry, unlike the gay and gallant Henry we have so often described, was seated at a table in his oratory, busily engaged perusing a number of letters. From time to time exclamations of surprise and joy escape from his lips.

"So unexpected, so beyond all hopes," he said aloud, "such an alliance, a sovereign house! what honour will it not reflect upon my name! It is true the conditions proposed by the prince of Arsberg are enormous, three hundred thousand livres a year to be settled on my son at his marriage, and this, added to the fortune of the young princess, will be only sufficient to enable them to maintain a proper state. But I must endeavour to obtain the consent of my wife and daughter, with regard to Mary's destination."

The count then rang the bell, and desired that his daughter might be informed he wished to speak to her.

"I cannot see how my daughter can refuse to make the sacrifice, it is for the benefit of myself and her brother. But still, that I may be certain of her consent, I will act as my chaplain advised me."

At this instant Mary entered, pale and trembling, her heart beating violently, for it was the first time in her life she had ever been thus alone with her father.

"Come here, Mary, and seat yourself by me, I wish to talk seriously, very seriously to you."

Mary de Vaudry, now seventeen years of age, obeyed her father's orders, and timidly seated herself near him. After a few minutes silence, the count, addressing her, said: "Tell me, Mary, if to day it should be in your power to save your father's life, and to—"

"Father!" exclaimed Mary, at the same time flinging her arms round his neck.

"Be patient, my dear Mary, and allow me to conclude; if it should be in your power to-day to save my life by devoting the remainder of your days to trouble and sorrow, would you do so?"

"You never doubted I would, father."

"Then without hesitation you would sacrifice yourself for me?"

"I have said so, father, if you wish for an oath—"

"Mary, you can do much more than save the few days I have still left to dwell on this earth—you can assist in rendering me happy to all eternity."

"In my youth, Mary, I was a great sinner, but at length I repented of my sins, and, for the last eight years, I have endeavoured to expiate the errors of my former life; but, if heaven hears my prayers, how much more will it listen to those that arise from your pure and innocent heart."

"Then I and my mother will pray for you daily."

"But how much more efficacious would your prayers be, if they issued from some holy retreat?"

"I understand you, father," said Mary, turning deadly pale, "but to leave my mother—oh, God! to leave my mother!"

"Listen to me, Mary, if the pious reasons I have given you are not sufficient, there is another, of a less elevated character, which may assist in persuading you, that what you look upon as a sacrifice will also have the effect of establishing the future welfare of your brother."

"I am listening, father."

"Here is a letter from one of my most devoted friends, and he proposes for my son, the inheritor of my name, for him who can alone transmit it to posterity, he proposes a most unhoped-for alliance for your brother—the princess of Arsberg, whose uncle is allied to the house of Austria; but I am obliged to settle on him an income of three hundred thousand livres, preserving for you a life annuity of twelve thousand livres."

"I know, father, that without riches or beauty I shall never find an appropriate match. I cheerfully consent to what you propose for my brother, but for mercy's sake do not force me to leave my mother!"

"Do you hesitate, after having sworn?"

"But father," said Mary, falling on her knees, "to leave her alone—who will take my place near her?—oh, no one, no one!"

"And who will supply your place at the foot of the altar? who will pray to insure the salvation of your father's soul - perjured and unnatural child—no one."

"God never wishes I should cause my mother to die of grief."

"Rather let me risk my eternal happiness. Unhappy father! you thought that your daughter's oath was sacred!"

"No, no! I swear—but oh, pray for my mother! she will be very miserable!"

At this instant Madame de Vaudry suddenly opened the door of the oratory, pale and agitated, Mary rushed into her arms, exclaiming, "Oh, mother, mother!"

"My child," said the count, "I have to speak to Madame Vaudry on particular business, wait for me without, in the library.—Remember!"

"I have promised you, father," said Mary, and she left the room.

"I trust, madame," said the count, "you have not so far forgotten yourself as to listen to a secret that concerns my daughter and me alone?"

"Yes, sir, I have so far forgotten myself. Understanding that for the first time in your life you asked for an interview with my daughter, I wished to know what was your purpose; I came alas too late, but I do know it."

"You know, then" said the count, calmly, "that my daughter has sworn to enter a convent, to ensure my salvation and the welfare of my son. I do not deny I have been a great sinner, madame," then coolly and sententiously continuing, "When first I saw you in India, madame, it was at Gondolar, I think; I brought you news of the death of a certain English captain, Sir George Gordon. I have much to regret, madam, but I have repented of my sins—I must also acknowledge with shame that it was cupidity rather than what they call love induced me to seek your hand."

"I pardon you, sir," said the countess, "it is long since I learnt that."

"I return thanks to you madame, and to heaven for that. But I must acknowledge also, that, seeing your attachment to Sir George, when you told me he had sworn not to play, I was delighted at having it in my power to prove that he had forsworn himself. But I have still further to crave your forgiveness; I have been, alas! an unworthy calumniator."

"What is it you mean, sir?" said the countess, growing pale with terror

"Perceiving that his failing to keep his promise was not sufficient to cause you to forget him, it came into my mind to tell you that Sir George had calumniated you in my presence, by saying that you had been—his mistress. I acknowledge that I uttered a most wicked lie."

"And I could believe this of you, George!" exclaimed the countess; "alas! I have been properly punished."

And the count fell on his knees before his crucifix, "I thank Heaven I have had sufficient strength to confess my faults,—my conscience now is clear,"

"My child, my child," said the countess, "have you considered well that you leave the world for ever!"

"It is not the world," returned Mary, "that I leave—it is you, mother."

"Then be comforted, Mary, you are worthy of me, and we will not be separated. I have just been talking with M. de Vaudry, child, and I am of his opinion, that, with your tastes and character, seclusion will be the best. And as the whole of the time of M. de Vaudry is occupied in the insurance of his salvation, he has scarcely leisure to devote even a few minutes each day to worldly matters, he has consented that I shall be your companion in the convent during your noviciate. I do not forget the promise I made you, sir. Thank heaven, your health is now excellent; but, should you be afflicted with illness, that instant will I be at your side." And the countess and Mary left the room.

"She forgives me still! I expected this disagreeable scene; but my chaplain told me he could give me more perfect absolution if I confessed my sins to those I had injured; so that I now feel free,

as if I had paid a debt.—She has promised, should I be ill, to visit me. After all, I shall merely miss her at the dinner hour; it was a toil to me, and I had rather dine alone." And the count, reclining in his arm chair, murmured to himself, in broken words, "in couraceously making this acknowledgement, I have followed the advice of the Holy Scriptures, and I feel a beatitude—a hope that I am one of the elect. My daughter will pray for me, and then—my house will be allied—with a sovereign house—" and he fell asleep.

* * * * *

Five years had elapsed since the occurrences we have just related; the countess de Vaudry and her daughter had retired to a convent, and the young De Vaudry's alliance with the noble Austrian house had perfected the ambitious schemes of his father.

Meantime the termination of the career of the count himself was fast drawing to a close. Duval, his confidential domestic, was anxiously waiting the arrival of the medical man, in the court-yard of the chateau. At last, the long-looked for doctor made his appearance.

"Well, Duval!" he exclaimed, "how fares the count?"

"The day before yesterday," said Duval, "the count rose in as good health as usual; he heard mass, breakfasted, rode out for three hours, and afterwards dined."

"With an appetite?"

"As usual, with a great appetite; he ate even, perhaps, to excess. and that of a dish to which he was extremely partial, a fowl dressed with lamb's marrow, and truffles, and a *pure* of Lorraine shrimps; he was helped twice to it, as I am informed."

"And you attribute his disorder to this, Duval?"

"Not exactly; he had some fruit also; but his valet de chambre was imprudent enough to bring him a letter, just delivered by a courier, and the reading of this letter, I think, affected him."

"Did this letter contain any ill news?"

"On the contrary; it announced the birth of a grandson, and the sudden joy, no doubt affected his digestion."

"This affair at his age is a serious matter; but go and inform him, Duval, of my arrival."

"Ah, my dear doctor," said the count, as he entered; "the Viscountess de Vaudry is put to bed of a son; thank heaven, my name will be handed down to posterity."

"I am happy to hear it, count; but how do you feel yourself to-day?"

"A little weak, doctor, but in no pain. I felt my pulse while I was at confession, but I could hardly feel it beat."

"You performed that religious duty so lately as yesterday?"

"Certainly, every day; ought we not to be prepared for every event? for supposing my illness had been a serious one instead of the slight attack, I feel, I should have been unprepared. I am now certain of my salvation in the other world, is it not so, chaplain?"

"The life of the count," said the chaplain, "has been so exemplary, his repentance so deep and humble, and the prayers of Mademoiselle de Vaudry must needs be so efficacious, that the count may be certain of his safety."

"You see, doctor," said the count, "certain, I am certain."

Not long after his interview with the doctor, the abbe, now the cardinal de Cilly, was announced: on the appearance of the doctor, who informed him the count would be ready to receive him on the instant, the cardinal asked,

"How does he find himself, sir?"

"My lord, he has but an hour to live; his weakness increases every minute; happily he is in no pain, and is perfectly unconscious of his danger."

"And as to his mind, sir?"

"It is much weakened, my lord; when I first entered he was lucid enough, but now M. de Vaudry speaks less, and his ideas appear confused."

When the cardinal entered the count's chamber, he requested him to desire all his attendants to retire.

"Let them leave," said the count, "I wish to receive his highness's absolution."

"Where are your wife and daughter, sir?" said the cardinal.

"They pray for me, my lord; they have both retired to a convent—but your blessing, cardinal—I . . ."

"Madame de Vaudry," said the cardinal, interrupting him, "is dead, sir."

"Dead, oh God! she will pray for me, then, in heaven."

"Your daughter is dying, sir."

"God will bless her," said the count, growing gradually weaker; "She prayed for her father, and has ensured my everlasting salvation, and enabled me to render my house illustrious—my daughter, I . . ."

"Everlasting salvation for you!" cried the cardinal, in a voice of thunder, "for you, you!—think of those you have sacrificed—"

But the count was by this time delirious, and exclaimed feebly, "I go to heaven—my daughter has ensured my fate—to heaven—my son—a sovereign house--heaven."

"He dies," cried the cardinal, "this man dies, without fear, without remorse; oh, it is horrible!"

"I—go—paradise!" and the count expired.

The cardinal remained for a time stupified, and then in a solemn voice exclaimed, "After the infamous life of this man, who dares to doubt the logical existence of a just and retributive deity, a deity who punishes the wicked in another world? Who dares to doubt that our sojourn in this world is but a passage from nothingness to eternity?"

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